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A cross-cultural and intercultural investigation of request realisation strategies in Italian and British-English and the issue of how culturally-bound understandings of politeness can affect intercultural interactions.

by

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Declaration and Inclusion of Material from a Prior Thesis

I declare that this thesis is the candidate's own work and that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

List of abbreviations

AG(s): Attention getter(s)
AT(s): Address term(s)
CA: Checking on Availability
CD: Consultative Devices
CM(s): Cost Minimizer(s)
CCP: Cross-cultural Pragmatics
CP: Courtesy Pronoun
EM: External Modification
EP: Explicit performatives
ER: Establishing Relationship
ES: Evaluative surveys
FTA(s): Face-threatening Act(s)
GP: Getting a precommitment
H(s): Hearer(s)
HA(s): Head Act(s)
HO: Hearer Oriented
HSO: Hearer and Speaker Oriented
HP: Hedged performative
ICP: Intercultural Pragmatics
ILP: Interlanguage Pragmatics
IM: Internal Modification
LD: Locution derivable
MD: Mood derivable
MR: Making restitutions-Offering awards
PT: Past tense
RI: Retrospective Interviews
Interjections: Requestive Interjections
RP: Roleplay
RQ(s): Research Question(s)
RPC: Reference to preparatory conditions
S(s): Speaker(s)
SF: Language specific suggestory formula
SH: Strong hints

SS: Scope stating

SO: Speaker Oriented

Abstract

Research in the field of pragmatics has highlighted important differences in speech act realisation strategies and the perception of contextual variables across lingua-cultures. This particularly applies to requests, which are potentially face-threatening acts and important expressions of cultural behaviour, as their performance is influenced by culturally-embedded perspectives on interpersonal rights and obligations. Although some languages have been widely investigated in terms of request realisation, such as English, little research has been done on Italian, and on this language-pair. This thesis aims to address this gap, by studying request realisation strategies in Italian and British-English, in terms of Head Acts and modification, from an intracultural, cross-cultural and intercultural perspective, and the impact of (perceptions of) the sociopragmatic factors of social distance and weight of imposition of the request on participants' strategy choice. This study employed roleplays to elicit linguistic performance preferences, follow-up retrospective interviews to unearth participants' understandings of such variables and evaluations of linguistic behaviours, and evaluative surveys to help triangulate the interview data. The roleplay data was analysed by using a coding scheme based on Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), while interview data was analysed by using content analysis, and the evaluative surveys were examined by using quantitative analysis and content analysis. The findings reveal that the British-English speakers generally paid more attention to the perceived weight of requests and exhibited a preference for negative politeness strategies that avoid/reduce imposition on the hearer. Conversely, the Italian speakers were overall more influenced by social distance and oriented toward positive politeness moves that invoke the hearer's solidarity. These cross-cultural differences were reflected in the intercultural interactions, since the Italian Ss showed they prefer more moves that invoke solidarity. Yet, the intercultural data also showed a different phenomenon, i.e. of intercultural mediation between L1 and L2 cultural phenomena by the Italian Ss.

Chapter 1 Introduction

The starting point of this thesis is the acknowledgment that language and culture are deeply intertwined. The way people communicate is not only a matter of their linguistic system and structures, but also of how the use of such resources is shaped by the underpinning culture. Indeed, socio-cultural-embedded values and beliefs about appropriate behaviour can influence how speakers use language to communicate and how they perceive, interpret and evaluate context, relationships and their own and other's linguistic behaviour. This means that people from different cultural backgrounds may not only have different ways of communicating, but also perceive, interpret, understand and therefore evaluate a certain linguistic choice differently, according to different sets of values (e.g. Ogiermann, 2009a,b; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2016; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021; Wierzbicka, 2003).

Research in the fields of pragmatics, cross-cultural and intercultural pragmatics has highlighted important differences in speech act realisation strategies and the perception of contextual variables across languages and cultures (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Haugh, 2017; Ogiermann, 2009a,b; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2016; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021; Wierzbicka, 2003). This is especially true for requests, which are potentially face-threatening acts (Edmondson, 1981) whose performance is dependent on culturally-derived perceptions of variables, such as (un)familiarity between interlocutors and weight of the request, rights and responsibilities behind such requests (Spencer-Oatey, 2008; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021) and related expectations of compliance attached to them (Márquez et al. 2005). Hence, request realisation preferences represent an important expression of cultural behaviour which is worth investigating to understand such nuances, and its study is particularly relevant for politeness research (e.g. House, 2012; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021).

Considering the multicultural world we live in today, where intercultural encounters happen daily, it is important to unpack these cultural subtleties, and even more the reasons behind them, in terms of linguistic repertoires, perceptions and evaluations. This is because the more people become aware that the way one communicates is deeply influenced by their own culture, the more we can overcome stereotypes about socio-cultural groups, such as that certain groups are, for instance, more direct/indirect, cold/warm or polite/impolite than others (e.g. Culpeper & Gillings, 2018; Zamborlin, 2004).

Though speech acts and the related politeness phenomenon have been widely investigated in many languages, and especially in the English (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Stewart, 2005), and German languages (e.g. House, 2006), there are still many under-investigated languages in this respect, both intraculturally and cross/interculturally (House, 2012).

Hence, more research is required to investigate speech act realisation and politeness phenomena across cultures, from different perspectives. At an intracultural and cross-cultural level, more research is needed to tease out the strategies employed by different lingua-cultures and whether there are similarities or differences and of what sort. At an intercultural level, more studies are needed to bring to light whether and how cross-cultural differences are reflected in the intercultural communication between people with different native languages, and with what consequences. However, to fully understand the politeness phenomena, it is also necessary to investigate not only what forms are available in each language, but also what are the factors and reasons influencing speakers' linguistic choice among different options, and how speakers understand and perceive such elements. Since these understandings and perceptions can vary across cultures, and they influence speakers' choices and their evaluation of own/others' linguistic behaviours (e.g. Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003), unpacking these dynamics and the underlying values is fundamental for understanding any cross and/or intercultural differences in linguistic behaviour and overcome any intercultural misunderstandings and stereotyping. Yet, the evaluative process has been mostly neglected in pragmatic research (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021).

In view of this, this thesis investigates whether and how perception of sociopragmatic variables, such as social distance (D) and weight of imposition of the request (W), alongside related rights and obligations (Spencer-Oatey, 2008; Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003), influence interlocutors' linguistic choices in making requests and their evaluations of behaviours, by focusing on the language-pair of Italian and British-English. The investigation adopts a multiple (intra, cross and intercultural) approach, which allows for teasing out these lingua-cultures' preferences, understandings and underpinning reasons, for cross-comparing them, and for examining whether and with what consequences such cross-cultural

differences impact the intercultural interactions, and employs dyadic roleplays, follow-up individual retrospective interviews and evaluative surveys.

The focus on this language-pair is due to the following reasons. Firstly, the interest stems from the fact that the author's mother tongue is Italian, though she lives in England, which means that she experiences the impact of her own and the new home country's culture on ways of communicating on a daily basis. In turn, this also implies that there are many analytic advantages in studying this language-pair, such as special access to the communities studied, linguistic expertise and pragmatic knowledge. Secondly, though there is research that shows that politeness systems function differently in the Italian and the British-English lingua-cultures (e.g. Molinelli, 2019; Venuti, 2020 on Italian. Stewart, 2005; Márquez et al. 2005 on British-English), there is no work that shows how such differences in politeness systems translate into dissimilarities in terms of linguistic production and perceptions of linguistic behaviour. Hence, this project looks at the effect that such diversities in politeness systems have on these two lingua-cultures' linguistic production, perceptions and evaluations of context and linguistic choices. Finally, in doing so, this study also joins recent efforts to expand the investigation to other languages, since there is not, to the author's knowledge, any systematic work that thoroughly considers the Italian language, nor the Italian and British-English language-pair, in the above terms. Though some research (e.g. Márquez Reiter et al. 2005; Venuti, 2020; Pozzuoli, 2015) has investigated British-English and Italian speakers' linguistic strategies, no one has conducted a cross-cultural or intercultural study of this language-pair that explores what are the factors influencing and the reasons behind their linguistic behaviour that can explain any cross and intercultural differences.

Therefore, this thesis attempts to fill this gap, by examining this under-investigated language-pair and by focusing not only on strategies, but also and most importantly on the underpinning factors and reasons influencing linguistic choices and the evaluative process behind such choices. In doing so this study adopts an interactional approach to politeness that focuses on participants' understandings/evaluations, to unpack the relationship between culture and language, and specifically on how culture manifests through language usage and on how this language in use is interpreted/evaluated by the interactants (Haugh, 2017).

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 offers the literature review, which is subdivided into three sections. The first section focuses on pragmatics, and covers speech act theory and indirectness, the notion of culture and of socio-moral order, and pragmatic approaches based on a socio-cultural view. The second section deals with politeness, starting from Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, its limitations and the solutions offered to such limitations, to examine key concepts such as sociopragmatic variables, rights and obligations and then introducing the interactional approach adopted in this study. The third section provides an overview of research on Italian, alongside of cross and intercultural studies on Italian and British-English request realisation strategies. Chapter 3 details the methodology, providing information about participants, data collection and data analysis, by distinguishing among the different (intra, cross and intercultural) approaches and the different methods employed (i.e. roleplays, retrospective interviews and evaluative surveys). The data analysis, together with the discussion, is divided into four chapters, according to the different datasets. The intracultural analysis – Italian (chapter 4) and British-English (chapter 5) – examines the request realisation strategies employed by the two groups under investigation, according to different levels of D and W. The cross-cultural analysis (chapter 6) compares the results of the intracultural analyses and, by drawing on the retrospective interviews data, focuses on the differences that emerged between the two socio-cultural groups, in terms of participants' perceptions and evaluations of such variables and of linguistic behaviour and of underlying reasons. The intercultural analysis (chapter 7) investigates the request realisation strategies employed by the Italian and the British-English speakers when interacting with each other in English and examines whether and how their strategy choice was influenced by their understanding of D and W and, most importantly, whether a difference in choices, and in reasons behind them, was detectable across the two sets of informants. A closing chapter (8) draws the final conclusions, highlighting the contribution offered by this investigation and the implications that it has for future research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As the focus of this research is on requests, cultural variation and politeness-related issues, the following chapter is divided into three parts. The first part deals with pragmatics (and speech act theory), the notion of culture and of socio-moral order, offering an account of different pragmatic approaches based on a cultural view. The second part focuses on politeness, by examining Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory and its limitations, the possible solutions, key concepts for this project, such as sociopragmatic variables, rights and obligations and (in)directness/(im)politeness, for then introducing the approach of this study. Finally, the third part provides an overview of related intracultural, cross-cultural and intercultural studies.

2.2 Pragmatics

There are two main views on pragmatics, the Anglo-American and the Continental view (Huang, 2017), though this geographical divide has been challenged (Levinson, 1983; see also Verschueren, 2017). The first view is also called the narrow view, as it sees pragmatics as a theory of language, separated from, but at the same time interconnecting with, linguistic signs (syntax), the things they describe (semantics) and their users/interpreters (see Morris, 1938). Pragmatics, in such a narrow sense, is usually considered part of linguistics, and it is identified with studies on topics such as speech acts, presuppositions, implicatures and inferences, and can be related to a "micro" view of context. The second view is also called the broad view, as it considers pragmatics as a socio-cultural perspective on the usage of linguistic phenomena, hence being a superordinate field encompassing linguistics, sociology and psychology (Haugh, 2017; Culpeper & Haugh, 2014). Within this view pragmatics focuses on the interconnection and mutual influence between socio-cultural elements, such as context and knowledge, and language, therefore entailing a "macro" approach to context.

Based on this wider viewpoint, pragmatics is defined as the study of language in use and, also, of what people mean, by either saying and not saying (Haugh, 2017), or as "the cognitive, social, and cultural science of language and communication",

which deals with cognitive-based language use of language forms, “taking place in a social world with a variety of cultural constraints” (Verschuere, 2009, 1).

Pragmatics, though in its traditional narrow sense used to focus on the utterance only (i.e. on the speech act), in its broader sense shares with discourse analysis a focus on language use that goes beyond the utterance (Blitvich & Sifianou, 2019), i.e. that study not only the use of speech acts, but also how these are combined into speech act sequences in interactional contexts (Barron & Schneider, 2014). Pragmatics, from this standpoint, is based on three key concepts: meaning (making), context (which includes socio-cultural elements) and communication, and its study necessarily interrelates with Speech act theory (section 2.2.1), with the concept of culture (section 2.2.2) and with politeness studies (section 3).

There are two main types of approach to pragmatics: the social and the cognitive. Social pragmatics provides analyses of interactive communicative behaviours with reference to features of context and interpersonal relations, whereas cognitive pragmatics explains the specific cognitive mechanisms by which individuals assign meaning and significance to pragmatic forms (Žegarac & Pennington, 2008). These approaches are complementary, which is why researchers are increasingly attempting to theorise pragmatics from a socio-cognitive perspective (e.g. Kecskes, 2014). The notion that pragmatic acts are influenced by socio-cultural elements involves two assumptions: that each language has its own pragmatic conventions, with ways/norms for how to choose among the linguistic resources available, and that pragmatic acts are subject to interpretation and evaluation according to the socio-culturally constituted norms, assumptions, and frames of reference dominant within a speech community (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016). As increasingly highlighted in pragmatics scholarship (e.g. Kádár & Haugh, 2013), evaluations of language use are closely linked to speakers’ sense of socially and morally correct behaviour. Such processes of evaluation can be amplified in intercultural communication (McConachy, 2019), since pragmatic interpretation involves not only understanding what speech act the speaker is trying to perform but also un/conscious judgements about appropriateness (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016). Therefore, it is pivotal to combine both approaches to fully grasp how language is used, what the driving reasons are for certain linguistic choices and evaluations, and how this is related to politeness.

2.2.1 Speech act theory

The foundation of Speech act theory (SAT) lies in Austin's ([1962]1975) work, who introduced the concept of 'performative' utterance (i.e. speech act), for which any utterance we issue does not simply describe what we are saying, but can also represent the performance of an action (i.e. by saying "I ask you to do X", I am requesting the hearer to do something). The performance of such actions can be successful (or felicitous) only if they meet certain 'felicity conditions'. Firstly, the existence of conventional procedures that produce conventional effects and the appropriateness of the people involved and of the circumstances, as specified in such procedures. Secondly, the execution, according to such procedures is correct and complete. Thirdly, the people involved need to have the requisite thoughts/feelings/intentions that are required in these procedures. Additionally, Austin ([1962]1975) elaborated on the structure of an utterance, distinguishing amongst three aspects. The locutionary act, representing "the act of 'saying something'" ([1962]1975, 14), i.e. the production of the expression. The illocutionary act, representing the performance of the locutionary act "in saying something" ([1962]1975, 99), e.g. requesting, also called the illocutionary force, which is based on conventionality. The perlocutionary act, i.e. the effect, in terms of feelings, thoughts and actions brought about with the locutionary act. This last concept is particularly relevant in the case of politeness studies and even more in case of pragmatic failure, where the effect of a pragmatically failed performance of a speech act can potentially lead, among other things, to a negative evaluation of this performance in terms of impolite linguistic behaviour. Indeed, as observed by Levinson (1983, 241), "what is a perlocution in one culture might not be an illocution in another" (Levinson, 1983). Yet, the issue of the uptake of the addressee, including how s/he understands the content and also the force of the utterance, has been neglected by Austin (Levinson, 1983).

Austin's work was further systematised by Searle (1969, 1979), who defined the felicity conditions as not just dimensions where utterances can go wrong, but as constitutive rules that link the illocutionary force to the corresponding act, one of which is that the speaker intends to convey a meaning/illocutionary force to the recipient, and that the recipient recognises the speaker's intention. He identified four types of felicity conditions: propositional content, preparatory conditions,

sincerity conditions and the essential condition, i.e. that uttering a certain illocutionary force indicating device X counts as doing speech act Y.

However, one of the main critiques of SAT lies in the fact that, since the illocutionary force pertains to the realm of action, it should not be treated as a theory of meaning, as elaborated by Searle, but rather as a theory of action that anchors the study of speech acts (and their possible different forces) to context (Levinson, 1983), within the realm of linguistic communication/social interaction (Bierwisch, 1980).

Searle (1969, 1979) also distinguished between direct and indirect speech acts, the latter referring to ways of communicating where “it is possible for the speaker to say one thing and mean that but also to mean something else” (Searle, 1979, 31), which can be used as a means for ‘strategic indeterminacy’ (Leech, 1977, 6). That is, the meaning is intentionally indeterminate so that it can be negotiated between speaker and hearer, plus it “protects both parties from the embarrassment in explicit non-compliance” (Ervin-Tripp, 1976, 51).

According to Searle (1979), indirect meaning, i.e. the nonliteral primary illocutionary point, is conveyed by use of a different literal secondary illocutionary act. The processing of this meaning, which goes beyond what is actually said, relies on its interpretation, by means of Grice’s (1969) conversational implicatures and of shared background information, which allow the hearer to infer the unsaid meaning. Nevertheless, this explanation works only on an intracultural level, as it does not take into consideration that the inferencing can be problematic in case of intercultural encounters, for lack of shared common ground.

Further, Searle (1979, 36) identified within the directive speech acts (e.g. requests) the most useful area for studying indirectness, considering that people, because of “ordinary conversational requirements of politeness”, would prefer to use indirect means to reach their illocutionary ends. Hence he categorised conventionalised forms of indirect directives for explaining how the hearer can infer the unsaid speaker meaning. Though research has argued that this assertion may be Anglocentric and does not take into consideration that different cultures may have different communicative styles and preferences (e.g. Wierzbicka, 2003; Ogiermann, 2009a), nonetheless Searle’s (1979) theorisation has represented a milestone in pragmatics and in tracing the interconnection between indirectness and politeness, at least from an Anglophone point of view. Particularly in the case of requests, the

use of indirect forms (e.g. checking on availability questions, as in “can you pass the salt?”) is preferable because it theoretically leaves the option of refusing, and therefore compliance “can be made to appear a free act rather than obeying a command” (Searle, 1979, 48), honouring the most prominent British-English cultural values of autonomy and non-imposition (e.g. Culpeper & Gillings, 2018; Márquez Reiter et al., 2005; Sifianou, 2005; Wierzbicka, 2003).

2.2.1.1 Indirectness and politeness

The assumption of a straightforward association between indirectness and politeness has been criticised by many authors (e.g. Blum-Kulka, 1987; Mills & Grainger, 2016; Ogiermann, 2009a; Wierzbicka, 2009), who claim that in certain cultures directness is positively associated with values such as honesty and frankness and is preferred over non-imposition (Venuti, 2020), and is therefore considered polite. For example, as observed by Mills and Grainger (2016), who interviewed bilingual speakers to understand their views on certain linguistic choices made by British and Zimbabwean-English participants in roleplays involving different types of interactions (e.g. requesting, changing arrangements), while directness can be associated with economy and intimacy, and reflects an optimistic view about what can be asked of others, indirectness can be negatively associated with ambiguity. This is because politeness has more to do with conventionalisation than with indirectness (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Terkourafi, 2015), which means that different lingua-cultures might have different conventionalised forms to express politeness, or they may have different perceptions of what stands for directness or indirectness (Meier, 1995a). Indeed, any expression can become conventionalised if it is employed with a certain use relative to a specific context frequently enough to be able to achieve clearly and transparently a particular illocutionary goal in that context. Through conventionalisation we learn that way X to achieve Z in a context W is the right way of doing things (e.g. requesting) in a certain type of context. Hence conventionalisation is inherently evaluative, and it is a frequency and habit-based concept, which allows for any expression to be conventionalised, regardless of its degree of in/directness (Terkourafi, 2015). This means that indirectness is only one of the possible ways to achieve politeness, since this can also be achieved with more direct forms, according to the conventionalised/repeated usage associated with such forms in a certain lingua-culture.

This also implies that even those indirect structures, because of their conventionalisation, may not really be (and perceived as) indirect at all. Rather, “their perceived “indirect”-ness may just be an artifact of an ideological commitment to denotational explicitness as the prototypical way people communicate” (Lempert, 2012, 185). Furthermore, the degree of optionality embedded within indirect forms “is illusive since once the slightest hint is dropped, the hearer feels compelled to take it up and offer what the speaker is too reluctant to ask for. Ignoring such a hint would be impolite, therefore, an indirect request may put more pressure on the hearer than would a straightforward one” (Ogiermann, 2009b, 192-3). In other words, as firstly underlined by Blum-Kulka (1987), indirectness can be perceived as being as rude as directness, though for different reasons (see also House, 1986; Terkourafi, 2015). Additionally, indirectness can be achieved in different ways, “depending on the expectations and interpretive repertoires that participants bring to the encounter” (Mills & Grainger, 2016, 32), which are culturally dependent. For instance, in English indirectness is usually realised through means that convey optionality for the hearer and avoid imposition (e.g. Brown and Levinson, 1987). Indirectness has also various interpersonal functions in communication -such as avoiding face loss or responsibility, or negotiating relationships - of which achieving politeness is just one (Haugh, 2014; see also Sifianou, 2005; Terkourafi, 2014). Hence, indirectness feeds into politeness only in certain cases, and for certain cultures, but this is not always true, due to cultural variation. Furthermore, as Liddicoat and McConachy (2019, 6) observed, “deviations from expectations of politeness do not involve a simple opposition of ‘polite’ versus ‘impolite’ behaviour but rather ‘polite’ practices enter into complex possibilities of rapport management” (see section 2.2.4.2 on rapport management), which can lead to different understandings of a certain linguistic behaviour, for instance in terms of friendliness.

It is for all these reasons that the equation that indirectness equals politeness has to be questioned.

2.2.1.2 Speech acts and cultural variation

As mentioned, different lingua-cultures may have different linguistic resources to achieve politeness, depending on the conventionalised forms available. How cultural variation can influence speech act realisation strategies, particularly in

terms of in/directness, has been explored by the Cross-Cultural Speech Acts Realisation Project (CCSARP, Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

This project examined requests and apologies across eight different languages. It was based on Searle's (1969, 1979) idea of intentionality, but also drew on Bierwisch (1980) view, which anchored the study of speech acts within linguistic communication/social interaction. This study represented a milestone in cross-cultural pragmatics, as it showed that different lingua-cultures employ different levels of in/directness in requesting or apologising. However, since the methods used were written DCTs to investigate request forms, only speakers' linguistic choices were examined. This means that recipients' uptake (i.e. their understanding or evaluation of speaker's intention) could not be an object of investigation, since the DCTs were not followed by interviews with the participants, to tease out their evaluation.

2.2.2 Pragmalinguistics and Sociopragmatics

In line with a broader view on pragmatics, we can also distinguish between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Pragmalinguistics focuses on the linguistic forms capable of conveying particular communicative functions or indexing pragmatic meanings in a given language (Marmaridou, 2011). Sociopragmatics focuses on the use of language in context, or, in Marmaridou's (2011) words, on the social conditions of language use, i.e. on how contextual elements, such as relationship between interactants, age, situations, culture-specific perceptions of rights and obligations and of the imposition of a particular speech act influence the use of the language. Thus, the focus is "on the construction and understanding of meanings arising from interactions between language (or other semiotic resources) and socio-cultural phenomena" (Culpeper, 2021, 27). In this sense, sociopragmatic knowledge informs assessments of appropriateness based on contextual elements, which influence the linguistic choice among different resources and its interpretation, and in doing so it carries an evaluative orientation (Marmaridou, 2011).

Put it simply, the choice of what linguistic resources to use is a pragmalinguistic issue, whereas the choice to mitigate the linguistic use depends on culturally-influenced assessments of communicative context, participant relations, etc., and relates to sociopragmatics (Nuzzo, 2007). The fact that languages differ both with

respect to pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic norms means that it is important to analyse linguistic performance and how participants themselves make sense of it.

2.2.3 Pragmatics, culture and the socio-moral order

We could therefore say that pragmalinguistics is closer to 'language' whereas sociopragmatics is closer to 'culture'. Yet, what do we exactly mean by culture? Unpacking the significance of this concept is pivotal for this intra/cross and intercultural investigation, and is the object of this section.

As observed by Spencer-Oatey & Franklin (2009), culture is a fuzzy concept, extremely difficult to define. Amongst the many definitions offered, the key points that characterise culture are defined by the authors as: its manifestation through various types of patterns and uses; its association with social groups; its influence on people's behaviour and the interpretation and evaluation of such behaviours; its acquisition and construction by means of interaction with others (see also Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021).

From another perspective, culture can be identified in terms of a set of: products, i.e. 'codified' aspects of culture, such as language systems, which is relatable to Sewell's (1999) definition of culture as a system of symbols and meanings; practices, i.e. regularities of behaviour, patterns enacting such products; perspectives, i.e. deep-rooted and usually unconscious attitudes, values, beliefs about life and other cultural norms (e.g. having respect for the elderly) (Spencer-Oatey & Žegarac, 2018). In such terms 'culture' reminds us of Bourdieu's (1991, 12) concept of habitus, defined as "a set of [inculcated] dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways", which "generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are 'regular', without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any 'rule'". While practices and products are visible, perceptions are usually hidden, though they can be teased out by using metapragmatic comments. However, the essence of culture has more to do with perspectives (Banks, 2010), i.e. with how members of a certain socio-cultural group understand, interpret and use their products and practices, since such products and practices do not necessarily mean the same thing for everyone. People make sense of them by drawing on their prior knowledge which, according to schema theory (Bartlett, [1932]1995; Schank & Abelson, 1977), is "psychological material", deriving from personal and cultural experiences, "organised by some active tendency" (Bartlett, [1932]1995, 231) and stored and retrieved from long-term memory (i.e. schema,

frames, scripts), which enable us to infer meaning and interpret the provided information. This implies that different persons, both within and across cultural groups, may perceive the same products and practices in different ways.

Most recently Spencer-Oatey and Kádár (2021, 45), building on all those key elements and drawing on Spencer-Oatey's (2008) and Ting-Toomey and Dorjee's (2019) definitions, redefined culture as "a complex set of meaning systems that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, schemas, norms, and symbols, that are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a social group and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour". In other words, they recognise culture as a determining factor in shaping interactions, behaviours and interpretations of such behaviours and expectations related to them, yet they also acknowledge different degrees of influence and individual variability.

This idea of meaning systems made of cultural patterns relates with the idea of (socio-)moral order.

The idea of moral order was firstly applied to pragmatics by Kádár and Haugh (2013), who defined it as a set of taken for granted expectations, informed by culturally-embedded moral values and beliefs, based on prior knowledge, on what constitutes appropriate behaviours in interactions (see also Mills, 2017; van der Bom & Mills, 2015). The moral order is orderly, because it entails that people "expect the structure and style of interactions to unfold in what they perceive as an 'orderly' way" (Kádár et al. 2019, 9). In this sense, the moral order is "a culture-specific ideology about what counts as right or wrong" (Culpeper & Tantucci, 2021, 148; see also Kádár & Márquez Reiter, 2015; Márquez Reiter, 2022), which necessarily presupposes interaction, since it is a situated manifestation of moral values and morality, intended as abstract foundations that are constructed through language use and evaluation (Blitvich & Kádár, 2021). This implies that what is considered (im)moral behaviour is subject to discursive struggle (Márquez Reiter & Haugh, 2019), and shows that "moral evaluations are socioculturally constructed" (Márquez Reiter, 2022, 31), since the moral and social aspects are intertwined. While the former reflects expectations about how contextually-based interpersonal encounters should unfold – hence moralizing judgments entail the assessment of some behaviour as infringing such expectations (Márquez Reiter & Haugh, 2019; see also Márquez Reiter & Orthaber, 2018) –, the latter relates to the underlying

perceptions of how and why such interactions should happen in such ways (Márquez Reiter & Kádár 2022).

Spencer-Oatey & Kádár (2021) developed the concept of moral order by proposing the idea of socio-moral order as a continuum, constituted by two types of norms. Descriptive norms and behavioural conventions (e.g. not interrupting others), which have no strong moral connotation and which relate to the social end. Injunctive norms and ethical requirements (e.g. avoid harming others), which proscribe morally charged rules and which relate to the moral end (on the moral order, see also Kádár et al. 2019; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2016). According to this new reformulation, it is the social order the most likely to be subject to cultural variation, hence to influence how people think and communicate, interpret and evaluate their own and others' linguistic behaviour. Yet, because these two orders are on a continuum, this implies that the (socio-moral) values guiding people's behavioural choices reflect on how such people understand and evaluate behaviour. Values are abstract constructs that, consciously or unconsciously, reflect people's preferences for behavioural choices and are the result of socio-cultural patterning, informed by socio-cultural (interactional and interpretative) norms, perceptions of rights and obligations and schemas (i.e. conceptualisations of situational contexts). This means that people from different cultural backgrounds may give different importance or emphasis to different/same values and hence evaluate the same (linguistic) behaviour differently (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). Moreover, how people think/interpret is also influenced by and is a reflection of a sort of linguistic/cultural heritage, made up of language systems and practices. Thus, language "is constituent not only of cultures, but of perceptions of cultures (our own and others') and the processes by which we make sense of ourselves and others" (Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013, 9). In turn, "language use is a highly dynamic and situated phenomenon that is actively constructed and interpreted by participants on the basis of morally charged expectations about language use relative to roles, relationships, and situational context" (McConachy, 2019, 169). Hence to understand (linguistic) patterns of one group of speakers is necessary to understand the underpinning culture (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2019).

All this links with the concept of 'languaculture' (Agar, 1994), which highlights the interconnection between language system and culture, since the use of language resources, definable as a 'system of behaviours' (Tannen, 1987, 130), mirrors one

people' worldviews and values (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2019) and is influenced by cultural patterns (House & Kádár, 2021) and related expectations about appropriate behaviour.

Although culture, in terms of linguistic heritage, has been often associated with national boundaries, i.e. certain linguistic patterns and practices proper to a certain language and spoken in a certain nation are considered as representing a shared common knowledge of a certain national culture (McConachy & Spencer-Oatey, 2021), this idea is strongly challenged by the literature (e.g. Avruch, 1998; Holliday, 2013, 2016; Kádár & Haugh, 2013; Spencer-Oatey & Žegarac, 2018). The main criticism is that individuals are organised in different types of groups, according to different types of criteria that transcend nationality, such as organisational-institutional, kinship, social classes and "each of these groups can be a potential container for culture" (Spencer-Oatey & Žegarac, 2018, 6; in similar terms, Holliday 2013, 2016, on 'small cultures' and Avruch, 1998, on 'sub-cultures'). Other authors, such as Risager (2006), even challenge the automatic association of language with culture, arguing that only on a general and universal level these concepts are inseparable, whereas from a differential level, i.e. when analysing one language in relation to one culture, they should be separated, and empirical investigation should be conducted to identify what specific forms of culture are associated with a certain language, to demonstrate the connection between the two. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that every nation that shares the same language and the same socio-cultural and historical background is more likely to share experiences of communication, frames of discourse, views on interpersonal relationships and preferred linguistic behaviours (McConachy, 2019).

Yet, when considering interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds (object of intercultural pragmatics), the notion of culture takes on a slightly different meaning (McConachy & Spencer-Oatey, 2021). In such cases communication relies not on shared core common ground, but on the negotiation and co-construction of meaning and of so-called emergent common ground, transcending differences in culturally-embedded communicative preferences, patterns and attitudes (Kecskes 2014, 2015, 2017). This means that in intercultural pragmatics the focus is on how and to what extent culture may influence language use and its context-specific interpretation/evaluation (Spencer-Oatey & Žegarac,

2018; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). Indeed, if interactants are from different lingua-cultures they might have different (prior) cultural background knowledge, linguistic repertoires and patterns, values (priorities) and norms, and inferencing systems, hence they may differ in the construction of meaning of practices and behaviours (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016) and in the interpretation of contextual elements associated to specific communicative events (Pozzuoli, 2015). They may give different importance or emphasis to different/same values and hence evaluate the same (linguistic) behaviour differently (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). In other words, “to speak one language rather than another means to convey different cultural and social values” (Pozzuoli, 2015, 415). All such differences, and particularly mapping same/similar values onto different attitudes/behaviors or vice versa (Fischer & Schwartz, 2011), can affect intercultural communication, leading to intercultural misunderstandings (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021; Spencer-Oatey & Žegarac, 2018). This implicates that, while in intracultural encounters the sharedness enhances speakers’ smooth communication, intercultural interactions, where participants share no (or minimal) core common ground, require more mindfulness (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2019) on how to create emergent common ground that allows fluidity and avoid misunderstandings.

Further, the extent of these intercultural clashes will depend on the ‘cultural tightness-looseness’ (Gelfand et al. 2006) of the sociocultural groups under investigation, i.e. on the strength of their socio-cultural norms and on how much tolerance members of these groups have for deviation from them. This is particularly relevant for the field of politeness (section 3), where socio-cultural differences, in terms of different (hierarchies of) values, mentalities and beliefs, can lead to different social and politeness norms (House, 1998, 2015) and, in turn, to different levels of tolerance for deviation from them, depending on the ‘tightness’ or ‘looseness’ of the interactants’ culture (similarly, Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021).

2.2.4 Approaches to the study of lingua-cultures

As we have seen, the study of pragmatics necessarily entails understanding the impact that culture has on language use (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2019) and communication-related phenomena, such as perceptions, interpretations and evaluations of linguistic behaviours. To achieve this, it is pivotal to study different lingua-cultures, intraculturally and cross-culturally, to tease out any

similarities/differences in linguistic choices and the reason behind them. Indeed, though different lingua-cultures may have the same linguistic resources, they may understand them differently, hence employ them according to different reasons or values. Furthermore, to fully grasp the impact of one culture on language use, it is also fundamental to investigate how people from different lingua-cultures communicate among themselves, to unearth whether and to what extent one own's culture influences the intercultural encounter. According to the different perspective adopted and type of inquiry conducted in studying lingua-cultures, we can distinguish among cross-cultural (CCP), intercultural (ICP) and interlanguage (ILP) pragmatics approaches (e.g. Kecskes, 2012, 2014, 2017). CCP concentrates on how people from different communities interact, following their own socio-cultural rules and conventions, therefore focusing on comparing socio-cultural differences in communicative strategies, such as speech act realisation moves. ICP studies how people with different L1s (and usually from different cultural backgrounds) interact using a common language. In other words, CCP compares independently the interactional outcomes of different cultural groups (Spencer-Oatey, 2008), and therefore adopts an intracultural view, by analysing the discourse between people from the same cultural background, whereas ICP focuses on the interaction between members of two cultural groups. Finally, ILP focuses on the acquisition and use of pragmatic knowledge and competence in a second language, and in this sense is relatable to ICP, as ILP can manifest in an intercultural encounter.

Yet, it is important to note that cross-cultural and intercultural studies are to some extent intertwined. From a cross-cultural perspective, the idea of relativity of cultural priorities in terms of values, e.g. tact vs sincerity (Wierzbicka, 2003), can explain the differences in lingua-cultures' communicative styles and preferences (e.g. some favour more direct strategies, while others more indirect moves). Since the way we communicate is self-evidently natural only to us (Tannen, 1987), raising awareness of such differences on an intracultural level can enable a better understanding of the other's culture, which can impact positively on the intercultural interaction between the members of those different cultural groups. However, as Wierzbicka (2003) points out, "the crux of the matter lies in [paying attention to] the language in which the explanations are couched" (2003, 70). A frequent risk in cross-cultural pragmatics is to try to explain such differences using terminologies such as directness/indirectness, politeness/impoliteness, without

explaining what exactly they mean, but using them as if they were self-explanatory, without taking into account that a certain term may have different meanings or be interpreted differently in different cultures. For instance, and relevantly for this research, politeness is not seen and interpreted in the same way in the British-English and the Italian lingua-cultures, but rather, as we will see (section 3), this term entails different values for the two groups. Furthermore, terms such as “polite” and “cortese” [courteous] can have different connotations, and hence be interpreted in different ways, according to the cultural background of the interactants. ‘Polite’ behaviour could be seen as entailing ‘friendliness’, while this might not be the case for the equivalent “cortese” and “amichevole” and these terms could be understood as two separate concepts, where friendliness has nothing to do with politeness (Liddicoat & McConachy, 2019; Rieger, 2018). Therefore, when conducting a cross-cultural investigation, it is indispensable to consider that differences in meaning may be attached to the same or to different terms used within the same semantic field, though they may be used as synonyms.

2.2.4.1 Approaches to cross-cultural pragmatics

We can distinguish among different cross-cultural approaches (McConachy & Spencer-Oatey, 2021), depending on how they see context. A first, traditional approach focuses on the interactional level and views context (intended in terms of sociocultural variables) as unidirectionally influencing language choices. This view has been more recently integrated with a discursive perspective, which understands language use and context as mutually influencing each other, where language use is both dependent on context and context creating. These two approaches can be considered as taking a social perspective and can be complemented by a third approach to context, the cognitive approach (e.g. ethnopragmatics or the cultural scripts approach), which offers greater insights into the dynamic interrelation between context and language use, by focusing on the sociopragmatic dimension of language use, i.e. on how cultural patterns, assumptions and values influence how speech practices are expected to be carried out. Hence, a socio-cognitive approach is the best way to conduct cross-cultural investigation, since it allows for examining both linguistic usage and the underpinning socio-cultural elements influencing language choice.

2.2.4.2 Approaches to Intercultural pragmatics

As underlined by Haugh (2017), we can distinguish among three interrelated approaches to ICP, i.e. cognitive, critical and interactional, depending on their view on culture. The cognitive approach views culture as (pragmatic) knowledge, from which the success of the intercultural interaction depends. The critical approach views culture as a means for exercising power, regarding interactions as linguistic struggles. The interactional approach considers culture as a set of practices (i.e. “ways of doing, thinking, and categorizing people” Haugh, 2017, 3), and focuses on how such practices are implemented and evaluated in the intercultural interactions.

As with the majority of the studies in ICP (Haugh, 2017), this thesis adopts a combined cognitive-interactional perspective, since their focus is intertwined. Pragmatic knowledge influences linguistic choices, creating assumptions and expectations that lead to the establishment of certain linguistic practices and patterns, which in turn are enacted and evaluated according to the prior cultural knowledge that generated them in the first place. Therefore, such a combined approach allows for a thorough analysis of how intracultural prior knowledge, in terms of own socio-cultural-moral systems, preferences and practices may influence the intercultural encounters between British-English and Italian speakers when communicating in English, in terms of linguistic choices and evaluations of own/others’ linguistic behaviour. Conversely, a critical approach, by focusing on the idea of culture as an ideological resource for exercising power, would not allow this type of analysis.

Among the different cognitive-interactional perspectives, particularly relevant for this study are interactional pragmatics, sociopragmatics and interactional sociolinguistics, as the approach taken by this study focuses on request strategies’ performance and on interactants’ culturally-driven interpretations and evaluations. Interactional pragmatics (e.g. Chang & Haugh, 2011; Culpeper & Haugh, 2014; Haugh & Chang, 2015) focuses on (im)politeness and on understanding how linguistic practices are enacted and evaluated in situated intercultural interactions by the participants, according to their respective sociocultural backgrounds. Moving from the assumption that what stands for politeness is subject to ‘discursive struggle’ (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, 214), i.e. to interactants’ different evaluations, for which what is considered polite by A can be seen as impolite by B,

it focuses on the evaluative moments and moves from the idea of multiple understandings (see section 2.3.3.1). Similarly, sociopragmatics focuses on the interpersonal dimension of the intercultural encounter (e.g. McConachy & Spencer-Oatey, 2021; Spencer-Oatey, 2008; see also Locker & Watts, 2005), of which politeness is only one of the possible manifestations. This approach focuses on the 'relational work' (Locher & Watts, 2005, 10) undertaken by individuals to negotiate their relationships during the interaction and relies on Goffman's (1967) notion of face, for which face is discursively co-constructed during the interaction or, in Spencer-Oatey's (2000, 2008) words, it focuses on the 'rapport management'. That is, it studies how culturally-driven face sensitivities, interactional (transactional or relational) goals and perceptions of rights and obligations affect behavioural expectations based on behavioural conventions and values/beliefs-driven principles (Spencer-Oatey, 2008; Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003) and therefore participants' interpretations and evaluations (see section 2.3.2.1.4). Both approaches allow for the investigation of why a certain linguistic behaviour can be dissimilarly interpreted and evaluated by members of different cultural groups. Nevertheless, the idea of expectations based on behavioural conventions recalls the concept of "frame" (i.e., prior knowledge). Particularly, the frame-based approach (e.g. Terkourafi, 2001; Terkourafi, 2005a) concentrates on the idea that regular and unchallenged co-occurrences of certain linguistic formulae within certain types of contexts (e.g. the use of "what would you like" forms by a waitress in a restaurant situation) become encapsulated within a frame and create forms of 'default behaviour'. Thus, also Interactional Sociolinguistics (e.g. Gumperz, 1982; Tannen, 2006) will come into play because, by focusing on how to explain differences in inferencing meaning by means of socio-culturally-driven contextualised cues (where "context" here is comparable to the concept of "frame", as observed by Tannen, 2006, 349), it allows for investigating the assumptions behind such evaluations. Indeed, as Verschueren (2021, 128) observed, "all understanding is essentially 'framed'".

All these approaches have in common an interpersonal view on pragmatics, which is particularly relevant for this study, as it allows for focussing the analysis on two aspects of the interaction: the interpersonal socio-relations, which can manifest as expressions of intimacy, roles, rights and obligations, and the interpersonal attitudes, i.e. values and emotionally-driven behaviours and perspectives on

others' behaviour, which can manifest through evaluations, such as of sympathy, like/dislike, politeness/impoliteness (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014). Indeed, "the term 'interpersonal pragmatics' is used to designate examinations of the relational aspect of interactions between people that both affect and are affected by their understandings of culture, society, and their own and others' interpretations" (Locher & Graham, 2010, 2). Furthermore, interpersonal pragmatics has the advantage of being an open theoretical framework which, by drawing from other theories and disciplines, enables to adopt and merge different concepts to complement its theoretical and methodological stance to (im)politeness (Locher & Graham, 2021; Rieger, 2018), which is the object of the next section (3).

2.2.4.3 Interlanguage pragmatics and pragmatic transfer in intercultural communication

Since we argued (section 2.2.4) that ILP is relatable to ICP, because it can manifest in an intercultural encounter, this section focuses on the concept of "pragmatic transfer" (Selinker, 1972), originally developed in ILP, which refers to the fact that speakers are influenced by their mother tongue (L1) in the production of speech into another language (L2), by transferring, consciously or unconsciously, L1 knowledge and its linguistic features to L2 production. This happens because L1 linguistic items, rules and subsystems are "fossilizable" linguistic phenomena that "tend to remain as potential performance, reemerging in the productive performance of an IL [interlanguage] even when seemingly eradicated" (Selinker, 1972, 15). The concept of pragmatic transfer is relevant in ICP since it can explain why intercultural encounters are more likely subject to intercultural misunderstandings. That is, as language systems and use are linked, as we have seen, to culture and reflect cultural values and assumptions, transferring L1 linguistic systems and conventions into L2 production may also involve a L1 cultural-pragmatic transfer of meanings and values that may not match the corresponding L2 conventions and uses. This can lead to a mismatch between the L1 speaker's communicative behaviour and its underlining intention and how it is perceived and understood by the L2 hearer which, in the case of negative misinterpretation, can lead to misunderstandings and even stereotyping (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021; Tannen, 1987).

2.2.4.3.1 Pragmatic transfer vs multilingualism and multicompetence

Intercultural pragmatics researchers (e.g. Kecskes, 2010, 2014; McConachy, 2019; McConachy & Liddicoat, 2022; see also House & Rehbein, 2004, on multilingual communication) usually do not employ the notion of pragmatic transfer, which implies separation and independence between (fixed) linguistic systems and the fact that a bilingual speaker has two sets of pragmatic competence (L1 and L2). Rather, they tend to emphasise the ideas of multilingualism and multicompetence (Cook, 1992) of language users, for which multilingual speakers have one single, complex pragmatic system.

According to this view, since pragmatics is more socio-linguistically oriented, where linguistic choices are possible and not constrained by rules as rigid as the rules of grammar, speaking multiple languages does not entail a transfer from one language to another, but rather working with an integrated, complex setting of mappings between forms and context, which draws on different sociolinguistic/contextual rules according to the different languages involved (McConachy, 2019; McConachy & Liddicoat, 2022). This means that multilingual speakers may apply their understandings of the mappings between forms and context based on their experiences of communicating in one language to experiences of communicating in another language, hence constructing meanings drawing on different frameworks (McConachy, 2019; McConachy & Liddicoat, 2022; Kecskes, 2014).

Nevertheless, we can observe that this integrated system still draws on distinctive language systems, which may work differently and have different linguistic resources that map onto and convey different socio-cultural values (Pozzuoli, 2015, 415). Hence, we can argue that the idea of pragmatic transferability of resources from one language into another can still be useful in understanding intercultural pragmatics, as long as it is not intended in a rigid way, since this transferability is neither systematic, as it does not necessarily happen all the time, nor does it work unidirectionally, i.e. from L1 language system into L2 production, as it can work bidirectionally and in a more integrated way.

For what concerns the first point, since linguistic repertoires vary across languages and reflect cultural values, if a L1 linguistic convention or expression has no L2 equivalent with the same meaning and/or illocutionary force, L2 speakers might not be able to enact a pragmatic transfer from L1 to L2 production. In this case the L2 speakers might end up choosing to use other L2 forms which, according to their

L2 pragmatic knowledge, are considered appropriate to achieve their interactional goals in the L2. This particularly holds true for the use of L2 stereotyped conventional formulae, such as “please” in the English language (on the stereotype about 'please', see Culpeper & Gillings, 2018), which has the advantage of being a handy device for all kinds of requests (Göy et al., 2012), being an explicit means (Bella, 2012) that is easy to use to convey a requestive intention in an unambiguous way. This means that if L2 speakers are uncertain about how to appropriately request something in the L2, they might rely on the use of stereotypical polite formulae, such as “please”, to make sure that their intention is clearly and properly conveyed to the recipient.

If we consider that most pedagogical materials designed to teach request forms in L2 English are accompanied by this marker (Bella, 2012; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2012; Göy et al., 2012), and that even non-academic resources, such as online blogs or articles, directed to give travellers to England hints about how to speak in English stress the importance of using “please” (Culpeper & Gillings, 2018), this could explain why L2 English speakers may use such formulae. Furthermore, it can explain why they may end up even overusing “please” (Bella, 2012), in comparison with native speakers.

However, this use of stereotyped formulae could be problematic and cause intercultural problems. For instance “please”, because of its unambiguity (Ruytenbeek, 2021), can carry opposite meanings. As observed by House (1989), “please” has a dual function, since it serves as a mitigation device to convey politeness, but also functions as an illocutionary force indicator that signals the requestive force of the locution, making it transparent (see also Kádár & House, 2021). House (1989) also claimed that “please” is commonly employed in situations where interactants’ rights and obligations are clear (e.g. in a restaurant) or when the request involves a minimal imposition on the hearer (e.g. passing the salt at the dinner table), whereas it is not employed whenever the imposition is greater and/or the rights and obligations of the participants are not self-evident (see also Webman Shafran, 2019; Wichmann, 2004). This could imply that, while L2 English speakers might end up overusing this device, because, due to their limited and stereotyped L2 pragmatic knowledge, they simply see it as an easy-to-use, unambiguous and handy device that fits all types of requests, their native counterparts, because of their L1 English pragmatic knowledge, might not see it

necessarily in such terms. That is, by seeing “please” as also explicitly indexing the illocutionary force of a certain utterance as a request, the English native speakers might prefer to use other types of more indirect mitigation, such as more internal modifiers instead, as many research has shown (e.g. Barron, 2003; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2012; Göy et al., 2012), particularly when the imposition is higher and/or the rights and obligation are not clearly defined. Hence, if L2 English speakers employ “please” in making -what they think are- polite indirect requests in situations where, conversely, the L1 English speakers would not use this device to avoid marking the illocutionary force of the request as such and therefore putting the pressure on the recipients, who might feel compelled to not ignore the explicit hint (in line with this argument, see Ogiermann, 2009b), this could lead to intercultural misunderstandings. This shows that even if there is no pragmatic transfer, misunderstandings can still happen at the intercultural level, because of differences in L2 pragmatic knowledge between the L1 and the L2 speakers.

2.2.4.3.1.1 The intercultural style hypothesis

The fact that pragmatic transfer can work in different ways has been explained by Blum-Kulka’s (1991) ‘Intercultural Style Hypothesis’, according to which bilingual speakers may develop, in intercultural interactions, intercultural communicative patterns that reflect bi-directional interaction between their L1 and L2 (see also Cenoz, 2003). In such a case, according to Blum-Kulka (1991, 262), the intercultural interaction is performed drawing on three types of components:

- (1) A general pragmatic knowledgebase
- (2) Degree of sensitivity to target language specific pragmalinguistic constraints.
- (3) Degree of accommodation to the target culture's sociocultural norms.

According to this theory the L2 speaker, though firstly drawing on L1 pragmatic knowledge, combines it with awareness of L2 pragmatic knowledge and develops a middle way approach which takes into account and adapts to the pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics of the target language. In other words, those speakers may only partially enact a pragmatic transfer from L1 to L2, by merging their L1 and L2 pragmatic knowledge, to convey an interactional meaning which is appropriate and clear in the target L2 language (e.g., by using “please” to make unambiguous requests).

This bi-directionality can also explain why pragmatic transfer does not necessarily involve all aspects of speech act realisation in the same way or in the same direction. As many researchers (e.g. Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2012, 2016; Félix-Brasdefer, 2012; Göy et al., 2012; Nuzzo, 2007) have highlighted, L2 speakers experience more difficulty in handling internal modification in L2 production, because it is considered as requiring more L2 pragmatic knowledge, whereas they seem to find external modification less complex to use and more explicitly polite. This could explain why L2 speakers, if unable to transfer their L1 strategies into L2 production, may find it easier to employ L2 features, such as stereotyped conventionalised formulae, which only externally modify the speech act, therefore do not require particular L2 pragmalinguistic knowledge, to make the request unambiguous, rather than lexical or syntactical (internal) modification.

2.2.4.3.1.2 Intercultural mediation

The bi-directionality of pragmatic transfer can also be explicable in terms of “intercultural mediation” (Liddicoat, 2014; McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016), defined as the ability to explain cultural events “that involves critical comparison of cultural phenomena, a recognition of the relativity of cultural concepts and the negotiation of meaning within and across cultural frames” (Liddicoat, 2014, 260). As mediation encompasses both analysis and performance (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), it requires awareness (or mindfulness) of one’s own cultural positioning and the capability to detach from it to be able to interpret cultural phenomena taking into account also the other’s cultural perspective. Thus, intercultural mediation is linked with the idea of (metapragmatic) awareness, which “enables interlocutors to continually map their purposes onto both their own language production and their reception of their partners’ language production” (Caffi, 2005, 89). Intercultural mediation unfolds as “a process where the individual makes a conscious effort to consider the cultural frames that shape interpretation of pragmatic acts in each language, how these differ across languages, and what the consequences of these differences are for use of these languages in intercultural communication” (Liddicoat & McConachy, 2016, 17). In this sense, it can be defined as an “act of translation between cultural frameworks in which the values and assumptions of each framework are attended to” (Liddicoat, 2014, 271). This could explain why L2 English speakers, when using L2 in intercultural encounters, and particularly with L1 English speakers, may choose to adapt their L2 production by drawing from both

their L1 and L2 pragmatic knowledge, i.e. as a consequence of such a process of translation and negotiation, to make sure to attend to the other's cultural perspective and convey the message appropriately and clearly. Indeed, such a process of 'accommodation' (Haugh & Kádár, 2017, 615) is pivotal in intercultural communication (Incelli, 2013).

2.2.5 Summary

To conclude, CCP, ICP and ILP are intertwined and can overlap, as in the present study. Hence why it is relevant to study languages from different perspectives, to have a full and real grasp of cross-cultural similarities/differences in communicative styles between lingua-cultures and of how they can impact on the intercultural interactions. The attention of this thesis is on understanding the relationship between culture and language, and specifically how culture manifests through language usage and how this language in use is interpreted/evaluated by the interactants (Haugh, 2017). By focusing on participants' evaluations, it aims to tease out how any similarities/differences in cross-cultural interpretations and evaluations of the same linguistic behaviour may manifest in intercultural interactions and with what consequences, especially in terms of (im)politeness evaluations.

2.3 Politeness

Politeness as a socio-cultural phenomenon has been studied since 1970s within pragmatics, and more recently, other disciplines/fields, such as psychology and anthropology (Brown, 2017; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021).

Politeness as a concept can be defined in different ways and, possibly because of this, definitions of this phenomenon are very scarce in the literature (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). Kádár and Haugh (2013) deliberately broadly define it as a "key means by which humans work out and maintain interpersonal relationships (...) encompassing all types of interpersonal behaviour through which we take into account the feelings of others as to how they think they should be treated" (2013, 1). However, scholars such as Meier (1995a, 1995b), have argued that politeness is not even a useful working concept, because it implies the problematic issue of on what ground its measurement is based. Indeed, attempting to determine universal standards of politeness carries a danger of ethnocentricity, since the term

“polite/ness” might not even exist in other languages, or it may have different connotations, or the value given to the concept itself may vary. More recently, Spencer-Oatey and Kádár (2021) proposed a definition of politeness in terms of its main distinctive characteristics, i.e. as a relational phenomenon that follows (linguistic) patterns, means different things to different people and comes into existence in interaction, but also by not engaging in interaction, which can as well lead to politeness evaluations. From this we understand that one of the main features of politeness, for how we intend it, is its intrinsic evaluativeness of behaviour.

Additionally, from an intercultural perspective, politeness is also both an interactional and an extra-interactional phenomenon, as it is influenced by elements, such as context and preconceived attitudes, which are not interactional per se, though they are brought into the exchange by the interlocutors. Spencer-Oatey and Kádár’s (2021) definition has the importance of highlighting that, even if politeness is often associated with ‘proper’ social conduct¹ (Brown, 2017, 3; see also Hernández Flores, 1999; Kádár & Márquez Reiter, 2015; Mills, 2017; van der Bom & Mills, 2015), its intrinsic evaluativeness implies that it can mean different things to different people, as the idea of appropriateness is subject to different understandings, interpretations and evaluations. This holds particularly true from a cross-cultural/intercultural perspective, where interactants from different socio-cultural backgrounds’ perceptions, understandings and evaluations of appropriateness are influenced by their culturally-embedded socio-moral orders. Put it another way, as (im)polite behaviour is interpreted within the frame of moral agency, “politeness is the verbal realization of morality” (Blitvich & Kádár, 2021, 395), therefore its evaluation is morally charged and can vary across lingua-cultures.

Indeed, if Anglophone cultures seem to value more autonomy and non-imposition (e.g. Wierzbicka, 2003; Ogiermann, 2009a; Zinken & Ogiermann, 2013) other cultures, as for instance the Italian culture, appear to be more inclined toward showing warmth and cooperativeness. It is symptomatic of this that Mariottini (2007, 9) defines ‘*cortesía*’ [courtesy] as all those linguistic structures employed to

¹ The majority of research considers politeness as appropriate behaviour. However, on the difference between politeness and appropriateness, as the latter does not necessarily entail politeness, see Locher and Watts (2005).

convey a respectful and cooperative behaviour². This could entail that, if English and Italian people interact among themselves by drawing on their values and beliefs about what is appropriate, they could end up misunderstanding each other's intention, i.e. the English could find the Italian person too invasive of their own space, whereas the Italians could find the English person too cold (along these lines, on English and Polish, see Wierzbicka, 2009). That is why it is fundamental to tease out the values and reasons behind certain linguistic choices and evaluations, because it is only in this way that we can enable smooth intercultural communication and we can avoid stereotyping about cultures.

From this viewpoint, an interactional/interpersonal approach to politeness is foremost, because it allows for studying politeness as a dynamic process, by moving from the idea that the evaluation of appropriateness is dependent on the socio-cultural context and situational factors and thus it can vary across cultures because of their different social orientation (Zinken & Ogiermann, 2013) toward conceptualisations and actualisations of polite behaviour.

Drawing from these postulates, this section examines the relevant theories on the politeness phenomenon, by offering an overview of Brown and Levinson's (1987) founding contribution to politeness theory and its limitations, and by outlining the interactional approach to politeness, whose adoption can overcome such drawbacks.

2.3.1 Brown and Levinson's politeness theory

In terms of the role certain factors play in influencing linguistic behaviour (and consequently its evaluation), it is important to acknowledge Brown and Levinson's (1987) contribution to politeness theory, who have highlighted how speech act realisation strategies, and particularly requests, are influenced by face needs and by sociopragmatic factors.

Drawing on Goffman's (1955, 213) notion of face, defined as the "positive social value a person effectively claims for himself", Brown and Levinson (1987) developed this concept and distinguished between two kinds of desires/faces: for one's actions to be appreciated and approved of (positive face, which is similar to Goffman's) and to be free (not impeded) in one's actions (negative face). On the same vein, they adopted Leech's (1983, 81 ff) distinction between negative and

² "Con 'cortesia' si indicano tutte quelle strutture ricorrenti nella lingua scritta e parlata che manifestano un comportamento comunicativo cooperativo e rispettoso."

positive politeness, where the former aims to “minimise expression of impolite beliefs” to readdress a negative face and the latter aims to “maximise expression of polite beliefs” to satisfy a positive face, and claimed that any rational agent employs negative and/or positive politeness strategies to avoid corresponding face-threatening acts (FTAs). Particularly, positive politeness strategies are approach-based, employed to convey that, in some respect, the speaker wants the hearer’s wants, and in this sense they are often associated with the values of camaraderie, cooperativeness and solidarity. Negative politeness strategies are, instead, avoidance-based, and are employed to assure the hearers that their freedom of action will not be impeded, and as such they are usually associated with the values of non-imposition and autonomy. As Brown and Levinson (1987) seem to give more importance to negative politeness strategies, they highlight the importance of conventionalised indirectness strategies to achieve such ends.

However, the choice of the most appropriate strategy is affected by what face we want to address, and depends on certain variables, such as social distance (D), power (P) and rank of imposition of the request (R). D is intended as a symmetrical social dimension, mostly related to the frequency of interaction between interactants. P is defined as an asymmetric social dimension of relative power of one participant over another. R refers to the ranking of the imposition of the request, because it can interfere with the recipient’s face wants (Brown & Levinson, 1987), particularly in terms of negative face, often discussed in the literature in terms of the weight of the imposition (e.g. Gagné, 2010; Kinginger, 2000), i.e. the effort required from the hearer to comply. Drawing on these authors, in this thesis I discuss this variable in such terms and label it as W, rather than R, since the emphasis is on the weight of the imposition, and to also avoid confusion with the construct respect (as detailed below)³.

³ Some authors (e.g. Ruytenbeek, 2021; Slugoski & Turnbull, 1988) have also highlighted that social distance (D) should be kept separated from affective distance, which depends on how much the interlocutors dis/like each other, regardless of whether they know each other or not, since the literal meaning can be understood differently according to the affective factor (e.g. a compliment could be intended as sarcasm/insult -i.e. non-literally, if the interlocutors dislike each other). However, this does not seem relevant in the case of requests to un/familiar people, at least those pertaining this study. It would not be applicable to requests directed to friends, since this relationship necessarily entails liking, nor to strangers, where the unfamiliarity necessarily excludes any affect. In the case of requests directed to acquaintances, since the request is performed for the speaker’s own good, one would expect that the speaker, regardless of his/her dis/like of the H, would perform it in the nicest way possible to obtain compliance and that the affect factor would be relevant only from the hearer’s side, in the sense that, if the H doesn’t like the speaker, s/he could be reluctant to comply. Yet, this has nothing to do with the interpretation of meaning as proposed by the above authors. Hence this study will not differentiate between social distance and affective distance.

2.3.2 Critiques and further development of Brown and Levinson's theory

Despite the undoubtable merit of Brown and Levinson's (1987) work, in terms of introducing the concepts of positive/negative face and politeness, and of highlighting how corresponding values (e.g. non-imposition and solidarity) and socio-contextual factors can influence strategies choice, this theory has been object of critique (e.g. Eelen, 2001; Meier, 1995a, 1995b; Watts, 2003) because of two main downsides. Firstly, the authors, by claiming the universal applicability of this framework of analysis to all languages, did not acknowledge the importance of cultural variation, i.e. that different lingua-cultures may draw on different understandings of the same situations and contextual factors and prioritise different values, and therefore achieve and evaluate politeness differently. Secondly, by adopting an analytical approach which moves from the viewpoint of the analyst, based on an abstract rational agent model who weights up means to ends and chooses the most satisfying means to achieve such ends, they assume that individuals act in fundamentally rational ways without any investigation of their perspective. These limitations are discussed in the next sections, and alternative interpretations and approaches are offered to overcome them.

2.3.2.1 *The importance of cultural variation*

The major critique to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory concerns the fact that, although its (presumed) universal applicability, this framework is based on an Anglocentric view that does not account for cultural variation (e.g. Eelen, 2001; Meier, 1995a, 1995b; Watts, 2003). That is, that different lingua-cultures may not only have different request realisation preferences or means with different functions, but also value things differently, by having diverse understandings of sociopragmatic variables, such as social distance or the weight of imposition of the request, or perceptions of what counts as polite behaviour, or by giving different importance to such variables or to face (issues) (e.g. Holtgraves & Yang, 1992; Márquez Reiter, 2000; Meier, 1995a, 1995b; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021; Spencer-Oatey & Žegarac, 2017; Zamborlin, 2004). In other words, as seen in section 2.3, culture can play an important role not just in choosing what linguistic strategies are more appropriate for achieving certain interactional goals, according to situational context and contextual variables, but also and most importantly, even before this, in providing the socio-moral grounds underpinning such decisions. Therefore, it is pivotal to unpack the various forms in which cultural variation may

manifest to fully understand the politeness phenomenon. The following section aims to do this, by discussing how cultural variation can play a role in shaping the understanding of and the importance attached to positive/negative politeness and face, sociopragmatic variables, indirectness, and rights and obligations.

2.3.2.1.1 Understandings and importance attached to negative/positive politeness and face

One issue associated with Brown and Levinson's (1987) Anglocentric bias is that they gave excessive importance to the concept of negative politeness against positive politeness (Nuzzo, 2007) and did not acknowledge that face wants are not necessarily the most valued interactional components in every lingua-culture, as other factors, such as honesty and clarity, may be preferred over avoiding imposition (e.g. Wierzbicka, 2009; Ogiermann, 2009a; Venuti, 2020). Furthermore, differences can exist in (perceptions of) face wants, as in the way to meet them (Meier, 1995a), and the distinction between negative and positive face/politeness is ambiguous. In fact, as Meier (1995b) noted, it is arguable that attending negative face -i.e. respecting the other need to not be impeded- equals wanting what the hearer wants, hence it could be subsumable under positive politeness. In addition, Spencer-Oatey (2008) observed that Brown and Levinson's (1987) conceptualisation of positive face is underspecified, and to overcome this limitation she proposed a modified framework which focuses on rapport management (see sections 2.2.4.2 and 2.3.2.1.4), i.e. the management of relationship(s) among individuals, rather than on face only. Moreover, not in every culture acts such as requests are perceived as an imposition on others' freedom (e.g. Bravo, 2017; Hernández Flores, 1999; Ogiermann, 2009b; Sifianou, 2005), as asking for help may signal closeness and aim to activate solidarity (Spencer-Oatey 2008), nor is imposition conceptualised in the same way (Zamborlin, 2004), or positive politeness is necessarily employed to compensate for a face-threat (e.g. Geis, 1995). For instance, mockery and non-serious teasing (i.e. mock impoliteness) can be employed in close relationships to signal closeness and companionship, therefore as positive politeness means (Haugh, 2014) that have nothing to do with concerns about face-threats. Besides, other authors (e.g. Culpeper, 2011; Locher, 2010) emphasised how over(negative) politeness can be perceived with a negative connotation. In other words, positive politeness moves can be employed to create affiliation (Bravo, 2017; Hernández Flores, 1999), and negative politeness moves

are not necessarily used to avoid imposition, or perceived as appropriate. Hence, identifying lingua-cultures with positive/negative politeness may be problematic, and it seems more important to focus on how certain linguistic features and patterns are perceived in particular contexts, and within a particular speech community (Meier, 1995a, 1995b). Viewing politeness within a framework of social interaction, in terms of the interpretation of situated linguistic behaviour and of perceptions of appropriateness – what is socially acceptable, allows for reducing the risk of an ethnocentric bias (Meier 1995a). Additionally, as argued by Meier (1995a, 1995b), politeness can only be assessed with reference to a particular context and to interactants' expectations, and in this sense it can be considered universal only in terms of the existence of systems of appropriate behaviour, which nevertheless can vary across lingua-cultures. To overcome the limitation entailed in the negative/positive politeness dichotomy other researchers (e.g. Bravo 2017, Hernández; Flores, 1999; Scollon et al., 2012; Tannen, 1987) have proposed, as an alternative, the dichotomies independence/interdependence (Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Scollon et al., 2012) or autonomy/affiliation (involvement) (Bravo, 2008), which shift the focus from face-threats to how interactants perceive their relationships with each other (within a certain context).

Acknowledging such remarks, in this thesis I still choose to use the terms positive and negative politeness, as it is easier to associate them to positive and negative face respectively, when relevant, yet moving from the standpoint that these concepts need to be understood within the sociocultural context where they are employed, as not in every lingua-culture are linguistic choices strongly determined by concerns for face-threats.

[2.3.2.1.2 The dichotomy politeness-indirectness](#)

Going back to section 2.2.1.1, it is not necessarily the case that all lingua-cultures favour indirectness as a means to achieve (negative) politeness, nor can indirectness always be equated with politeness. Therefore, it is important to keep these two terms separated in unpacking cross and intercultural differences in request realisation strategies.

[2.3.2.1.3 Understandings and importance attached to sociopragmatic variables](#)

Cultural and individual variation can be found in understandings and perceptions of sociopragmatic variables, and particularly of D and P, or in the

importance/weighting given to them (Holtgraves & Yang, 1992). Spencer-Oatey (1996; see also Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021) highlighted that many pragmatic studies have shown that researchers often employ the same terms with dissimilar meanings, or different terms with the same meaning. D has been defined in various ways, such as in terms of social similarity/difference (e.g. Brown & Levinson, 1987), solidarity and like-mindedness, which “seems to be the core of the solidarity semantic” (Brown & Gilman, 1972, 258), closeness (e.g. Fukushima, 2000) and familiarity (e.g. Blum-Kulka & House, 1989), and with different scopes (e.g. how to interpret the acquaintances’ relationship in terms of familiarity or intimacy). P has been described as the ability to exert control or influence on others (e.g. Brown and Levinson, 1987; Brown & Gilman, 1972), dominance (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989), or authoritative status (e.g. Leech, 1983). Furthermore, from a cross or intercultural perspective, different conceptualisations of certain role relations among people from diverse cultures is even more likely (Spencer-Oatey, 1996; Spencer-Oatey & Žegarac, 2017). For instance, Spencer-Oatey (1993) discovered that British and Chinese tutors and postgraduate students envisage the degrees of power and distance of the tutor-postgraduate student relationship in different ways.

Other authors (Molinelli, 2002, 2019; Terkourafi, 2005b) argued that the conceptualisations of D and P do not fit very well with other linguistic systems. Terkourafi (2005b) observed how Brown and Levinson’s (1987, 76) definition of D as ‘a general dimension of similarity/difference’, of which frequency of interaction is one aspect, cannot be equated with the notion of familiarity, which is more relevant in understanding language systems which are referred to as positive politeness systems, such as Cypriot Greek. Molinelli (2002) remarked how the dichotomy D/P does not render justice to the complexity of other linguistic systems, such as the Italian one, where other parameters, such as respect, need to be taken into consideration. Indeed, in the Italian language system the codification of roles is firstly achieved by the choice of allocutive forms, i.e. between the use of the informal ‘*tu*’ or the formal courtesy pronoun (CP) ‘*lei*’ in third singular person in addressing the hearer, whose use affect the verbal conjugation of the speech act and whose choice reflects a relational complexity which depends on different variables, such as:

(1) The familiarity/unfamiliarity between the interactants, which is connected to D, where a symmetrical relationship can entail either the use of reciprocal ‘*tu*’, in case

of familiarity, which connects with the idea of solidarity (and common ground), or of reciprocal *'lei'*, in case of unfamiliarity and detachment, as with strangers. Yet, *'tu'* and *'lei'* could also be employed asymmetrically, as for instance in the case that, between acquaintances, one wants to mark detachment from the other, so that, while one addresses the other one with *'tu'*, the latter addresses back the former with *'lei'*, to show distance and signal lack of solidarity.

(2) Respect (henceforth R), which is a complex variable that is primarily linked to D, but incorporates P, since showing R is achieved by means of symmetrically using *'lei'* to acknowledge reciprocal esteem between acquaintances (Molinelli, 2019), or through asymmetrical use of *'tu'/'lei'*, in case of cultural customs relating to D, such as paying respect to an elderly person, or in case of an authoritarian power relationship, as between employer-employee. In the case of a difference of age, the younger person would address the older with *'lei'*, while the latter could choose how to manage the relationship, i.e. by symmetrically addressing the former with *'lei'*, out of respect, and because of D, or by asymmetrically responding with *'tu'*, in a sort of acknowledgement of the asymmetry of the age gap. In the case of power relations, the person with more power would address the other with *'tu'*, while the latter would address the former with *'lei'*. However, in both cases we can observe that R is ultimately employed as a consequence of D, i.e. because of the social distance due to the status or age difference.

This shows that, at least in the Italian language, the choice between the informal *'tu'* and the formal and polite *'lei'* depends mainly on differences between people (Brown & Gilman, 1972), i.e. on D, intended in terms of un/familiarity and social differences, and as a consequence, on whether there is a need to pay respect to the other. While *'tu'* necessarily signals a symmetric relation based on familiarity or common ground, in all those cases where the CP is employed, either to mark a symmetric or an asymmetric relationship, this usage conveys R and reflects acknowledgment of a greater D (Molinelli, 2015), because of unfamiliarity or of social dissimilarities, due to either different (authoritative) status or age (in such terms see also Renzi, 1993). Hence, because of the way R works in the Italian language system, where R is paid because of D, which already includes P, and because of the intertwined nature of such variables, in a language like the Italian D and P cannot actually be separated. Rather, D becomes the overarching category

that covers all these aspects, and D and R organise the study of the variable D in a more useful way than D and P.

Going a step further, we can also argue that D, intended as any type of social distance, naturally embeds a dimension of superiority/inferiority, such as those relating to social (status) or generational (i.e. age) gaps, as both imply the existence of social (hierarchical) dissimilarities that ultimately result from a D difference. In other words, we can say that P is not independent of D. Drawing on Brown and Gilman (1972, 257), who observed that “not all differences between persons imply a difference in power”, this implies that in some instances social differences between people, i.e. D, imply a difference of P, which can be understood as D encompassing P. This especially holds true if we intend power in Leech’s (1983) terms, as authoritative status, as in the case of the student-Professor relationship, since the asymmetric relationship necessarily implies, as already mentioned, social distance between the interlocutors. Indeed, we argue that the linguistic choices of the lower in status (e.g. the student) are more likely to be influenced by D and R because of the authoritative role of the Professor and therefore of the inferiority/superiority relationship. Moreover, P may be a problematic category to investigate because, as highlighted by Fukushima (2000), Lorenzo-Dus (2001) and Thomas ([1995]2014), sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between P and D because some components of these concepts overlap, such as social dissimilarities due to age or social status. Hence why many studies have conflated the two (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001). Finally, the proposed argument seems also supported by Spencer-Oatey and Žegarac (2017, 138), who observed that “more research is needed into facets of P and D, and the extent to which it is helpful or unhelpful to distinguish them in any given context”. Since the authors point out that one of the main questions is about the actual domains of power and distance, i.e. as to whether P and D should be considered single variables or umbrella terms encompassing other variables, we can argue from this that it is not necessarily helpful distinguishing between D and P in every context (e.g. as in the case of the student-Professor relationship), because, at least in certain cases, we could consider D as an umbrella term including P.

On another note, another issue related to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model is that, though they claim that a higher D and P necessarily lead to higher degrees of

politeness, Wolfson's (1986) bulge theory suggests that interactants at the extremes of the social distance scale (i.e. being friends/familiar people or total strangers) seem to use less politeness moves than those in middle distance relationships (e.g. acquaintances). Wolfson explains this phenomenon in terms of fixed-unfixed relationships. Relationships at the extremes of the distance scale, being fixed and established, pose less risks of face-threats and therefore do not require particular mitigation, whereas relationships in the middle of the scale, being unfixed and not clearly established, could pose more risk of face-threats, particularly if interactants perceive their role relations differently, which can lead to more tentative approaches. This could be the case of relationships such as the Professor-student which, as we have seen, especially if the interlocutors are from different cultural backgrounds, could even be conceptualised and thus managed differently (Spencer-Oatey, 1993), in terms of amount of D and R to be paid to the superior, and of perceptions of rights/obligations. Hence, and particularly from an intercultural perspective, it is important to investigate sociopragmatic variables moving from the assumption that their working is not universally fixed because, as people's perceptions of role relations are dynamic, they can vary across cultures (Spencer-Oatey & Žegarac, 2017). In other words, the investigation of such variables needs to also take into account that (cross-cultural) differences in perceptions of social relations may reflect (different) culture-specific conceptualisations. For instance, as observed by Ogiemann (2009a), while in Slavic cultures (like Polish and Russian) the concept of friendship is associated with intimacy, in the British culture friendships are usually less intimate. Similarly, Lubecka (2000) contrasted the Polish view of friendship, which entails genuine "disinterested emotional involvement" that "allows for critical remarks, painful sincerity and often for lack of respect for privacy" (2000: 48) to the difficulty of Americans in fostering friendships with their fellow Americans, due to their inclination for non-commitment. Such observations on the Slavic cultures' conceptualisations of friendship seem applicable to the Italian culture as well. Indeed, research (e.g. Menesini, 1997) on Italian children has shown that fostering reciprocal and quality friendships helps children becoming more prosocial in general, which in turn leads to developing higher levels of sympathy and concern for others' well-being. Furthermore, according to Corsaro (1994, 23), who investigated Italian and US pupils, friendship is a "collective and cultural process",

which means that “friendship processes are (...) deeply embedded in children’s collective, interpretative re-production of their culture”. Drawing on these two studies, we can argue that Italian speakers develop from the early stages of life culture-specific concepts of friendship that are associated with intimacy (i.e. to quality), and in turn that they are inclined to solidarity toward others in general, as a consequence of this tendency to being warm. This seems to contrast with the observed lesser intimacy of Anglo-Saxon friendships, which in turn might also affect Anglo-Saxon relationships with other non-friends. Since different conceptualisations are likely to influence the related perceptions of such role-relations, it is important to acknowledge that the categories of friends, acquaintances and strangers, but particularly the former, can be cross-culturally conceptually different.

Therefore, the sociopragmatic variables of D, and as a consequence of W, need to be understood, analysed and interpreted not just as decontextualised features of speech acts, but within the different cross and socio-cultural contexts in which they unfold, and more specifically in connection with perceptions of sociality rights and obligations (see next section) associated with them, as Spencer-Oatey (2008) did with her rapport management framework. However, within this framework, perceptions of rights/obligations are difficult to operationalise, since these perceptions can remain at the unconscious level, and they may emerge without the individuals necessarily referring to the rights/obligations, through expressing their understanding of sociopragmatics variables, such as D. This means that it is the variables (and their perceptions) that can be the object of inductive analysis. Put differently, it is by analysing how these variables are understood that it is possible to tease out what the related perceptions of rights/obligations are. This is why it is important to investigate such variables within the context of (perceptions of) rights/obligations.

[2.3.2.1.4 The importance of culturally-driven rights and obligations and related expectations](#)

Spencer-Oatey (2000, 2008; see also Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003) emphasised that also other parameters, such as warmth/involvement and perceptions of sociality rights and obligations, need to be taken into account when evaluating what factors

influence request realisation strategies. In fact, “the degree of imposition of the requested act is related to the requester’s right to make a certain request. How that right is perceived is culturally influenced” (Fukushima, 2000, 183; see also Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2009; Mirzaei, 2019). This means that, the more right one perceives to have, the more at ease one will be in making a request, which in turn can entail a more straightforward, or less tentative approach in asking, alongside more or less use of politeness means, and such perceptions and consequent performances can vary across lingua-cultures.

According to Spencer-Oatey (2008), ‘sociality rights’ are entitlements that one claims for oneself in relation to other people (which therefore implies the concept of others’ obligations) and are based upon personal and/or social behavioural expectations. Perceptions of such rights/obligations and the associated expectations are dictated, *inter alia*, by conceptualisations of roles and social positions and related considerations in terms of fairness, distance-closeness and the consequent rights/obligations connected to the role relationship. In fact, “these role relationships not only partially determine the power and distance of the relationship, but also help specify the rights and obligations of each role member” (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 37). In turn, these perceptions and related conceptualisations determine expectations about what is considered appropriate (behaviour) which, if not fulfilled, could negatively affect the interpersonal rapport among such people. This could be particularly likely if interactants hold different views on the nature or extent of their rights and obligations, as in the case of intercultural interactions, being such expectations based on value-laden beliefs and on what Spencer-Oatey and Jiang (2003) defined as sociopragmatic interactional principles (SIPs) that underpin any interaction. Hence why it is important to investigate the role that (culturally-influenced) perceptions of social relations and related rights/obligations have in the formation of behavioural expectations and in influencing the enactment of behaviour, since different perceptions can lead to different expectations and (linguistic) behaviours.

Two fundamental rights are equity and association rights. ‘Equity rights’ refers to the right to be treated fairly by not being unduly imposed upon, which entails the idea of balance between costs and benefits based on the principle of reciprocity, and the related issue of autonomy-imposition, and ‘association rights’ relates to the entitlement of social involvement with, or detachment from, others. Yet, also

what stands for “not being imposed upon” or the idea of social involvement or detachment can vary across lingua-cultures, not only in terms of understanding of these concepts, but also in terms of importance attached to them. Though ‘equity rights’ and the idea of non-imposition and detachment are relatable to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) concept of ‘negative face’, whereas ‘association rights’ and the idea of involvement seems relatable to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) notion of ‘positive face’, these rights are broader in scope as their infringement do not necessarily lead to face-threats, but rather to annoyance or irritation (Sifianou & Tzanne, 2021). Therefore, also the study of these elements is important, as it enables to thoroughly investigate interactions and what influence linguistic choices without necessarily focusing on the idea of face-threat that, as we have observed, is not central in every lingua-culture.

The notions of rights and obligations and the idea of how the perceptions of them can influence the requests performance bear some resemblance with the concepts of entitlement and contingency (e.g. Craven & Potter, 2010; Curl & Drew, 2008; Gagne, 2018; Rossi, 2015a; Zinken & Ogiermann, 2013). Entitlement refers to the speaker’s right of having the request granted, hence refers to the speaker’s (perception) of his/her right to ask, and contingency refers to hindrances to the fulfilment of the request, i.e. to the recipient’s ability/willingness to comply with the request (Craven & Potter 2010), which can be associated with the idea of (social) obligations. Indeed, the higher the perception of own obligations, the lower will be the contingency, as the hearer will be more predisposed to comply to a request s/he believe to have some sort of obligation to fulfil. According to these authors, interactants employ different request strategies depending on their perceptions of such variables. Whether they believe to have high entitlement in requesting and that the request implicates a low contingency (as in the case of free or shared goods), they will choose more direct forms, because they expect compliance, whereas if they believe to have low entitlement, and that the request implicates a high contingency, they will select more indirect and tentative forms (see also Haugh, 2014, on tentativeness as signalling no right to ask). This holds particularly true in the case of British-English speakers, who seem to behave differently, depending on “whether they thought they had the right to expect compliance” -i.e. the right to ask- “or whether they were simply asking for a favour” (Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003, 1643) - i.e. less right to ask. Favour-asking implicates

requesting something that is 'outside' of the recipient's daily routine, requires some time and/or effort or something belonging to the addressee and thus is potentially costly (Goldschmidt, 2009), hence why it may be perceived as face-threatening (Brown & Levinson 1987), particularly for speakers from a lingua-culture oriented toward values such as autonomy and non-imposition. However, this is not the case in every lingua-culture. As observed by Márquez Reiter and colleagues (2005) in studying English and Spanish requests realisation, Spanish speakers are more inclined to expect compliance from familiar people, and therefore to use more direct forms, regardless of their right to ask. Actually, the right to ask is sort of implicit within the idea of close relationship, that is, being close entails expectation of compliance because the level of familiarity implies solidarity and cooperation, based on the optimistic view that the addressee, being close to the hearer, is willing to comply with the request (in this sense see also Paternoster, 2015, on Italian), regardless of whether the recipient believes they have the obligation to comply or not.

Thus, also the idea of expectation of compliance is culturally-related, as it can vary across lingua-cultures, and so also this element of cultural variation needs to be taken into account when analysing linguistic performances and their evaluation.

To conclude, in unpacking the politeness phenomenon, especially from a contrastive perspective, it is fundamental to consider all those variables that could influence the decision-making and the underlying evaluative process, such as the interpretation and importance attached to social distance or the weight of the request, the concepts of positive/negative politeness/face, the associated rights and obligations and the underpinning values and beliefs. Besides, it is even more important to conduct this analysis by drawing on the perspective that all such variables are culturally-embedded, and therefore their understanding, perception, application and evaluation can vary across lingua-cultures.

2.3.2.2 The importance of the participants' perspectives

A second major critique of Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework, which in a way derives from the lack of account of variability, is that they adopted an objectivist approach which studies politeness from the standpoint of the analyst, according to an abstract rational agent model who makes strategic choices based on a specific and logical mode of reasoning, which not necessarily reflects how participants, in

real interactions, process their thoughts and perform accordingly. Indeed, the idea of strategy choice based on an individualistic rational intentionality to achieve interactional goals does not work for those lingua-cultures that rely on formal forms, such as allocutive pronouns or honorifics, to achieve linguistic politeness. While strategy choice potentially allows for different linguistic expressions to achieve interactional goals, formal forms are limited in choice and are socio-pragmatically or grammatically obligatory, which means that their choice is constrained by social convention and/or by grammar, according to the relationship between speaker and hearer, rather than by interactional aims. Hence, formal forms choice is controlled by different behavioural principles to those underlying the strategy choices treated by Brown and Levinson (Gu, 1990; Ide, 1989). Additionally, their analysis of polite behaviour is based on an outsider (i.e. etic) perspective, so called 2nd order politeness approach, rather than moving from an insider (i.e. emic) perspective that considers interlocutors' perceptions, processing and understandings of their own and others' linguistic behaviour (in terms of politeness) in context, so called 1st order politeness approach. However, a 1st order approach is fundamental to investigate the politeness phenomenon, because it allows interactants "to decide for themselves what might constitute "politeness"" (Watts, 2012, 106), rather than attempting to predict when a linguistic behaviour labelled as "polite" may occur. Moreover, Brown and Levinson's (1987) rational agent model only focuses on the speaker's production and does not recognise the importance of the hearer's perception of the speaker's behaviour (Culpeper & Haugh, 2021; Culpeper & Terkourafi, 2017; Spencer-Oatey & Žegarac, 2017; see also Terkourafi, 2019, on the H's uptake). Yet, as more recent scholars have emphasised (e.g. Eelen, 2001; Haugh, 2007; Kádár & Haugh, 2013; Watts, 2003), it is pivotal to acknowledge participants' (different) understandings (and evaluations) of politeness, alongside their perceptions of face (threats), rights and obligations and (in)directness (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 2008; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). Regardless of the speaker's intention, ultimately it is down to the hearer's how s/he interprets the former's behaviour, hence why it is important to investigate both perspectives and understandings. In line with this Haugh (2007), drawing on Eelen (2001), proposed to distinguish among 'expressive politeness', which refers to the speaker's perspective, i.e. to speaker's linguistic choices to convey politeness, 'classificatory politeness', which refers to the hearer's perspective, i.e. how the

recipient understands and evaluates the speaker's choices, and 'interactional achievement politeness', which refers to the joint accomplishment of (im)politeness by both the speaker and hearer.

Therefore, in confirmation of the point made in the previous section, we can conclude that to fully understand the politeness phenomenon around requests realisation it is necessary to investigate how it works in different lingua-cultures, not only by taking into account that certain concepts or variables might be interpreted differently according to the (socio-cultural) language systems under investigation, but also by teasing out different participants' perceptions and evaluations.

2.3.3 Interactional approach to politeness

To achieve such a comprehensive investigation it is fundamental to adopt an interactional/interpersonal approach (e.g. Kádár & Haugh, 2013; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021) which, by adopting a participant (1st order) perspective, allows for the investigation of individual and cultural variability in enacting and evaluating (polite) linguistic behaviour and in understanding the contextual factors influencing linguistic choices.

2.3.3.1 Politeness as evaluative attitude and as social practice

According to Kádár & Haugh's (2013) interactional approach, politeness is an evaluative attitude toward in-context behaviours, and particularly manifests in situated uses of languages, i.e. in specific social situations (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014). As such, it ranges on a positive-negative continuum (Culpeper & Tantucci, 2021), which is subject to variability, moving from the fact that interactants' conceptualisations, interpretations and enactments of politeness, and evaluations of own and others' behaviours as such vary, because these activities are strongly influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by values and beliefs. Values and beliefs which, as we have seen (section 2.3) can, and most of the times do, differ across lingua-cultures (e.g. see Wierzbicka, 2003), and therefore can affect intercultural interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, the fact that (im)politeness implies both the interpretation and evaluation of a certain linguistic behaviour within a certain context and the act of figuring out its attitudinal implications "is what makes it a pragmatic and interpersonal matter" (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, 199). Indeed, the evaluation of a certain linguistic behaviour (e.g. as (im)polite) usually leads to evaluating the

people who enact that behaviour in the same terms (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2016), and this can lead to judging, labelling (Spencer-Oatey & Xing, 2019) and even stereotyping and therefore can impact on the interpersonal rapport.

Because of this judgmental trait, politeness is also a social practice, not only because it can be - and often is - employed as a means for engaging in sociality (Márquez Reiter, 2021; Márquez Reiter & Kádár, 2022), but also since it implies evaluations that are determined by social meanings and actions (i.e. behaviours) that are recognisable by the interactants in certain contexts. This is because social actions are 'meaningful' inasmuch as they are the object of interpretation by those that enact them (Verschueren, 2021; Winch, [1958]2015). The recognisability of such meanings and actions lies in the shared knowledge of certain linguistic practices and that certain actions and ways of saying things have certain meanings, and in this sense this approach links to the idea of frames, since such understandings of meanings are 'framed' (Verschueren, 2021). Hence, "sociality is what makes politeness possible, but the latter is a form of sociability. It represents conventionally accepted forms of interaction with particular categories of others" (Márquez Reiter & Kádár, 2022, 4).

It is this recognisability of meanings that informs the evaluation of behaviours, because it allows for the attachment of a meaning X to a behaviour Y (e.g. impolite). In turn, this evaluation, as we have seen in section 2.3, is influenced by a (presumed shared) socio-moral order, i.e. a cluster of taken for granted expectations, informed by socially-grounded beliefs on what represents appropriate/inappropriate behaviour in interactions, which can be seen as "a culture-specific ideology about what counts as right or wrong" (Culpeper & Tantucci, 2021, 148). Indeed, evaluations of (im)politeness usually hinge on questions of morality (Kádár & Márquez Reiter, 2015; Márquez Reiter & Kádár, 2022; Márquez Reiter & Orthaber, 2018)⁴. According to Davies (2018), who distinguished between three levels of evaluative behaviour, i.e. classification of politeness, assessment of the individual and rationale underlying such judgements, is the 'rationale', or the moral foundations of such evaluations that links Eelen's (2001) idea of argumentativity,

⁴ Yet, as highlighted by Kádár and Márquez-Reiter (2015), the evaluations based on morality are not always dependent on social practice, because in certain instances (e.g. bystander intervention) morality can take precedence over (im)politeness concerns (see also Márquez Reiter & Orthaber, 2018). Nevertheless, negative evaluations not based on impoliteness still draw on similar moral values as do impoliteness evaluations (Márquez Reiter & Kádár, 2022).

that is “the social positioning and indexing that is achieved through evaluation” (Davies, 2018, 128) to the idea of moral order. This means that the only way to understand the social positioning, or stance, in terms of politeness, attached to a certain social and linguistic behaviour lies in unpacking how those individuals interpret and evaluate their own and others’ behaviour and the ‘rationale’ underpinning such evaluations. Hence it is pivotal, particularly in comparative studies, to investigate the cross-cultural aspect of moral judgements, because dissimilar evaluations can lead to cultural differences in understandings social roles, hence interactants’ rights/obligations, and in related perceptions of what counts as appropriate behaviour (Kádár & Márquez Reiter, 2015).

As politeness is an evaluative attitude toward behaviour, influenced by the socio-moral order, it can be defined in similar terms to the latter, i.e. “based on a social ideology, i.e. on a set of ideas about behaviour which are shared by a community and, hence, are recognized as appropriate in the community” (Hernández Florez, 1999, 37). In other words, politeness “permeates the very ways in which people interact: is more than simply the use of linguistic forms” (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, 3).

Spencer-Oatey and Kádár (2021) took this further, by developing the concept of politeness as evaluative process and by defining such grounded beliefs as the (politeness) evaluation warrant or, in Davies’s (2018) words, the ‘rationale’, people appeal to when making an evaluation, distinguishing between two interrelated elements: individuals’ interpersonal sensitivities and concerns, about face-threats or the infringements of rights and obligations, or regarding interactional goals (Spencer-Oatey, 2008) and the underpinning socio-moral order (section 2.3), which are both culturally-laden. According to the authors, the politeness evaluation process is triggered “only when an individual (subjectively) perceives the normalcy threshold to have been breached, such that the limits of acceptability have been overstepped” (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021, 118), i.e. when the enacted behaviour is perceived, because of such interrelated elements, as inappropriate. This means that, from an intercultural point of view, if interactants hold different understandings of these bases to rapport, based on culturally different (hierarchies of) values and beliefs (Wierzbicka, 2003) informing their socio-moral orders, they are more likely to have different expectations, perspectives and therefore criteria for evaluation purposes, which therefore can lead to different evaluations of a

same communicative event, particularly in terms of politeness (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). This can happen even if interactants hold the same socio-moral foundations (e.g., of what stands for fairness/reciprocity), as they might have different understandings of the same values (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2016).

This is even more complicated by the fact that, as argued by Kádár and Haugh (2013), there are four perspectives of analysis of understandings of politeness that cannot be underestimated: the one of the participants vs the one of the meta-participants in the interaction (i.e. emic vs etic), both involving evaluation; the one of the lay-observers vs the one of the analysts (i.e. folk vs scientific theoretic), both involving observation of such evaluations. Identifying such perspectives has the merit of enabling “a much richer and more nuanced understanding of politeness and, more broadly, interpersonal attitudes” (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, 232). Moreover, the acknowledgment of different perspectives and therefore understandings of politeness allows for raising awareness on and to consequently address important questions, such as whose understanding we are analysing, what are the socio-moral grounds behind them and how can the analyst establish that an evaluation in terms of politeness has taken place during an interaction. Particularly, with reference to the latter point, the interactional approach also highlights the importance of making recourse to metapragmatics, i.e., the study of language use in talking about the use of language (see next section). Indeed, “every type of language use that requires multiple levels of understanding also requires metapragmatic awareness” (Verschueren, 2021, 128). Moving from an outsider perspective, metapragmatics allows for an investigation of different insider perspectives on what is (im)polite and on politeness evaluators, i.e., “descriptors or metalanguage used by members to conceptualise their social world” (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, 96), which are based on different socio-moral orders and therefore can vary across lingua-cultures.

2.3.3.2 Relevance of metapragmatic awareness in politeness evaluations

Politeness, because of this evaluative and judgmental trait, necessarily involves (self)awareness and evaluation of not only “the choices we make when using language, but also the choices of others” (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, 235). Depending on our culturally-embedded socio-moral orders, we determine how (in our perspective) people should behave, and we assess our and other’s behaviour

accordingly. Though most of the times such evaluations remain hidden, it is possible to tease them out through studying what language was used to comment on such behaviours, either during the conversation or, more likely, after the interaction has occurred. Thus, metapragmatics, involving (self)awareness and reflexivity (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014; Kádár & Haugh, 2013; Haugh, 2018), is pivotal in politeness research, because it allows for unearthing how interactants conceptualise and evaluate own and others' linguistic choices by studying what language/expressions they used to comment on or evaluate them. The concept of reflexivity implies the interconnection between what occasions an evaluation of politeness and the evaluation itself, i.e., the recognisability of an action/meaning as polite/impolite leads to the evaluation of that type of action/meaning as such. Yet, as acknowledged by Márquez Reiter (2021), it is pivotal to note that there is not necessarily a one-to-one relationship between metapragmatic comments and the (im)politeness phenomena they refer to. This is because the remarks given by participants on their/others' prior linguistic choices are elicited in a setting that is different from the one under scrutiny, where the enactments of behaviours occurred. This means that the perceptions participants share through metapragmatic comments may not correspond with the reactions they had to the (im)politeness phenomena they experienced during the different setting of the interactions.

There are four types of metapragmatic (reflexive) awareness (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014; Kádár & Haugh, 2013): metalinguistic (or metarepresentational), metacommunicative, metadiscursive and metacognitive. Metalinguistics awareness relates to the representation of evaluations of own/others' behaviour in terms of politeness made by means of the metalanguage used. Therefore, it concerns the ability to treat language itself as the object of reflection (Haugh, 2018; Verschueren, 2021). Metacommunicative awareness, drawing on the former, involves the interpretation and evaluation of the communicative event, i.e. the ability to treat communication itself as the object of reflection (Haugh, 2018; Verschueren, 2021), where "the subject of discourse is the relationship between the speakers" (Bateson, [1972]2000, 178). Metadiscursive awareness involves reference to a persistent frame of interpretation and evaluation about a certain pragmatic phenomenon that, by drawing on the socio-moral order, has become object of reification, i.e. the focus is on how people should behave. Finally,

metacognitive awareness concerns the presentation of cognitive states, such as expectations and attitudes.

As these four types are necessarily intertwined, they need to be studied together. By using as a starting point the language used to evaluate, we can examine how participants evaluated the interaction and how they referred, in doing so, to certain culturally-embedded values and culturally-driven frames of interpretation, expectation and evaluation. Such evaluations can be accessed by using metapragmatic commentary, which allows for (re)negotiating or clarifying the interpretation of how a certain linguistic form/behaviour was to be intended (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014), but also can shed light on different evaluations of same behaviour and on the reasons behind such evaluations (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016). This will be a particularly useful means in studying intercultural interactions between British-English and Italians, as it will allow for teasing out what participants thought of each other's linguistic behaviour and choices and, more importantly, what socio-moral values were behind such evaluations.

2.3.4 Summary

In conclusion, this thesis adopts an interactional approach to politeness, as this allows for the investigation of request realisation strategies from different cultural perspectives, by moving from participants' understandings, and by taking into account that cultural, alongside individual variability, plays a pivotal role in shaping the understanding and interpretation of different value-embedded sociopragmatics factors, the consequent performances and their evaluation. As Terkourafi (2019, 1201) pointed out, "it is only by gaining a sound understanding of insiders' shared knowledge that we can begin to account for what happens when insiders become cultural outsiders as they encounter each other" in intercultural communication. Additionally, focusing on the evaluative process enables the unpacking of cross and intercultural similarities/differences and allows to tease out what most of the times remain hidden, i.e. the reasons behind certain linguistic choices and evaluations. Through the recourse to metapragmatics commentary, it will be possible to bring to light not only *what* are the similarities/differences in understandings, choices and evaluations but, most importantly, *why* these similarities/differences exist, i.e. what are the underpinning values, beliefs and morals. As we have seen, same variables, such as D and W, or concepts such as face, (in)directness, or rights and obligations, can be understood differently, or same

values can be pursued in different way. That is why an approach that focuses on the politeness evaluation process, and not only on showing and/or comparing what are the linguistic repertoires and patterns available to certain languages, can allow a thorough understanding of the politeness phenomenon in context, across lingua-cultures.

2.4. Research on Italian (and English)

As mentioned in chapter 1, though some languages have been extensively investigated in terms of request realisation strategies and politeness-related aspects, such as English (e.g. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) and German (e.g. House, 2006), little research exists on Italian (as highlighted by Gili Fivela & Bazzanella, 2014), and none offers a thorough investigation of request realisation strategies, factors influencing linguistic choice and the evaluative process, neither on an intracultural, nor on a cross-cultural or intercultural level. The following sections review such studies, by distinguishing among intracultural studies on Italian and contrastive (cross-cultural and intercultural) research on the language-pair of Italian-English.

2.4.1 Intracultural research on Italian request realisation strategies

From an intracultural point of view, there is no systematic work on speech acts, and particularly on Italian oral request realisation strategies and the implications in terms of politeness evaluations.

Benincà and colleagues' (1977), though studied indirect strategies, and highlighted how factors, such as urgency, can override other sociopragmatic variables, such as distance and the importance of the request, and the choice of more indirect speech acts to convey politeness, relied only on fictive examples. Rossi (2012, 2015a, 2015b), drawing on Conversation Analysis, investigated the Italian request system and showed how structures, such as imperatives or '*Mi x*' forms are employed for low-cost requests or for requests for transfer of shared goods (e.g. passing the salt at the dinner table), i.e. when the requesters perceive the request to entail high entitlement and low contingency and therefore, because of this, when there is expectation of compliance. However, because he only employed video-recordings of natural occurring interactions in familiar settings, this study offers insights only on requests based on closeness and familiarity (i.e., less D). In addition, not having

controlled data, this study does not explore whether and how other variables, such as social distance/unfamiliarity or weight of imposition of the request, affect the evaluations in terms of entitlement and contingency and therefore the choice of strategy, nor does it explore the politeness implications of linguistic choices. Same can be said of Rossano's work (2010), which investigated question formats and how non-linguistic elements, such as intonation and gaze, are employed to enable the recognisability of these questions as such rather than as statements, in order to elicit a response, and showed that polar questions are often used for requesting confirmation, whereas content and alternative questions are mostly used to request information. Indeed, also in this case the focus was on close relationships only, plus the study did not systematically investigate request realisation strategies, what sociopragmatic factors influence the choice of strategy and related politeness phenomena. Along similar lines, Galeano and Fasulo (2009) studied directive sequences between parents and children by examining different features of requests, such as the use of address terms, preliminary questions, and more or less coercive forms, and showed that directives oriented to control are usually performed by using a question format, as a means to mitigate the controlling force, whereas those oriented to scaffolding joint activities can be performed by using imperatives. Yet, this study, by exploring only parent-child interactions, which are based on a very special relationship, do not offer an account of how different relations, or other factors (e.g. different weights) can affect linguistic choice, nor examines the politeness implications behind linguistic choices.

Other researchers investigated only certain request forms, such as Mertelj (2008) on the functions of the imperative, highlighting how this form is mostly employed between familiar people and how its force can be mitigated by using 'affective exhortatives', in conjunction with the CP, and Bazzanella (1990) on the use of the imperfect as a distancing politeness means. Besides, most authors have focused only on the use of mitigation or discourse markers. Scaglia (2003) studied personal and temporal deixis, Ghezzi and Molinelli (2014) examined the use of the markers '*guarda*' [look], '*prego*' [welcome], '*dai*' [come on], Fedriani (2019) explored the use of '*per favore*' [please] as an impolite means, Ghezzi and Molinelli (2014) investigated the use of '*scusa*' [sorry] as a mock impoliteness marker, and Molinelli

(2019) focused on courtesy forms. Others, such as Gili Fivela and Bazzanella (2014) concentrated on features such as prosody and its connection with politeness⁵.

Therefore, none of these studies offers a thorough analysis of Italian request realisation strategies, and of whether and how different sociopragmatic factors, such as distance, weight of imposition and rights and obligations affect interactants' linguistic choice, alongside the evaluations of and the reasons behind such choices, or the relationship between (in)directness and (im)politeness, by employing oral data. Hence, it is pivotal to fill this gap.

2.4.2 Cross-cultural research on Italian-English request realisation strategies

In terms of contrastive studies, the language pair of Italian-English has not been extensively investigated in terms of request realisation strategies, with a few exceptions. Pozzuoli (2015) examined requests (and apologies) in British-English and Italian, from a cross and intercultural perspective, by using an adapted version of the CCSARP coding scheme and by investigating how the variables of dominance (i.e. social status) and social distance influenced participants' request realisation strategies, by employing DCT. The study showed that the Italian speakers (either when responding in Italian or when responding in English) used a higher number of direct strategies, particularly when dominance and social distance were low, in comparison to their British-English counterparts, and that they seemed to compensate for their directness with an overuse of external modification. However, the study investigates only realisation strategies in terms of Head Acts and external modifiers, leaving out the analysis of the internal modification. Furthermore, since it relies on written data, it does not account for oral interactions, nor did it explore the evaluative process and the reasons behind such differences. Kolková (2008) investigated courtesy forms, such as courtesy pronouns (for the Italian language) and address terms, employed in written Italian, in the play "*Così e' se vi pare*" and in its English translation, and showed different usages. In Italian the pronoun 'tu' is employed in symmetric and close relationship and/or to show solidarity, whereas 'lei' is used in (a)symmetric relations to show politeness and/or respect and in asymmetric and distant relationships to acknowledge power

⁵ Although conducted from an interlanguage perspective, it seems worth mentioning also the work of Nuzzo (2007, 2009) because, by comparing L2 learners of Italian's requests realisation and the use of mitigation with the Italian native speakers use, it showed that the latter were more likely to use morphosyntactic modification (such as conditional and imperfect) than lexical modification to mitigate their requests.

or to signal non-solidarity, and the association of allocutive pronouns with address terms serves to better signal the type of relationship and the stances of each interlocutor toward the other (e.g. respect for the superior). Conversely, in English, due to the lack of T/V system, the relationships are signalled only by means of address terms, which are, nevertheless, employed in different ways than in Italian. In Italian surnames and titles or adjectives (e.g. *'cara/o'* [dear]) are often used together, whereas in the English translation they are employed alternatively, e.g. surnames instead of titles or vice versa. Though this work provides interesting insights, we could argue that it lacks a proper cross-cultural analysis. Since the English version is a translation of the Italian version, the English translation reflects Italian norms rather than typical English use of the language. Furthermore, as the same author observed, an imprecise translation (such as the one, as Kolkova implies, she examined) can cause discrepancies in the politeness level between the two languages shown in the interactions, as in some instances the characters in the English version showed a different and less deferential (or polite) attitude toward the other.

Other studies explored only certain (extra-linguistic) features (e.g. Ponton, 2014, on handshake), certain types of strategies (e.g. Testa, 1988 on interruptive strategies), or certain genres (e.g. Vergaro, 2004, on promotion letters; Aston, 1988 and Zorzi Calò, 1990 on public service encounters; Varcasia, 2013, on telephone talk in service encounters; Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1997, on corporate meetings), or focused on a sub-category of politeness (e.g. Taylor, 2016a, 2016b, on mock politeness). Testa (1988) cross-compared British-English and Italian interruptive strategies and found that, while the former preferred the smoother token "well", the latter preferred the more direct opinion emphasiser *'ma'* [but], showing that their different preferences reflected different communicative styles, underpinned by different values/ideologies and conceptions of (im)politeness. Vergaro (2004) investigated discourse strategies of Italian and English in sales promotion letters and showed that Italian writers used mood and modality as negative politeness strategies to acknowledge distance, whereas English writers used them more as positive politeness strategies to create common ground. Aston (1988) led the PIXI project, which examined openings, closings and response sequences, alongside the role of laughter, in customer-assistant encounters in departmental bookshops, in Italian and British-English, by means of corpus analysis. The results showed that the

English encounters tended to follow reduced scripts, with few openings and closings, overall reflecting a more transactional footing. Conversely, the Italian data showed a different approach adopted depending on the type of bookshop, where in small bookshops the encounters were more scripted while in University bookshops, possibly because of the familiarity between young students and young assistants, they were less scripted and without greeting openings or closings. Furthermore, in the case of negative responses (e.g. that the desired book was unavailable), the English shop assistants tended to focus on the “bad news” and to use complexity in the verbalisation of the reply, whereas the Italian shop assistants tended to hush up the inability to comply with the request by focusing on the upcoming ‘good news’, e.g. that the book was arriving soon. Finally, laughter was often used by the English speakers to establish or appeal for solidarity, whereas the Italian data showed a tendency for presumption of solidarity, also supported by the use of apologetic moves such as *‘abbi pazienza’* [be patient]. Zorzi Calò (1990), drawing on the PIXI project dataset, conducted a comparative analysis of Italian and English speakers’ conversational order, particularly of interruption and extension moves, by means of Conversation Analysis. The study showed that the two groups have different structures to remedy dispreferred answers. While the Italian speakers’ strategies are reparatory, following the requests with justifications and excuses, the English speakers’ remedy strategies are preparatory, usually preceded by pauses to give space for self-correction/modification of the request. However, an opposite pattern was detected for the use of interruptions, since the Italian speakers used them as a means for clarification/reformulation of the requests, hence as preparatory, to avoid the dispreferred sequence, while the English speakers employed them to elicit other, or carry their own, self-correction, thus as reparatory. Finally, differences were also detected in the use of extensions. The Italian speakers employed them to favour the accessibility of the request, whereas the English speakers used them to facilitate the accessibility of the reply. Varcasia (2013), drawing on corpora of spontaneous conversations in Italian, British-English, and German, explored and cross-compared request-response sequences in telephone talk in service encounters, again by means of Conversation Analysis, with a focus on the development of the exchanges and particularly on the receivers’ responses to callers’ (pre-)requests. The data showed that minimal format responses were rarely used by both Italian and English speakers, though in much

higher percentage by the former in comparison to the latter, since they both favoured more complex structures. Both also favoured giving more information with their responses, either by expansion or by insertion of a new sequence, or with extensions by offering alternative solutions. However, the Italian speakers made more use of justifications in case of dispreferred responses, while the English speakers made more use of apologies in such cases. Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1997) investigated and compared corporate meetings discourse across two companies, one British and one Italian, by using recordings of meetings and follow-up individual interviews. The results showed some differences in terms of discourse strategies/markers. While the Italian speakers made overwhelming use of the first singular pronoun “I”, either with indexical or non-indexical functions, and relied on the use of different address forms, the British speakers mostly relied on different uses of “we” references and of “I”, but only as self-reflexive, and made use of first names only. The results also showed that, despite the Italian meetings being more heated, characterised by a higher level of argumentativeness and directness, both groups used interruptions with a supportive function, to clarify/integrate information and propose solutions, echoing Testa’s (1988) findings about the not necessarily dysfunctional function of interruptions. Taylor (2016a, 2016b) examined two online forums (therefore written natural occurring conversation) and showed how interpretations of metapragmatic labels of mock polite behaviour, such as “sarcastic” and “ironic”, and the corresponding behaviours, can vary cross-culturally. The data showed that Italian speakers not necessarily attach to such labels a negative evaluation in terms of impoliteness as the British-English speakers do, and that socio-contextual factors, such as participants’ roles, influence the use of such terms and their evaluation.

To sum up, also on a cross-cultural level no systematic study has been conducted of this language-pair to show what are the similarities/differences in oral request realisation strategies across the two groups, what factors influence linguistic choices and the reasons underpinning such moves and their evaluation. Considering that little research has been conducted, in general, on sociopragmatics, and particularly on the evaluative process and on the reasons underlying cultural differences (McConachy & Spencer-Oatey, 2021), this thesis aims to contribute to filling such a substantial gap.

2.4.3 Intercultural research on Italian-English request realisation strategies

Finally, from an intercultural perspective, there is a general lack of research on intercultural interactions and particularly on how different conceptualisations, interpretations and evaluations of sociopragmatic variables and related rights/obligations can lead to different understandings of politeness across lingua-cultures (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021), and the lack of intercultural studies concerning this language-pair is even more pronounced. Although Aston's (1988) and Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris's (1997) studies also had an intercultural dimension, this was minimal, plus these studies only investigated, as we have seen in section 2.4.2, specific genres. Aston and the PIXI Project (1988) examined some intercultural interaction between Italian clients and British-English bookshop assistants, and showed that the former's failure to recognise and adapt to the assistants' interactional strategies often led to misunderstanding/conflict. Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1997) investigated the intercultural implications of British-Italians cross-cultural differences, by interviewing British and Italian' managers, and showed how the British perceived the Italians as too loose and dependent on hierarchy, while the Italians perceived the British as too rigid and obscure. Other than these contributions, apart from the aforementioned work of Pozzuoli (2015), to the author's knowledge only Incelli (2013) studied intercultural interactions between British-English and Italians, though focusing only on business emails. This work showed how is pivotal to adopt accommodation strategies in intercultural communication to facilitate the exchange, particularly when the L2 speakers of English do not have a good command of the L2, and that the Italian businessman was more direct, casual and used more relational strategies, whereas the British-English were more indirect, formal and more detached in their conversations.

Overall, this means that there are no studies that investigated how English and Italians interact among themselves, what strategies they use in making oral requests, nor on what sociopragmatic factors influence their linguistic choices and especially why, by investigating the evaluative process behind them. Therefore, even more from an intercultural perspective, this study is relevant as it aims to contribute to expanding the understanding of intercultural communication across lingua-cultures.

2.4.4 Summary

This overview of the literature on Italian request realisation strategies suggests that, in comparison with what the literature (e.g. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Márquez Reiter et al. 2005; Sifianou, 2005) has shown about English request realisation strategies, these two lingua-cultures draw on two different politeness systems and related linguistic structures. However, this phenomenon still need to be unpacked, given the scarcity of work on the Italian politeness system, particularly in comparison with the English one, when requests are concerned.

This is why it is relevant to the literature to explore such an under-investigated language-pair, both on an intra and cross-cultural level, to tease out not only request realisation patterns, but also what sociopragmatic variables influence each cultural group's linguistic choices. Moreover, it is important to examine how these speakers conceptualise, interpret and evaluate these variables and, as a reflection, those linguistic behaviours that are a manifestation of such conceptualisations, perceptions and evaluations, as the evaluative process has mostly been neglected in pragmatic research (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). Along the same lines, it is also pivotal to examine whether and how any cross-cultural difference may impact the intercultural communication between members of the two cultural groups and understand what are the reasons behind such differences that inform the underlying evaluation warrant. Indeed, only by fully understanding these dynamics it is possible to understand cross and therefore intercultural diversities and overcome any misunderstandings and stereotyping. Finally, since it is only through interaction that linguistic norms are applied and reinforced, the examination of interactional data is crucial to explore the complex cultural phenomena of communication (Vine, 2019) and politeness.

Thus, this thesis attempts to fill this gap by conducting a systematic investigation of oral request realisation strategies, in terms of Head Act and internal and external modifiers (IM and EM), in Italian and in British-English, on an intracultural and cross-cultural level, to investigate the forms employed, what factors influence their linguistic choices, how and why, for then investigating the impact of any cross-cultural differences at the intercultural level.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology chosen to address the research objectives and questions. The method is mainly qualitative, although there are also some aspects of quantitative analysis, and it relies on both a top-down and an observational bottom-up approach to the data. To code the roleplays data both a deductive and an inductive approaches were employed, since the categories for the coding were created, respectively, by drawing on the categories set in Blum-Kulka and Olsthain (1984) and in the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989) schemes and by creating the missing necessary categories out of the data. Also, since these schemes did not investigate the hearers' interpretations, nor participants' evaluations of linguistic behaviour, retrospective interviews were employed to tease out, through a bottom-up approach, participants' interpretations/assessments of D and W and their evaluation of linguistic behaviour. The same bottom-up approach, with the same aim, was employed to analyse the explanatory comments given in the evaluative surveys.

After presenting the research questions (3.1), this chapter details the methods employed to address those questions (3.2) and describes the research design (3.3). An overview of the participants for the intracultural and intercultural datasets is followed by the sampling procedure employed (3.3.1). Section 3.3.2 illustrates how the three different datasets were collected, while section 3.3.3 is distinguished into two parts. Section 3.3.3.1 illustrates how the three datasets were coded, whereas section 3.3.3.2 details how the intracultural, cross-cultural and intercultural analyses unfolded, to show the connection between datasets and types of analysis. Finally, ethical considerations are treated in section 3.4.

3.1 Research questions

This thesis aimed at addressing the following research questions (RQs):

1. What are the main request realisation strategies used by British-English and Italian speakers?

And, as sub-questions:

- 1.a: Are such strategies influenced by the factors of social distance (D) and/or weight of imposition of the request (W), and how?

- 1.b How does each group of speakers understand and apply these factors when realising requests?
2. What are the main cross-cultural similarities and/or differences between British-English and Italian speakers in terms of request realisation strategies and factors and reasons influencing their linguistic choices?
3. How do Italian speakers realise requests in British-English and does this reflect Italian language patterns, values and expectations, and how?

3.2 Methods

To address these RQs, this thesis takes a multiple (intra, cross and intercultural) approach, which is reflected in how the research design and the data analysis and discussion are structured, and adopts a multi-method, constituted by dyadic roleplays, follow-up individual retrospective interviews and evaluative surveys.

To address RQ1, the first step was to conduct two intracultural analyses, by means of roleplays and retrospective interviews, to investigate how the Italian speakers on one side, and the British-English speakers on the other side, performed roleplays -intraculturally- involving different types of requests and how they subsequently evaluated their own and others' performances in terms of linguistic choices and politeness. Hence, the roleplays were employed to detect each lingua-culture's practices in terms of linguistic choices in making requests and, to address RQ1a, to examine the influence of the contextual variables of D and W. The interviews were employed to address RQ1b and unpack the reasons behind their choices, and how they evaluated the performances and the reasons behind such evaluations.

To address RQ2, the second step was to cross-compare the results of the two intracultural analyses, to highlight any similarities or differences, in terms of request strategy choices and of the underpinning reasons, and of perceptions, interpretations and evaluations of the performances and of the reasons behind them.

Finally, to address RQ3, the third step was to conduct an intercultural investigation of the language-pair of Italian and British-English, along the same lines as the intracultural analysis, i.e. it was conducted by means of roleplays and retrospective interviews. The roleplays were employed to examine how the Italian and the British-English speakers interacted among each other in English and their linguistic choices. The analysis distinguished between the two sets of participants, to

investigate whether there were differences in preferences between the two groups. The interviews were employed to unpack the driving reasons behind the two sets of participants' linguistic choices, how they evaluated their own and others' performances and the reasons behind such evaluations. To support the results of the intercultural investigation, a final step was to select salient parts of those intercultural roleplays that reflected a mismatch in interpretation and evaluation of each other's behaviour, particularly in terms of politeness, as it came out from the follow-up retrospective interviews, and use these parts in online evaluative surveys (Chang & Haugh, 2011). These were conducted by asking two groups of outsiders from each cultural group to evaluate those performances in the same way as they were evaluated by the intercultural roleplays' participants during the retrospective interviews, to investigate whether the intercultural mismatch in evaluations of those linguistic behaviours was mirrored, and therefore confirmed, by different interpretations and evaluations of such behaviours by the two sets of outsiders.

3.3 Research design

The investigation is divided into three parts: a study of production (roleplays), a study of reflections on performances (individual follow-up retrospective interview), both with an intracultural and an intercultural component, and a study of outsiders' evaluations of some intercultural interactions (evaluative surveys).

The following sections provide details of the participants, data collection and data analysis for each part of the study.

3.3.1 Participants

There were four sets of participants. The intracultural data is characterised by two sets, one composed of Italian speakers and one composed of British-English speakers, who both participated in the roleplays and in the individual follow-up retrospective interviews. The intercultural data is constituted by two sets, both composed by Italian and British-English speakers: one set participated in the roleplays and in the individual follow-up retrospective interviews and one set participated in the evaluative surveys and evaluated some of the intercultural roleplays' participants' performances.

3.3.1.1 *The intracultural dataset*

There were 8 Italian participants, all born and resident in Florence (Italy), with Italian parents and grandparents, and aged between 31 and 43. There were 8 British-English participants (henceforth English in the tables), all born in England and resident in the West Midlands (England), with British-English parents and grandparents, and aged between 18 and 33. Participants were of both genders and of different occupations, though 6 out of 8 British-English participants were students (Table 1). The discrepancies in age and occupation between the two samples indicate that, though the aim of the research was to allow for some comparability based on age and on socio-cultural background, it cannot be underestimated the role that other (differences in) contextual factors, such as age and occupation, might have played on participants' performance.

<i>Intracultural English participants: 8</i>			
<i>Dyad</i>	<i>Participant 1 – Age</i>	<i>Participant 2 -Age</i>	<i>Location</i>
EE1	AB – 33	MS – 30	England
EE2	CAM.B – 19	B.BEL - 19	England
EE3	AME.H – 19	GAB.G - 20	England
EE4	MAR.W – 18	MOL.G - 18	England
<i>Intracultural Italian participants: 8</i>			
II1	LOR.B – 31	EMA.G – 42	Italy
II2	AND.L – 36	SDP – 43	Italy
II3	SAR.B – 40	ENR.F – 40	Italy
II4	FED.A – 37	MID.M - 31	Italy

Table 1_Intracultural roleplays and follow-up individual retrospective interviews' participants

At the end of the intracultural roleplays these same participants took part in the individual follow-up retrospective interviews (section 3.3.3).

3.3.1.2 *The intercultural dataset*

There were two sets of intercultural participants performing the roleplays. There were 10 British-English participants (English in the tables), all born in England, with British-English parents and grandparents, and resident in the West Midlands. There were 10 Italian participants, all born in Italy, with Italian parents and grandparents, who had all been living in England for a period between 1 month and 5 years. The reason for selecting Italian participants who had been resident in the UK for up to 5 years was to ascertain whether, and to what extent, participants speaking in their L2 made linguistic choices that reflected a L1 pragmatic transfer or L2 pragmatic knowledge. Indeed, we could expect that in such a timespan, L2 participants have been exposed enough to their L2 to have been able to develop some L2 pragmatic knowledge, without losing the influence from their L1, which would be likely if the

L2 participants had been living in the country for a very long time (e.g. 10-20 years). Participants were of both genders, were aged between 18 and 39, and had different occupations, though half participants were students (Table 2). The wide age range and the fact that half participants were students may indicate, as previously noted, that despite the aim of the research was to allow for some comparability based on age and on socio-cultural background, the role that other (differences in) contextual factors might have played on their performance cannot be underestimated.

<i>Intercultural English-Italian participants: 20</i>				
<i>Dyad</i>	<i>English Participant 1 – Age</i>	<i>Italian Participant 2 - Age</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Length of stay in England for the Italian participant 2</i>
E11	RS – 30	LB - 29	England	1 month
E12	ALA.M - 18	GIN.P - 20	England	2 years
E13	BRA.W – 29	STEF.P - 32	England	6 months
E14	OLL.B – 19	SOF.R - 22	England	5 years
E15	ELL.B – 22	AMB.M - 22	England	4 months
E16	RAC.B – 39	VAL.P - 35	England	5 years
E17	ELI.P – 20	ALE.G - 28	England	1.5 year
E18	RMR – 20	STEF.C - 26	England	5 months
E19	GEO.T – 28	ANN.G - 29	England	3 years
E110	CLA.J – 30	MAR.C - 27	England	4.5 years

Table 2_ Intercultural roleplays & follow-up individual retrospective interviews' participants

At the end of the intercultural roleplays these same participants took part in the individual follow-up retrospective interviews (section 3.3.3).

There were two sets of participants in the evaluative surveys. There were 32 Italian participants, all born in Italy, with Italian parents and grandparents. Half were resident in Italy (and had a good command of English) and half were resident in England. There were 33 British-English participants, all born and resident in England, with British-English parents and grandparents. Both sets were of both genders and were spread across a large age range (Table 3). Again, the wide age range implicates that other contextual factors, such as different ages and in turn, possibly differences in occupation, might have influenced participants' perceptions and evaluations.

<i>English participants</i>	<i>Age range</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Italian participants</i>	<i>Age range</i>	<i>Location</i>
Eng1	30-39	England	Ita1	30-39	England
Eng2	30-39	England	Ita2	30-39	Italy
Eng3	40+	England	Ita3	30-39	Italy
Eng4	30-39	England	Ita4	40+	Italy
Eng5	40+	England	Ita5	30-39	England
Eng6	40+	England	Ita6	30-39	Italy
Eng7	30-39	England	Ita7	30-39	Italy
Eng8	40+	England	Ita8	30-39	Italy
Eng9	40+	England	Ita9	18-29	England
Eng10	18-29	England	Ita10	40+	Italy
Eng11	40+	England	Ita11	40+	England
Eng12	18-29	England	Ita12	40+	Italy
Eng13	18-29	England	Ita13	30-39	England
Eng14	40+	England	Ita14	30-39	England
Eng15	18-29	England	Ita15	30-39	England
Eng16	40+	England	Ita16	18-29	England
Eng17	30-39	England	Ita17	18-29	England
Eng18	40+	England	Ita18	30-39	England
Eng19	40+	England	Ita19	30-39	Italy
Eng20	30-39	England	Ita20	30-39	England
Eng21	30-39	England	Ita21	30-39	Italy
Eng22	40+	England	Ita22	18-29	England
Eng23	18-29	England	Ita23	30-39	England
Eng24	18-29	England	Ita24	18-29	Italy
Eng25	18-29	England	Ita25	30-39	England
Eng26	18-29	England	Ita26	18-29	England
Eng27	18-29	England	Ita27	40+	Italy
Eng28	30-39	England	Ita28	30-39	Italy
Eng29	18-29	England	Ita29	30-39	England
Eng30	30-39	England	Ita30	30-39	England
Eng31	18-29	England	Ita31	40+	England
Eng32	18-29	England	Ita32	30-39	England
Eng33	30-39	England			

Table 3_Online evaluative surveys

3.3.1.3 Recruitment

The (four sets of) participants, 101 in total, were recruited with different means: firstly, by use of convenience sampling, and, drawing on Terkourafi (2005a), of a snowball sampling procedure; secondly, through social networks, such as InterNations and Facebook, by joining groups and communities (e.g. Italians in Birmingham) and by creating posts/ads and by contacting individually those members who responded to the posts and fell within the criteria; finally, through the University, with the support of the department of Applied Linguistics, by sending out emails to the University cohort.

3.3.2 Data collection

This section distinguishes amongst the three datasets, i.e. roleplays, retrospective interviews and evaluative surveys.

3.3.2.1 Roleplays

To investigate participants' linguistic choices, open dyadic roleplays were conducted, where participants were asked to act out different parts in different scenarios. The choice of this method lays in the fact that, although fictional, roleplays have many advantages. Firstly, they constitute the closest type of data to naturalistic language use, by simulating conversational turns (Félix-Brasdefer, 2018) within settings as natural as possible (Demeter, 2007). Secondly, they allow for the control of certain variables during the investigation (Félix-Brasdefer, 2018; Demeter, 2007), which means that, by role specifications, they enable the observation of how contextual factors, such as D and W in this case, influence participants' linguistic choices (Kasper, 1999). Furthermore, they are replicable (Kasper & Dahl, 1991) and the outcomes are comparable (Félix-Brasdefer, 2018). Conversely, although naturalistic data would be preferable to elicit the most accurate speech act usage possible (Félix-Brasdefer, 2018), it is nevertheless a type of data that is more complicated to obtain, especially when, as in this study, the purpose is to investigate specific speech act usage and features (Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Kasper, 1999). Furthermore, natural data is not controllable, i.e. it is difficult, if not impossible, to control the influence of such sociopragmatic variables on the interactants' linguistic choices (Yuan, 2001), nor is replicable. Moreover, because of this lack of control, there is no certainty that the speech act under investigation will occur at all or that enough instances will be produced and collected (Yuan, 2001), which means that it may be practically very difficult to collect useful data in spontaneous productions. Additionally, using a note-taking technique for collecting spontaneously occurring data encounters many drawbacks, considering that the natural data selections are "biased in favour of short exchanges, because long ones are impossible to get down word for word in a notebook. And they are biased to ones that the researcher finds especially typical, especially atypical, or especially non-native sounding" (Beebe & Takahashi, 1989, 120; see also Kasper, 1999). Although to overcome this limitation it would be possible to record natural encounters, this could lead to the further downside of interfering with the authenticity of the interactions, as the presence of the recording equipment could

influence the interactants (see also Kasper, 1999), causing Labov's (1972) observer's paradox, triggering the same methodological issue which led the use of roleplays to be criticised. Therefore, considering the many advantages of roleplays, this instrument was chosen, especially since extensive research on speech acts has demonstrated that the use of roleplays is appropriate for the purpose of eliciting requests (e.g. Márquez Reiter, 2000; Márquez Reiter et al., 2005).

The roleplays were based on a prepared discussion guide with instructions for the suggested scenarios, which gave a rough structure, yet open to flexibility. Drawing on Mills and Grainger (2016) and on Félix-Brasdefer (2018), participants were provided with sufficient contextualised information, e.g. type of situations, roles enacted. Yet, the course and outcome of the interactions were left to participants' negotiation (Félix-Brasdefer, 2018), to make the interactions more spontaneous and thus to obtain data as close as possible to natural conversations (Mills & Grainger, 2016).

The roleplay scenarios were designed to cover a range of different relationships, request types and degrees of imposition. Although certain aspects of the relationships were described (e.g. "you are out with a friend", or "you are approaching a neighbour"), these relationships were not defined, nor were the degrees of imposition of the requests, but it was left open to participants to decide how to rate them. This means that D and W were defined according to participants' ratings.

The different roleplay situations were designed taking into consideration the idea of D and W, drawing from the argument set in chapter 2 (section 2.3.2.1.3). D is understood as any type of social distance and dis/similarities, based on elements such as un/familiarity, different or equal (authoritative) status and age, and is linked with the idea that such dissimilarities may lead speakers to pay R to hearers. Hence all scenarios reflected different levels of un/familiarity, and some scenarios were also designed to account for differences in age (e.g. addressing an elderly person), or in status (e.g. addressing the Professor), to investigate the impact of R connected to such variables. W is intended as the weight of imposition of the request on the hearer (H), i.e. how much effort is required for the addressee to comply with the speaker (S)' request. These variables were chosen to investigate whether and how

differences in (understandings and perceptions of) D and W influence participants' linguistic choices in making requests.

To determine participants' understanding of D and W retrospective interviews data (section 3.3.2.2) was employed, where participants were asked to rate these variables for each roleplay, using Likert scales, which means that they were given a range of possibilities without any pre-specification, to allow participants to gauge what D and W was for each roleplay. To avoid the issue of the restricted choices of Likert scales, the data collection was designed in a way that allowed for flexibility, by offering the participants the option to choose a rating in between points (e.g. 2.5). Participants' ratings of D and W were employed to categorise the different roleplay scenarios according to different levels of D and W, to analyse if and how different levels of such variables, as determined by participants, influenced their linguistic choices.

The following sets of request scenarios (15), taken and/or adapted from Syahri (2013) and from Márquez Reiter and colleagues (2005), were used for the roleplays (Table 4). For the order of the roleplays (RP1-RP15), with the relevant instructions, see Appendix 1.

<p>Lower D</p> <p>With different levels of W, both left to participants to assess</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Borrow money -Borrow notes -Note something down -Turn volume down -Lift -Cigarette
<p>Higher D</p> <p>With different levels of W, both left to participants to assess</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Restaurant -Information -Information to elderly -Book from Professor -Cigarette -Lift from Professor -Help from neighbour -Something to note an ad info down -To turn volume down to the elderly neighbour

Table 4_Roleplays' scenarios_different D and W

However, the restaurant scenario (RP1) was not included in the analysis, since its special status of pre-set and fixed context and established roles, i.e. the service provider and the customer, led to the outcomes not being comparable with the other roleplays because the institutional context meant that the requests were required and expected in the interaction. All the 14 scenarios that were examined involved a requester and an addressee role. To account for variability amongst participants' linguistic preferences (Mills & Grainger, 2016), each dyad performed all scenarios, and for each scenario participants swap roles (Tables 5-6-7). To attempt to ensure as much spontaneity as possible in the enactments, the scenarios were distributed in random order, to avoid participants being influenced by a previous enactment or figuring out the reasons behind the different types of scenarios and trying to adapt their enactment accordingly.

The roleplays lasted between 5-18 minutes (on average 9 minutes, see Tables 5-6-7 for the duration of each set of roleplays), were recorded with the consent of participants (Appendix 8) and transcribed according to the system of conventions detailed in Appendix 4.

Dyad 1: LOR.B-EMA.G	9'44"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: EMA.G (S) - LOR.B (H) RP3: LOR.B (S) - EMA.G (H) RP4: EMA.G (S) - LOR.B (H) RP5: LOR.B (S) - EMA.G (H) RP6: EMA.G (S) - LOR.B (H) RP7: LOR.B (S) - EMA.G (H) RP8: EMA.G (S) - LOR.B (H)	RP9: LOR.B (S) - EMA.G (H) RP10: EMA.G (S) - LOR.B (H) RP11: LOR.B (S) - EMA.G (H) RP12: EMA.G (S) - LOR.B (H) RP13: LOR.B (S) - EMA.G (H) RP14: EMA.G (S) - LOR.B (H) RP15: LOR.B (S) - EMA.G (H)
Dyad 2: AND.L-SDP	7'25"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: SDP (S) - AND.L (H) RP3: AND.L (S) - SDP (H) RP4: SDP (S) - AND.L (H) RP5: AND.L (S) - SDP (H) RP6: SDP (S) - AND.L (H) RP7: AND.L (S) - SDP (H) RP8: SDP (S) - AND.L (H)	RP9: AND.L (S) - SDP (H) RP10: SDP (S) - AND.L (H) RP11: AND.L (S) - SDP (H) RP12: SDP (S) - AND.L (H) RP13: AND.L (S) - SDP (H) RP14: SDP (S) - AND.L (H) RP15: AND.L (S) - SDP (H)
Dyad 3: SAR.B-ENR.F	8'12"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: ENR.F (S) - SAR.B (H) RP3: SAR.B (S) - ENR.F (H) RP4: ENR.F (S) - SAR.B (H) RP5: SAR.B (S) - ENR.F (H) RP6: ENR.F (S) - SAR.B (H) RP7: SAR.B (S) - ENR.F (H) RP8: ENR.F (S) - SAR.B (H)	RP9: SAR.B (S) - ENR.F (H) RP10: ENR.F (S) - SAR.B (H) RP11: SAR.B (S) - ENR.F (H) RP12: ENR.F (S) - SAR.B (H) RP13: SAR.B (S) - ENR.F (H) RP14: ENR.F (S) - SAR.B (H) RP15: SAR.B (S) - ENR.F (H)
Dyad 4: FED.A -MID.M	7'05"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: MID.M (S) - FED.A (H) RP3: FED.A (S) - MID.M (H) RP4: MID.M (S) - FED.A (H) RP5: FED.A (S) - MID.M (H) RP6: MID.M (S) - FED.A (H) RP7: FED.A (S) - MID.M (H) RP8: MID.M (S) - FED.A (H)	RP9: FED.A (S) - MID.M (H) RP10: MID.M (S) - FED.A (H) RP11: FED.A (S) - MID.M (H) RP12: MID.M (S) - FED.A (H) RP13: FED.A (S) - MID.M (H) RP14: MID.M (S) - FED.A (H) RP15: FED.A (S) - MID.M (H)

Table 5_Intracultural Italian dataset: Roleplays' duration & participants enacted roles

Dyad 1: MS-AB	18'05"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: AB (S) – MS (H) RP3: MS (S) – AB (H) RP4: AB (S) – MS (H) RP5: AB (S) – MS (H) RP6: MS (S) – AB (H) RP7: MS (S) – AB (H) RP8: AB (S) – MS (H)	RP9: MS (S) – AB (H) RP10: MS (S) – AB (H) RP11: AB (S) – MS (H) RP12: AB (S) – MS (H) RP13: AB (S) – MS (H) RP14: MS (S) – AB (H) RP15: MS (S) – AB (H)
Dyad 2: B.BEL-CAM.B	4'56"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: CAM.B (S) – B.BEL (H) RP3: B.BEL (S) – CAM.B (H) RP4: CAM.B (S) – B.BEL (H) RP5: CAM.B (S) – B.BEL (H) RP6: B.BEL (S) – CAM.B (H) RP7: B.BEL (S) – CAM.B (H) RP8: CAM.B (S) – B.BEL (H)	RP9: B.BEL (S) – CAM.B (H) RP10: CAM.B (S) – B.BEL (H) RP11: B.BEL (S) – CAM.B (H) RP12: CAM.B (S) – B.BEL (H) RP13: B.BEL (S) – CAM.B (H) RP14: CAM.B (S) – B.BEL (H) RP15: B.BEL (S) – CAM.B (H)
Dyad 3: AME.H-GAB.G	6'09"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: GAB.G (S) – AME.H (H) RP3: AME.H (S) – GAB.G (H) RP4: GAB.G (S) – AME.H (H) RP5: AME.H (S) – GAB.G (H) RP6: GAB.G (S) – AME.H (H) RP7: AME.H (S) – GAB.G (H) RP8: GAB.G (S) – AME.H (H)	RP9: AME.H (S) – GAB.G (H) RP10: GAB.G (S) – AME.H (H) RP11: AME.H (S) – GAB.G (H) RP12: GAB.G (S) – AME.H (H) RP13: AME.H (S) – GAB.G (H) RP14: GAB.G (S) – AME.H (H) RP15: AME.H (S) – GAB.G (H)
Dyad 4: MAR.W-MOL.G	6'	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: MOL.G (S) – MAR.W (H) RP3: MAR.W (S) – MOL.G (H) RP4: MOL.G (S) – MAR.W (H) RP5: MAR.W (S) – MOL.G (H) RP6: MOL.G (S) – MAR.W (H) RP7: MAR.W (S) – MOL.G (H) RP8: MOL.G (S) – MAR.W (H)	RP9: MAR.W (S) – MOL.G (H) RP10: MOL.G (S) – MAR.W (H) RP11: MAR.W (S) – MOL.G (H) RP12: MOL.G (S) – MAR.W (H) RP13: MOL.G (S) – MAR.W (H) RP14: MAR.W (S) – MOL.G (H) RP15: MAR.W (S) – MOL.G (H)

Table 6_Intracultural English dataset: Roleplays' duration & participants enacted roles

Dyad 1: RS-LB	11'	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: RS (S) – LB (H) RP3: LB (S) – RS (H) RP4: RS (S) – LB (H) RP5: LB (S) – RS (H) RP6: RS (S) – LB (H) RP7: LB (S) – RS (H) RP8: RS (S) – LB (H)	RP9: LB (S) – RS (H) RP10: RS (S) – LB (H) RP11: LB (S) – RS (H) RP12: RS (S) – LB (H) RP13: LB (S) – RS (H) RP14: RS (S) – LB (H) RP15: LB (S) – RS (H)
Dyad 2: ALA.M-GIN.P	05'38"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: GIN.P (S) – ALA.M (H) RP3: ALA.M (S) – GIN.P (H) RP4: GIN.P (S) – ALA.M (H) RP5: ALA.M (S) – GIN.P (H) RP6: GIN.P (S) – ALA.M (H) RP7: ALA.M (S) – GIN.P (H) RP8: GIN.P (S) – ALA.M (H)	RP9: ALA.M (S) – GIN.P (H) RP10: GIN.P (S) – ALA.M (H) RP11: ALA.M (S) – GIN.P (H) RP12: GIN.P (S) – ALA.M (H) RP13: ALA.M (S) – GIN.P (H) RP14: GIN.P (S) – ALA.M (H) RP15: ALA.M (S) – GIN.P (H)
Dyad 3: BRA.W-STEF.P	8'25"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: BRA.W (S) – STEF.P (H) RP3: STEF.P (S) – BRA.W (H) RP4: BRA.W (S) – STEF.P (H) RP5: STEF.P (S) – BRA.W (H) RP6: BRA.W (S) – STEF.P (H) RP7: STEF.P (S) – BRA.W (H) RP8: BRA.W (S) – STEF.P (H)	RP9: STEF.P (S) – BRA.W (H) RP10: BRA.W (S) – STEF.P (H) RP11: STEF.P (S) – BRA.W (H) RP12: BRA.W (S) – STEF.P (H) RP13: BRA.W (S) – STEF.P (H) RP14: STEF.P (S) – BRA.W (H) RP15: STEF.P (S) – BRA.W (H)
Dyad 4: OLL.B-SOF.R	7'19"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: SOF.R (S) – OLL.B (H) RP3: OLL.B (S) – SOF.R (H) RP4: SOF.R (S) – OLL.B (H) RP5: OLL.B (S) – SOF.R (H) RP6: SOF.R (S) – OLL.B (H) RP7: OLL.B (S) – SOF.R (H) RP8: SOF.R (S) – OLL.B (H)	RP9: OLL.B (S) – SOF.R (H) RP10: SOF.R (S) – OLL.B (H) RP11: OLL.B (S) – SOF.R (H) RP12: SOF.R (S) – OLL.B (H) RP13: SOF.R (S) – OLL.B (H) RP14: OLL.B (S) – SOF.R (H) RP15: OLL.B (S) – SOF.R (H)
Dyad 5: ELL.B-AMB.M	10'23"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: ELL.B (S) – AMB.M (H) RP3: AMB.M (S) – ELL.B (H) RP4: ELL.B (S) – AMB.M (H) RP5: AMB.M (S) – ELL.B (H) RP6: ELL.B (S) – AMB.M (H) RP7: AMB.M (S) – ELL.B (H) RP8: ELL.B (S) – AMB.M (H)	RP9: AMB.M (S) – ELL.B (H) RP10: ELL.B (S) – AMB.M (H) RP11: AMB.M (S) – ELL.B (H) RP12: ELL.B (S) – AMB.M (H) RP13: ELL.B (S) – AMB.M (H) RP14: AMB.M (S) – ELL.B (H) RP15: AMB.M (S) – ELL.B (H)

Dyad 6: RAC.B-VAL.P	10'41"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: RAC.B (S) – VAL.P (H) RP3: VAL.P (S) – RAC.B (H) RP4: RAC.B (S) – VAL.P (H) RP5: VAL.P (S) – RAC.B (H) RP6: RAC.B (S) – VAL.P (H) RP7: VAL.P (S) – RAC.B (H) RP8: RAC.B (S) – VAL.P (H)	RP9: VAL.P (S) – RAC.B (H) RP10: RAC.B (S) – VAL.P (H) RP11: VAL.P (S) – RAC.B (H) RP12: RAC.B (S) – VAL.P (H) RP13: RAC.B (S) – VAL.P (H) RP14: VAL.P (S) – RAC.B (H) RP15: VAL.P (S) – RAC.B (H)
Dyad 7: ELI.P-ALE.G	5'59"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: ALE.G (S) – ELI.P (H) RP3: ELI.P (S) – ALE.G (H) RP4: ALE.G (S) – ELI.P (H) RP5: ELI.P (S) – ALE.G (H) RP6: ALE.G (S) – ELI.P (H) RP7: ELI.P (S) – ALE.G (H) RP8: ALE.G (S) – ELI.P (H)	RP9: ELI.P (S) – ALE.G (H) RP10: ALE.G (S) – ELI.P (H) RP11: ELI.P (S) – ALE.G (H) RP12: ALE.G (S) – ELI.P (H) RP13: ALE.G (S) – ELI.P (H) RP14: ELI.P (S) – ALE.G (H) RP15: ELI.P (S) – ALE.G (H)
Dyad 8: RMR-STEF.C	8'44"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: STEF.C (S) – RMR (H) RP3: RMR (S) – STEF.C (H) RP4: STEF.C (S) – RMR (H) RP5: RMR (S) – STEF.C (H) RP6: STEF.C (S) – RMR (H) RP7: RMR (S) – STEF.C (H) RP8: STEF.C (S) – RMR (H)	RP9: RMR (S) – STEF.C (H) RP10: STEF.C (S) – RMR (H) RP11: RMR (S) – STEF.C (H) RP12: STEF.C (S) – RMR (H) RP13: STEF.C (S) – RMR (H) RP14: RMR (S) – STEF.C (H) RP15: RMR (S) – STEF.C (H)
Dyad 9: GEO.T-ANN.G	9'56"	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: ANN.G (S) – GEO.T (H) RP3: GEO.T (S) – ANN.G (H) RP4: ANN.G (S) – GEO.T (H) RP5: GEO.T (S) – ANN.G (H) RP6: ANN.G (S) – GEO.T (H) RP7: GEO.T (S) – ANN.G (H) RP8: ANN.G (S) – GEO.T (H)	RP9: GEO.T (S) – ANN.G (H) RP10: ANN.G (S) – GEO.T (H) RP11: GEO.T (S) – ANN.G (H) RP12: ANN.G (S) – GEO.T (H) RP13: ANN.G (S) – GEO.T (H) RP14: GEO.T (S) – ANN.G (H) RP15: GEO.T (S) – ANN.G (H)
Dyad 10: MAR.C-CLA.J	14'	RP1 (not analysed) RP2: CLA.J (S) – MAR.C (H) RP3: MAR.C (S) – CLA.J (H) RP4: CLA.J (S) – MAR.C (H) RP5: MAR.C (S) – CLA.J (H) RP6: CLA.J (S) – MAR.C (H) RP7: MAR.C (S) – CLA.J (H) RP8: CLA.J (S) – MAR.C (H)	RP9: MAR.C (S) – CLA.J (H) RP10: CLA.J (S) – MAR.C (H) RP11: MAR.C (S) – CLA.J (H) RP12: CLA.J (S) – MAR.C (H) RP13: CLA.J (S) – MAR.C (H) RP14: MAR.C (S) – CLA.J (H) RP15: MAR.C (S) – CLA.J (H)

Table 7. *Intercultural English/Italian dataset: Roleplays' duration & participants enacted roles*

3.3.2.2 Retrospective interviews

All participants who performed the roleplays were interviewed independently, to allow them to speak freely about their perceptions of their own and of the others' linguistic behaviour and avoid any possible discomfort. The individual retrospective interviews were conducted straight after the enactment of the roleplays, to attempt to guarantee that the recalling of the performances and of how they went was as fresh as possible. However, participants were invited to listen to the recording of their interactions, if necessary, to help their recalling.

The choice of conducting reflective follow-up interviews lays in the fact that this type of interview is a socially constructed event where participants explain their linguistic behaviour. Reflection on language use is instrumental for teasing out how participants actually perceived each situation and the contextual variables of D and W and how such perceptions influenced their responses (Félix-Brasdefer, 2010). Furthermore, the study of reflections allows for teasing out whether and how different constructions and understandings of meanings attached to D and W arise from the interactions between language resources and socio-cultural phenomena

(Culpeper, 2021), and therefore may reflect culturally-embedded values and expectations.

The use of metapragmatic commentary, such as participants' feedback on their own/other's behaviour, also allows for (re)negotiating or clarifying the interpretation of how a certain linguistic behaviour was to be intended (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014), and for shedding light on -otherwise inaccessible- (different) understandings of politeness (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014; Kádár & Haugh, 2013) and different evaluations of the same behaviours and underlying reasons (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016). Therefore, this instrument enables a more concrete, in-depth and data-driven analysis (Mann, 2016; van Compernelle & Henery, 2016) which helps in generating and investigating hypotheses (Félix-Brasdefer, 2010).

The retrospective interviews (RI) were based on Likert scale questions followed by open questions for further elaboration (Appendix 2) and were employed to collect participants' evaluations of D (in terms of un/familiarity), W and (im)politeness. Participants were asked to rate each scenario in terms of un/familiarity between interactants (i.e. Friends, Acquaintances, Strangers) and of W (between 1-very low and 5-very high) and to explain the reasons for their responses. They were also asked to rate their own and other's performance, alongside how they thought their counterparts rated their performance, in terms of politeness (i.e. between 1-very polite and 5-very impolite), and again to explain the reasons underpinning their ratings and evaluations. As mentioned in section 3.3.2.1, to avoid the restrictions inherent in a Likert scale, participants were given the possibility of giving rates between points (e.g. 2.5).

The interviews lasted around 15-30 minutes (including evaluations of RP1, which is not analysed), were recorded with the consent of participants (Appendix 8) and transcribed according to the system of conventions detailed in Appendix 4.

3.3.2.3 Evaluative surveys

To support the understanding of the outcomes of the intercultural roleplays and of these participants' retrospective interviews written evaluative surveys (Chang & Haugh, 2011) were employed, to offer insight on whether any intercultural dissimilarities in perceptions, interpretations and evaluations of same linguistic behaviour that emerged in those interviews could be attributed to the two sociocultural groups' cross-cultural differences. In fact, one way to validate the researcher's inferences about participants' evaluations of (im)politeness is to

observe how different informants, i.e. other sets of meta-participants, perceived and evaluated the same speech act performance within the same contextual situation (Chang & Haugh, 2011).

The evaluative survey (ES) was created online with Qualtrics, along the same lines as the retrospective interviews, and were filled by 32 Italian and 33 British-English speakers. For the survey, six salient extracts from the performances were selected, i.e. performances where there was a discrepancy in evaluation of each other's linguistic behaviour, particularly in terms of politeness, which seemed due to different intercultural perceptions and interpretations of D (un/familiarity) and/or W and to consequent different expectations attached to these variables and to the requests. Both sets of informants were asked to listen to the recordings related to those selected performances to get an idea of the scenarios, and to read transcripts of the salient extracts (see Appendix 5). They were then asked to rate, for each extract, the performances in the same terms as the participants of the retrospective interviews, using the same format, that is, Likert scales for D (Friends, Acquaintances, Strangers), W (between 1-very small thing and 5-very big thing) and politeness of requester and recipient (between 1-very impolite and 5-very polite) and to use the open-ended questions to explain, with as much detail as possible, the reasons for their responses and evaluations.

The surveys took on average 10-15 minutes (for the template, see Appendix 3).

3.3.3 Data analysis

Since this thesis entails a multi-method with different types of data and analysis, this section distinguishes between how the three datasets (i.e. roleplays, interviews and surveys) were coded (section 3.3.3.1) and how the intracultural, cross-cultural and intercultural analyses were carried out (section 3.3.3.2). A combination of a top-down approach, and of an observational bottom-up approach based on the data was adopted, to code, categorise and analyse the different datasets.

3.3.3.1 Coding

3.3.3.1.1 Roleplays

The three sets of roleplays (two intracultural and one intercultural) were coded using as starting point Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) coding scheme. However, as their categories were insufficient for understanding the data, this version was adapted by building in other categories taken from the CCSARP coding scheme

(Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) for requests, alongside other categories that were not included in the latter and which were created out of the data results.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) coding scheme's version was employed as starting point since it was clearer and more concise, while the CCSARP coding scheme (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), despite being an updated version of the former, was not chosen as such because it had too many categories, some of which overlapping (e.g. 'Conditional' and 'Conditional clause' categories, and 'Subjectivizers' also considered under 'Aspect', see Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, 282-284), hence creating difficulties for coding and for distinguishing between categories. Same can be said for House & Kádár's (2021) recent analytic framework which, since it is based on the CCSARP coding scheme, encounters the same methodological issues. Still, the continued use of the scheme gives evidence of the ongoing usefulness of Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) coding scheme, which was the starting point of the CCSARP scheme.

The request strategies were coded in terms of Head Act (HA), which is the nucleus of the speech act, i.e. "the minimal unit which can realize a request" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, 275), and Internal and External Modification. The request types are defined and classified on a scale of (in)directness, according to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and Blum-Kulka and colleagues (1989) (Table 8).

Types	Tokens
<p>1 Mood derivable</p> <p>The grammatical mood of the verb in the utterance marks its illocutionary force as a request.</p>	<p>Turn it down (MAR.W, EE4, RP15)¹</p> <p>Abbassiamo la televisione [let's turn the television's volume down] (AND.L, I12, RP15)</p>
<p>2 Explicit performatives</p> <p>The illocutionary force of the utterance is explicitly named by the speakers.</p>	<p>Do you mind if I ask you for a lift? (STEF.C, E18, RP12)</p> <p>Le chiedo se per caso ha [I ask you if by chance you have..] (SDP, I12, RP6)</p>
<p>3 Hedged performative</p> <p>The illocutionary verb indicating the requestive intent is mitigated, e.g. by past tenses, modal verbs or verbs expressing intention.</p>	<p>I was going to be a bit cheeky, and ask to borrow it (CLA.J, E110, RP6)</p> <p>Le vorrei chiedere un piacere ..se ne avesse una copia..per imprestarmelo.. [I would like to ask you a favour..if you would have a copy, to lend me] (EMA.G, I11, RP6)</p>
<p>4 Locution derivable</p> <p>The illocutionary point is directly derivable from the semantic meaning of the locution.</p>	<p>Anything to drink? (ELI.P, E17, RP1)</p> <p>Un'informazione, per la biblioteca, in via della Scala? [one information, for the library, in della Scala street?] (EMA.G, I11, RP2)</p>
<p>5 Scope stating</p> <p>The utterance expresses the speaker's intentions, desire or feeling vis d vis the fact that the hearer do X.</p>	<p>I'd really appreciated it if you could just turn it down now [RAC.B, E16, RP10]</p> <p>Avrei bisogno, se può, prestarmi il libro [I would need, if you can, lend me the book] (MID.M, I14, RP6)</p>
<p>6 Language specific suggestory formula</p> <p>The sentence contains a suggestion to X.</p>	<p>If I could lend something off you [RAC.B, E16, RP8]</p> <p>Eh comunque se l'abbassa un po' [Eh anyway if you turn it down a bit] (FED.A, I14, RP15)</p>
<p>7 Reference to preparatory conditions</p> <p>Utterance contains reference to preparatory conditions (e.g. ability or willingness, the possibility of the act being performed) as conventionalized in any specific language.</p>	<p>Can I use your notes? (CAM.B, EE2, RP4)</p> <p>Che me lo daresti un passaggio? [would you give me a lift?] [MID.M, I14, RP12]</p>
<p>8 Strong hints</p> <p>Utterance contains partial reference to object or to elements needed for the implementation of the act (directly pragmatically implying the act).</p>	<p>Your TV is really loud [MS, EE1, RP15]</p> <p>La televisione a tutto volume anche no, per favore [the television at full volume - just not on, please] (AND.L, I12, RP15)</p>
<p>9 Mild hints</p> <p>Utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable through the context as requests (indirectly pragmatically implying the act).</p>	<p>-Not present in the data-</p>

¹ MAR.W (S), EE4 (dyad), RP15 (roleplay 15).

Table 8_Request strategy types – definition of coding categories and tokens

The internal modifiers (IM), which are non-essential elements that occur within the request utterance and are linked to the HA, were distinguished into Request perspective (i.e. Hearer and/or Speaker-oriented, Impersonal), Syntactic (e.g. Interrogatives, Negation) and Other (e.g. Downtoners, Understaters) Downgraders and Upgraders (i.e. Intensifiers, Expletives) (Table 9).

<i>Types</i>	<i>Tokens</i>
Request perspective Point of View Operation (PVO)	
Hearer Oriented The request is realised from the viewpoint of the H ('you').	Do you know where it is? (CAM.B, EE2, RP2) C'hai mica una sigaretta? [Do you by any chance have a cigarette?] (ENR.F, I13, RP8)
> Courtesy Pronoun The use -in Italian- of "lei" in 3 rd singular person to address the H, as a means to show respect and distance.	Mi <i>potrebbe</i> dire dove è che si trova? [could you -CP- tell me where it is?] (SAR.B, I13, RP5)
Speaker Oriented The request is realised from the viewpoint of the S ('I').	can I borrow some? (LB, E11, RP7) Avrei bisogno, se può, prestarmi il libro [I would need, if you can, lend me the book] (MID.M, I14, RP6)
Hearer and Speaker Oriented The request is realised from the viewpoint of the H ('you') and of the S ('I').	Can we .. share? (ALE.G, E17, RP12) Si va a prender 'ste cose [we go to get those things] (LOR.B, I11, RP11)
Impersonal The request is realised by avoiding explicit mentioning the agent(s), by means of neutral agents, passivation or by reference to the action to be performed.	Would it be possible to, get a lift back? (GAB.G, EE3, RP12) Un'informazione, per la biblioteca, in via della Scala? [one information, for the library, in della Scala street?] (EMA.G, I11, RP2)
Downgraders Elements employed to mitigate the speech act of the request.	
Syntactic Downgraders	
Embedded 'if' clause Use of 'if' as hedging device	Can I ask you one second <i>if</i> you know where the library is? (SOF.R, E14, RP2) Se tu me li presti [<i>if</i> you lend me some money] (AND.L, I12, RP3)
Interrogative Use of question format to mitigate the request by requiring the H's response	Do you happen to have a cigarette that you could lend me? (MOL.G, EE4, RP8) Se non è un problema mi può dare un passaggio? [<i>if</i> it's not a problem can you give me a lift?] (LOR.B, I11, RP9)
Negation The head act is constructed with negative polarity, by means of which the S shows a pessimistic view with regard to the outcome of the request	I <i>couldn't</i> catch a lift home, could I? (BRA.W, E13, RP12) Non è che me la potrebbe prestare un attimo e poi gliela riporto? [is it <i>not</i> that you could lend it to me one moment and I bring it back to you?] (ENR.F, I13, RP6)
Subjectivisers Elements in which the speaker explicitly expresses his or her subjective opinion vis-à-vis the state of affairs referred to in the proposition, thus lowering the assertive force of his request	I <i>was wondering</i> if you could help me (ALA.M, E12, RP11) -Not present in the Italian data-
Conditional mood Use of conditional tense to show hesitation	Would you mind lend me some? (OLL.B, E14, RP3) Avrebbe una penna? [<i>Would</i> you have a pen?] (FED.A, I14, RP13)
Past tense Use of past tense as distancing element	I <i>wondered</i> whether you could, kindly, ehm, reduce the volume of your TV? (MAR.C, E10, RP15)

Other Downgraders	
Consultative Devices Elements by means of which the speaker seeks to involve the hearer and bids for his/her cooperation.	<i>If you don't mind</i> , if you have a spare one, could you please give it to me? (GIN.P, E12, RP8) Se gentilmente mi può dare un passaggio... <i>Le scoccia?</i> [if you can kindly give me a lift.. <i>Do you mind?</i>] (FED.A, I14, RP9)
Downtoner Elements by means of which the speaker modulates the impact his/her utterance is likely to have on the hearer, achieving the modulation via devices signalling the possibility of non-compliance	<i>Is there any chance</i> that I can borrow some cash from you? (AME.H, EE3, RP3) <i>Per caso</i> ha una penna .. e un foglio per poterlo scrivere? [<i>by chance</i> do you have a pen.. and paper so I can write it down?] (AND.L, I12, RP13)
Hedges Elements by means of which the speaker avoids specification in making a commitment to the illocutionary point of the utterance, in naming the required action, in describing the manner in which it is to be performed, or in referring to any other contextual aspect involved in its performance.	Do you reckon you can spare <i>like</i> a fiver until we get to the next place? (GEO.T, E19, RP3) -Not present in the Italian data-
Understaters Elements by means of which the speaker minimizes parts of the proposition, such as the required action or object.	Would you be able to turn your music down <i>a little bit</i> ? (RS, E11, RP10) Mi impresti <i>un attimo</i> il tuo telefono me lo segno? [do you lend me <i>one moment</i> your phone, so I write it down?] (SAR.B, I13, RP7)
Softeners Elements employed to reduce the impact of the preposition.	I wondered whether you could, <i>kindly</i> , ehm, reduce, reduce the volume of your TV? (MAR.C, E10, RP15) Se <i>per gentilezza</i> me la può un pochino abbassare [if <i>out of kindness</i> you can turn it down a little bit] (FED.A, I14, RP15)
> <i>Please IM</i> Politeness marker employed within the Head Act to bid for cooperation	Could you <i>please</i> ehm give me some instructions, directions? (AMB.M, E15, RP5) Mi diresti <i>per favore</i> dov'è la biblioteca, che mi so perso? [Would you tell me <i>please</i> where's the library, I got lost?] (ENR.F, I13, RP2)
Upgraders Means by which to increase the compelling force of the request and its impact.	
Expletives Lexical intensifiers by means of which the speaker explicitly expresses negative emotional attitudes.	<i>For goodness sake</i> Isabella, hey, do you really need to play it that loud? (RAC.B, E16, RP10) <i>Porca</i> (...), la vuoi abbassare questa musica?? [<i>for fuck's sake</i> , do you wanna turn this music down??] (EMA.G, I11, RP10)
Intensifiers Elements by means of which the speaker over-represents the reality denoted in the proposition.	If you could do it, now! Like, really? <i>It's been going on for hours!</i> (RAC.B, E16, RP10) La televisione <i>a tutto volume</i> anche no, per favore.. [the television <i>at full volume</i> - just not on, please] (AND.L, I12, RP15)

Table 9_ Internal Modification – definition of coding categories and tokens

The external modifiers (EM), which are non-essential elements that occur outside the HA, were distinguished between Alerters (e.g. Address Terms) and different supportive moves (e.g. Disarmers, Grounders) (Table 10).

Types	Tokens
Alerters Elements whose function is to direct the hearer's attention to the ensuing speech act by using attention seeking devices.	
> Attention getters Elements employed to make the H aware that the S is addressing him/her.	<i>Hey there</i> (SOF.R, E14, RP8) <i>Ciao senti</i> [hi listen] (SAR.B, I13, RP)
> Address terms First names, nicknames, titles/roles, endearment terms	<i>Hello Professor</i> (MS, EE1, RP6) <i>Buonasera signore</i> [good evening Sir] (FED.A, I14, RP5)
> Excuse me_sorry Elements employed to catch the hearer's attention in an apologetic way.	<i>Hiya, excuse me</i> (ELL.B, E15, RP2) <i>Scusa, scusa, posso fare una domanda?</i> [Sorry, sorry, can I ask a question?] (ENR.F, I13, RP2)
> Excuse me_sorry+AT Combination of apologetic elements and Address terms.	<i>Excuse dear?</i> (GEO.T, E19, RP5) <i>Scusa Daniele</i> [sorry Daniele] (ENR.F, I13, RP4)
Checking on Availability The speaker prefaces his/her main speech act with an utterance intended to check if the precondition necessary for compliance holds true.	<i>If you have a spare one, could you please give it to me?</i> (GIN.P, E12, RP8) <i>Lei per caso sta andando a casa?</i> [are you by chance going home?] (LOR.B, I11, RP9)
Cost Minimizer The speaker indicates consideration of the 'cost' to the hearer involved in compliance with the request.	<i>Obviously if you're going that way anyway..</i> (B.BEL, EE2, RP9) <i>Dato che si abita vicino, gli posso chiedere un passaggio?</i> [given that we live close, can I ask you a lift?] (AND.L, I12, RP9)
Disarmer The speaker indicates his/her awareness of a potential offense, thereby attempting to anticipate possible refusal.	<i>Hello mate, sorry to bother you</i> (BRA.W, E13, RP2) <i>Scusami abbi pazienza, mi devo segnare un numero di cellulare</i> [sorry have patience, I have to write a mobile number down] (FED.A, I14, RP7)
Establishing Relationship Devices employed to highlight the common ground and to establish a relationship/connection with the hearer, as a means to increase the possibility of his/her compliance.	<i>Hi, I'm the new neighbour and I live just next door</i> (LB, E11, RP11) <i>Son Gigi e... sono del suo corso..ho bisogno di un piacere.. [I'm Gigi and... I'm of your course..I need a favour]</i> (EMA.G, I11, RP6)
Getting a precommitment The speaker precedes the act by an utterance that can count as an attempt to obtain a precommitment.	<i>Hi, excuse me, can I ask you your help please?</i> (ANN.G, E19, RP2) <i>Me lo fai un favore, me lo segni questo numero?</i> [do you do me a favour, do you write this number down for me?] (AND.L, I12, RP7)
Grounder The speaker indicates the reasons for the request.	<i>I can't find the library</i> (MOL.G, EE4, RP2) <i>Io c'ho un problema, non, non mi fa il bancomat e c'ho bisogno dei soldi</i> [I have a problem, my card doesn't, doesn't work and I need some money] (SAR.B, I13, RP3)
Making restitutions-Offering awards Elements used to increase the likelihood of the hearer's compliance by promising a restitution or by offering a reward on fulfilment of the request.	<i>Would you mind, if I borrow a cigarette? And I'll give you one back later?</i> (GAB.G, EE3, RP14) <i>Dai per favore! Ti ti, ti invito subito a cena, appena posso!</i> [Come on please! I, I invite you for dinner straight, as soon as I can!] (SAR.B, I13, RP11)
Please EM Politeness marker added to the request to bid for cooperation.	<i>If you can, not watch the TV, please?</i> (MAR.C, E10, RP15) <i>Non è che puoi abbassar un pochino il volume per favore?</i> [is it not that you can turn the volume down a little bit please?] (SDP, I12, RP10)
Requestive Interjections Elements employed with the exhortative function of urging the hearer to do something.	<i>Dai per favore, ha qualcosa che posso, per, con cui scrivere?</i> [Come on please, do you have anything that I can, for, with which to write?] (SAR.B, I13, RP13) -Not present in the English data-
Sweetener By expressing exaggerated appreciation of the hearer's ability to comply with the request, the speaker lowers the imposition involved.	<i>You are my only hope</i> (STEF.P, E13, RP5) <i>Mi faresti un grande favore</i> [you would do me a big favour] (FED.A, I14, RP11)

Table 10_External Modification – definition of coding categories and tokens

For IM and EM, most definitions are provided according to Blum-Kulka and Olshain (1984), while some of them drew on the CCSARP coding scheme (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) or other research (see below).

Subjectivisers, Conditional, Alerters and Making restitutions/Offering rewards categories were built in drawing on the CCSARP coding scheme (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). The following (sub)categories were created based on the data: the Italian Courtesy Pronoun (CP) (defined drawing on Scaglia, 2003; Zamborlin, 2004); Excuses; Establishing Relationship; Requestive Interjections (defined drawing on Benigni & Nuzzo, 2018; Ghezzi & Molinelli, 2014); Softeners (e.g. 'gentilmente' [kindly]), which contains as a sub-category the politeness marker 'please' (which includes the Italian equivalent 'per favore/per piacere'). As noted by Fedriani

(2019), *'per favore'*, which is literally translatable as 'for favour', is the most used politeness marker in modern Italian, followed by two less common -and more formal- variants, *'per piacere'* and *'per cortesia'*. However, the conventionalisation of *'per favore'* as a politeness marker is recent, since "in Old Italian, typical strategies to soften directives included verbal periphrasis expressing impositive requests, featuring the verb *piacere* 'to like'" (Fedriani, 2019, 335). Though the author relates *'(per) piacere'* to the verb "(to) like", which resembles the origins of the use of "please" (i.e. "if it please you", "if you like", Busse, 2002, 208), the noun *'piacere'* means "favour" or "courtesy", as in *'mi fai un piacere'* [lit. do you do me a favour]. Hence, *'per piacere'* literally means the same as *'per favore'*, and *'per cortesia'*, which is translatable as "for courtesy", has the same meaning as the previous two variants. Although these three variants bear different levels of formality, since *'per piacere'* has a slightly more formal connotation than *'per favore'*, while *'per cortesia'* is a more polished version than the former two, these politeness markers can be used interchangeably and have the same function of "please", i.e. to soften a request. The 'Alerters' category was adapted by including only Attention Getters, Address Terms, Excuses and a combination of the last two. 'Please' devices were distinguished into IM and EM devices, depending on whether they were used, respectively, within or outside the HA.

3.3.3.1.2 Retrospective interviews

To identify D and W the participants' ratings, as provided in the follow-up retrospective interviews, were employed. For each roleplay, the categories of D and W were calculated by using mean average, i.e. the average ratings provided by the requesters, since this investigation focuses on the connection between requesters' evaluations of D and W and their impact on their linguistic choices. The ratings provided with the Likert scales by each participant for each intracultural and intercultural roleplay showed different levels of variation or consensus at different points, as shown in Appendix 9. These will be highlighted for each (sub)group of D and W in the data analysis chapters.

The 14 scenarios were classified by D (i.e. Friends, Acquaintances, Strangers) and W (i.e. between 1-very small and 5-very big), according to requesters' average ratings.

As in most cases the classification by W was not clear-cut, because often speakers evaluated the same type of request's weight in different ways, the roleplays data

was grouped by D and further distinguished into three sub-groups of W, according to three different ranges: Low (average ratings between 1-2.5), Medium (average ratings between 2.5-3.5) and High (average ratings between 3.5-5). A summary of the average rating provided by the requesters for each scenario is provided at the beginning of the analysis of each (sub)group in later chapters.

3.3.3.1.3 Evaluative surveys

The categories of D and W, as determined by the two sets of participants of the evaluative surveys with the Likert scales for each of the selected intercultural extracts, were calculated by using the higher rating given by the participants, for each group, along the same lines as for the analysis of the retrospective interviews.

3.3.3.2 Analysis

This section distinguishes among the three types of analysis (intracultural, cross-cultural, intercultural), as each type entailed different datasets and/or different uses of them.

3.3.3.2.1 The intracultural analysis

A pragmatic Discourse Analysis was carried out to understand whether and how each group of participants' linguistic choices in making requests, according to the different levels of D and W, were influenced by their culturally-embedded understanding of these variables.

The analysis was based on the intracultural roleplays and on the follow-up retrospective interviews. As seen (section 3.3.3.1.1), the 14 roleplays scenarios were categorised by (sub)groups of D and W according to participants' average ratings of D and W, as provided in the follow-up retrospective interviews.

The roleplays data was analysed using the adapted coding scheme discussed above (see section 3.3.3.1.1). Any request directed at obtaining what was prescribed by each scenario was analysed. Although in the majority of the roleplays there was only one HA per scenario, sometimes the requesters reiterated their requests. To allow for a better understanding of the dynamic of the interactions and of the use of certain moves, pre-requests (Fox, 2015), i.e. any request-related talk employed before the request turn, and request sequences, i.e. the various turns happening between the S's request(s) and the H's response(s), were also taken into consideration. This means that everything that happened as a pre-request, such as the use of Alerters to get the attention of the hearer or of a Grounder before or after performing the request, up to the response of the hearer, was coded.

The analysis of the two intracultural datasets was conducted as follows. Firstly, an overall analysis of the whole dataset for each group was made, to highlight any general practices. Secondly, a focused analysis by (sub)groups of D and W was conducted, to identify the strategies used and how they related to D and W, i.e. to examine whether and how different levels of such variables, as rated by the requesters, influenced each set of speakers' linguistic choices.

3.3.3.2.2 The cross-cultural analysis

The two intracultural sets of participants' datasets and responses were cross-compared, to investigate whether there were any similarities/differences. Since how each group of participants understood and perceived D and W, and the underpinning values, rights and obligations, is what influenced their linguistic behaviour, the cross-cultural analysis started by comparing each set's evaluations, as provided in the retrospective interviews. The open question responses clarifying participants' ratings of D, W and (im)politeness were employed to unpack participants' perceptions and interpretations of D and W, the reasons behind such ratings, and their evaluation of own and others' strategy choices in terms of politeness. This analysis was used as the basis for better understanding, from a comparative perspective, the two groups' request practices, as they emerged from the intracultural roleplays.

The data from the retrospective interviews were the object of qualitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 2013), to tease out how each set of participants perceived and interpreted, for each scenario, the variables of D and W. Indeed, by adopting a summative approach, it is possible to interpret and discover underlying meanings from the content of the text data and to compare different interpretations of such meanings (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

3.3.3.2.3 The intercultural analysis

Along the same lines as the intracultural analysis (section 3.3.3.2.1), the intercultural analysis was carried out by means of pragmatic and contrastive discourse analysis, to understand whether and how each group of participants' linguistic choices in making requests, according to different levels of D and W, were influenced by their understanding of such variables. The same 14 scenarios were employed between dyads composed by Italian and British-English participants, and D and W were identified in the same way, by using the retrospective interviews, to group and analyse the scenarios accordingly. However, to highlight any

intercultural diversities in understanding these variables and in performing the various requests, for each analysis differences between the Italian and the British-English speakers' performances were also distinguished.

The requests (sequences) directed at obtaining what prescribed by the scenarios were analysed, as for the intracultural analysis, by means of the same coding scheme as in the previous analyses.

Also the intercultural dataset was examined to create an overall analysis of the whole data for each groupset, followed by an analysis by (sub)groups of D and W, to tease out whether and how different levels of such variables, as rated by the requesters, influenced each set of speakers' linguistic choices.

To unpack their understanding of D and W, the reasons and the underpinning values behind such choices, the responses provided by the two sets of intercultural informants in the retrospective interviews, with the open questions for clarification of their ratings, were employed. This analysis also aimed to tease out if any cross-cultural differences that emerged from the cross-cultural analysis was mirrored by the two sets and with what consequences in terms of evaluations of each other's behaviour.

As the intercultural data offered some examples of intercultural differences in understanding of D and/or W and in evaluating each other's behaviour, some salient extracts of those performances were made the object of evaluative surveys. This data was analysed with a mixed approach. The Likert scales results were statistically examined, to investigate the responses, in terms of average score, for each extract, given by the Italian participants on one side and the British-English participants on the other, and whether these scores were similar or different across the two sets, alongside whether they mirrored the rating of D, W and (im)politeness provided for the same performances by the two sets of participants of the intercultural roleplays. The responses given in the open questions, representing reflexive insights on their evaluations, were analysed, in the same way as the retrospective interviews, via content analysis (Krippendorff, 2013), to tease out the reasons and underpinning values behind their perceptions, interpretations and evaluations, and whether there were intercultural differences that mirrored those that emerged from the retrospective interviews conducted with the two sets of intercultural roleplays' participants.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Before starting the data collection, several steps were taken to meet the ethical requirements set by the University of Warwick. Firstly, a research ethics form was filled in and approved by Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick (Appendix 6). Secondly, for the roleplays and follow-up retrospective interviews, which needed to be recorded in order to be transcribed, an information sheet (Appendix 7) and a consent form (Appendix 8), both in Italian (for the Italian participants) and in English (for the British-English participants) were prepared, following the guidelines provided by the University of Warwick. These ensured anonymity and the participants' right to withdraw at any stage of the research. The information sheet was sent to participants 1-2 weeks in advance, so that they could familiarise with it and to make sure they knew about what their contribution consisted of, what to be expected during the data collection and about their rights, and the consent form was handed to them the day of the roleplays and follow-up interviews for them to be filled and signed. The personal data collected with such forms (i.e. names and surnames) were anonymised before the data was analysed (Research Students' Handbook 2020-2021).

For the evaluative surveys, considering that there was no sensitive, personal, or identifying information data involved, as the participation was anonymous and the only details required at the beginning of the survey were about participants' age-range (which is already a type of anonymised data, see Bos, 2020) and cultural background, which do not allow for identifying participants, no consent forms were required. Additionally, although participants' location was recorded by Qualtrics system, this was only done by means of coordinates, which signifies that the exact locations of participants was not identifiable. However, information about the research and what was to be expected during the survey were shared with the participants beforehand.

Chapter 4 Data analysis and discussion: The Intracultural Italian dataset

This chapter analyses the Italian intracultural dataset, to highlight features of this group's request realisations and to investigate whether and how the speakers (Ss)' linguistic choices were influenced by the sociopragmatic factors of D and W.

As mentioned in section 3.3.3.2.1, the analysis is presented by giving an overview of the results first, followed by the analysis of the 14 scenarios (RP) grouped by D and W, as rated by the requesters, to unpack if and how these variables influenced participants' linguistic choices. The analysis distinguishes among HA, IM (and its subcategories: Request perspective; Syntactic Downgraders; Other Downgraders; Upgraders) and EM (and its subcategories: Alerters and other supportive moves). To note, the courtesy pronoun (CP) is analysed as part of Request perspective, positioned after Hearer-orientation, since the CP is mainly employed when addressing the H with a third singular pronoun in a third singular verb form, hence it was primarily used in conjunction with Hearer-orientation. Thus, though the data has instances of usage of the CP even when requesting the H by means of speaker-orientation (e.g. "Le chiedo" [I ask you -CP]), all instances of CP were coded together, since using speaker-orientation does not change the fact that the third singular form is used to respectfully address the H with a third singular pronoun.

4.1 General features: Head Acts and Modification

This section provides an overview of the general features of the Italian Ss' request realisation by examining the strategies used as HAs and the patterns of IM and EM. In terms of HAs, the data shows, across the 14 scenarios/56 roleplays (4 dyads), some variety of use of strategies (Table 11). The HAs analysed were in total 71.

	RP2	RP3	RP4	RP5	RP6	RP7	RP8	RP9	RP10	RP11	RP12	RP13	RP14	RP15	TOTALS	
Request Strategy type																
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
3 Hedged performative	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	
4 Locution derivable	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	9	
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	3	2	3	5	1	4	4	2	3	2	4	6	4	6	49	
8 Strong Hints	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	71

Table 11_ Intracultural Italian Roleplays_ HAs totals

Firstly, the data shows an overriding usage of "Reference to preparatory conditions" (RPC) (49 out of 71), such as questions about H's availability, as in "mi può dare un passaggio?" [can you -CP- give me a lift?] (I11, RP9), or willingness, as

in **“me lo segni questo numero?”** [lit. **“do you note this number down for me?”**] (II2, RP7). With reference to the latter, this construction seems to convey a bare request that does not seem to expect a negative response and which therefore can be interpreted as signalling certainty of compliance (Placencia, 2008; Scaglia, 2003). Indeed, the use of present indicative verbal forms, such as the one above, is anchored to the exact moment of the enunciation, hence they coincide with the temporal deictic centre. By referring to the reality and actuality of the present situation, they can be used to convey certainty about the propositional content and, as a consequence, they may not leave any room for the recipient to refuse/disagree (Scaglia, 2003), i.e., they can be employed to express certainty of compliance. However, it has been observed that present indicative forms can also entail a ‘future act’ condition employed to check if “the hearer is favourably disposed towards the eventuality of doing the expected action” (Venuti, 2020, 42), and as such they can be translatable as “will you x” forms (Le Pair, 1996). Yet, the choice to adopt the literal translation seems necessary since, as also pointed out by Ogiermann (2009b, fn 1, 212), “a contrastive study of politeness phenomena aims at capturing the cultural implications of the formula in the original language, which is often embodied by lexical choices and their culture-specific meanings”. There are some instances of “Suggestory formulae” (SF) (9), as in **“o si studia insieme, oppure me li presti e te li riporto”** [or we could study together, or you lend it to me and I bring them back] (II2, RP4) and “Hedged performative” (HP) (5), as in **“ti posso chiedere una sigaretta?”** [can I ask you for a cigarette?] (II2, RP8). There is little use of “Strong hints” (SH) (3), as in **“la televisione a tutto volume anche no, per favore”** [the television at full volume - just not on, please] (II2, RP15) and “Locution Derivable” (LD) (2), as in **“per la biblioteca, in via della Scala?”** [for the library, in della Scala street?] (II1, RP2). There is only one use each of “Mood derivable” (MD), as in **“Si ma intanto abbassiamo la televisione”** [Yes but in the meantime let’s turn the television’s volume down] (II4, RP15), “Explicit performative” (EP), as in **“le chiedo se per caso ha”** [I ask you -CP- if by chance you have] (II2, RP6) and “Scope stating” (SS), as in **“avrei bisogno, se può, imprestarmi il libro”** [I would need, if you -CP- can, lend me the book] (II4, RP6). Finally, the data shows no use of “Mild hints”.

Overall, despite the variegated use of strategies, the Italian participants mainly relied on moves that allowed confirmation of the Hearer (H)'s possibility/availability to comply with the request.

In terms of IM, Table 12 offers an overview of the results, across all 14 scenarios.

	RP2	RP3	RP4	RP5	RP6	RP7	RP8	RP9	RP10	RP11	RP12	RP13	RP14	RP15	TOTALS	
Internal Modification																
Request perspective (PVO)																
Hearer Oriented	3	5	5	5	3	4	4	3	4	4	5	6	4	8	63	
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	3	0	0	5	5	0	3	4	0	0	0	5	0	3	28	
Speaker Oriented	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	7	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	8	PVO
Impersonal	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	82
Downgraders																
Syntactic Downgraders																
Embedded 'If' clause	0	1	1	1	3	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	12	
Interrogative	4	4	4	5	1	4	5	3	4	2	4	6	4	6	56	
Negation	2	1	1	1	1	0	3	1	2	1	2	4	0	1	20	
Subjectivisers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Conditional mood	1	2	3	2	3	0	1	1	0	2	2	2	2	4	25	
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Other Downgraders																
Consultative Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Downtoner	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	9	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Understaters	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	2	6	0	0	0	3	16	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	
> <i>Please IM</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Upgraders																
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	IM-PVO
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	147

Table 12_ Intra-cultural Italian Roleplays_ IM totals

The data shows an overriding use of Hearer-oriented strategies (HO) (63), where the orientation is usually identifiable from the verbal conjugation, hence the pronoun is often omitted. HO was associated over half the time with the informal 'tu', as in "c'hai mica" [do **you** have by any chance] (II1, RP3), and almost half the times with the CP (28), which takes the form of addressing the Hearer with the third singular person 'lei' as a way to pay respect (Scaglia, 2003; Zamborlin, 2004), again often reflected and expressed only through the verbal conjugation, as in "sa mica...dirmi" [**can (lit. s/he > you + CP)** by any chance tell me] (II2, RP2). This was followed by some use of Hearer and Speaker-oriented strategies (HSO) (8), as in "facciamo un viaggio, prendiamo le ultime mie cose" [**we** make a journey, **we** take my last things] (II4, RP11) and Speaker-orientation (SO) (7), as in "ti volevo chiedere" [I wanted to ask you] (II2, RP11), a few times employed in combination with the CP. Conversely, the data shows only two instances of Impersonal perspective, as in "per la biblioteca, in via della Scala?" [**for the library**, in della Scala street?] (II1, RP2).

From this we can observe that the Italian participants, in making requests, tended to rely mainly on Hearer-oriented strategies, either by addressing the recipient with the informal 'tu' or with the formal 'lei'. This indicates that HO is a main feature of Italian requests realisation, i.e. it is a default strategy, which means that putting the weight on the H is not considered by the Italian Ss as intrusive or impositive, in line with Márquez Reiter's (2000) findings on Spanish request realisation. Rather, as observed by Venuti (2020) on Italian requests, Hearer-orientation is often perceived as more polite because putting recipients at the centre of the utterances gives them a position of control that allows them to decide whether or not to comply with the request. The importance of acknowledging the H's role is in line with a lingua-culture that values interdependence (Ogiermann, 2009b), such as the Italian culture does, where the use of pronouns reflects a positive politeness strategy (Félix-Brasdefer, 2004) that either signals closeness, by using 'tu', or pays respectful distance, by using 'lei'. In other words, using HO is an important means to do relational work with the H.

For what concerns the Downgraders, in terms of Syntactic Downgraders, the data shows an overriding use of Interrogatives (56). These constructions were half times associated with Conditional Mood (Conditional) (25), as in "**me la presteresti una sigaretta?**" [**could you lend me a cigarette?**] (II1, RP14). There was also consistent use of Negation (20), as in "sa mica dov'è la biblioteca?" [do you -CP- by **any chance** know where's the library?] (II4, RP2). 'Mica' is a typical Italian feature used to underline that the requester does not expect a positive answer, and its use in interrogatives, when following the verb, as in "sa mica" above, often is made by omitting the implied 'non' before the verb (i.e. '(non) sa mica'), whose use, in fact, is optional (Maiden & Robustelli, 2013, 406). There was also some use of Embedded "if" clauses (12), such as "se può, imprestarmi il libro" [**if** you -CP- can, lend me the book] (II4, RP6) which also indicates hesitation. Conversely, the Italian Ss used the Past Tense (PT) only once, as in "ti volevo chiedere se mi potresti dare una mano" [I **wanted** to ask you if you could give me a hand] (II2, RP11). In terms of Other Downgraders, the data shows large use of Understaters (16), as in "se l'abbassa un po'" [if you -CP- turn it down **a bit**] (II4, RP15), and some use of Downtoners (9), as in "le chiedo se per caso ha" [I ask you -CP- if **by chance** you CP- have] (II2, RP6). There is little use of Please (2), as in "Mi diresti per favore dov'è la biblioteca, che

mi so perso?” [Would you tell me **please** where’s the library, I got lost?] (I13, RP2) and other Softeners (3), such as “se **gentilmente** mi può dare un passaggio” [if you -CP- can **kindly** give me a lift] (I14, RP9), and only one instance of Consultative Devices (CD), such as “**Le scoccia?**” [**do you mind?**] (I14, RP9).

From this we can summarise that the Italian participants, in making requests, relied predominantly on Interrogative forms to mitigate their impact by requiring the H’s response, rather than indicating assumption of compliance (Wierzbicka, 2003), supported by significant use of Conditionals, Negation and Understaters, alongside some use of Downtoners and of Embedded “if” clauses to further reduce the request’s impact. All these devices convey uncertainty and hesitation, showing that the request’s compliance is not taken for granted, and thus consideration for the Hearer as means to be polite. Conversely, the lack of use of Hedges and CD indicates that the Italian participants did not consider avoiding specification or begging for cooperation necessary to soften the impact of their requests.

Finally, in terms of Upgraders, the data shows only one instance each of Expletives, as in “**porca miseria**, la vuoi abbassare questa musica??” [**for fuck’s sake**, do you want to turn this music down??] (I11, RP15) and of Intensifiers, as in “la televisione **a tutto volume** anche no, per favore” [the television **at full volume** - just not on, please] (I12, RP15). It is noteworthy that these devices were both used when asking the elderly neighbour to turn the volume of the TV down, which suggests that the Italian participants twice upgraded the negative force of the object of the requests, as a means to be impolite, when the required action (i.e. to turn the volume down) was perceived as socially due, therefore expected. Hence, the Upgraders were employed as impoliteness strategies with the specific function of enforcing social norms – i.e. rights and obligations (Márquez Reiter et al. 2005) - by conveying a negative emotional state, which is driven and ‘justified’ by the requester’s perception of having the right to demand a certain action to be performed (perceptions of rights and obligations are elaborated in chapter 6).

In terms of EM, the Italian data offers a varied usage (Table 13).

	RP2	RP3	RP4	RP5	RP6	RP7	RP8	RP9	RP10	RP11	RP12	RP13	RP14	RP15	TOTALS
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act															
Alerters															
> <i>Attention getters</i>	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	9
> <i>Address terms</i>	0	1	1	2	3	2	0	0	3	1	3	0	3	0	19
> <i>excuse me_sorry</i>	4	0	0	3	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	3	0	3	18
> <i>excuse me_sorry+AT</i>	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
Checking on Availability	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	6
Cost Minimizer	0	0	1	1	4	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	1	1	13
Disarmer	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	6	0	1	1	3	16
Establishing Relationship	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Grounder	4	8	4	5	8	3	5	4	6	7	4	5	6	12	81
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	3
Please EM	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	4	12
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	1	7
Sweetener	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

Table 13_Intracultural Italian Roleplays_EM totals

There was a prevailing use of Grounders (81), such as “**ho perso il tram**” [I’ve missed the bus] (II1, RP9), followed by a consistent use of Alerters (51 in total), used as conversational openings added to the HA or as pre-requesting devices, mainly in the form of Address Terms (ATs) (19), such as nicknames, as in “oh **Gigi guarda**” [Oh **Gigi** look] (II1, RP3), and Excuses, as in “**Scusami, guarda**” [Excuse me, look] (II2, RP8), (18), sometimes even combined together (5) as in “**Scusi Professoressa**” [Excuse me -CP- Professor] (II3, RP9).

Furthermore, some use of Cost Minimisers (CMs) (13), as in “ho perso i tram.. e **dato che si abita vicino**, gli posso chiedere un passaggio?” [I’ve missed the bus.. and given that we live close, can I ask you -CP- for a lift?] (II2, RP9), and Disarmers (16) as in “**scusami, abbi pazienza**” [sorry, have patience] (II4, RP7) was detected. The Disarmer ‘*abbi pazienza*’ is a common Italian courtesy formula employed for apologising (Treccani, n.d. ‘*pazienza*’, definition 1.a)⁶ and can be used in an appeal for solidarity (Vincent Marrelli, 1988).

They also used some Please (12), often associated with Requestive Interjections (Interjections) (7), mainly “*dai*”, as in “**dai per favore**, ha qualcosa che posso, per, con cui scrivere..?” [come on please, do you -CP- have anything that I can, for, with which to write..?] (II3, RP13).

Finally, the data shows little use of the following strategies. Checking on Availability (CA) (6), as in “**lei per caso sta andando a casa?**” [are you -CP- by chance going home?] (II1, RP9). Making Restitutions (MR) (3), such as “**ci si rifà dopo?**” [(lit. we) I will make it up to you later?] (II4, RP14). Establishing Relationship (ER) (3), as in

⁶ “In formule di cortesia: abbia p. per qualche giorno ancora, pregando di voler aspettare; se hai la p. di attendere un momento, te lo dico subito; abbia la p. di ripetermelo ancora una volta; abbi p.!, abbiate p.!, insistendo perché altri continui a darci ascolto; *abbia p., anche come modo di chiedere scusa*, in varie occasioni: abbia p., devo passarle di nuovo davanti; abbia p., ma oggi non posso” (emphasis added).

“non ci conosciamo.. però io sono stato nel suo ufficio” [we don’t know each other.. but I have been in your -CP- office] (I14, RP6). Getting a Precommitment (GP) (2), as in **“me lo fai un favore” [lit. do you do me a favour]** (I12, RP7). Sweeteners (1), as in **“mi faresti un grande favore” [you would do me a big favour]** (I14, RP11).

From this data we can summarise that the two most important features used in request realisations by the Italian participants were Alerters and Grounders. The use of Alerters, aimed at getting the H’s attention, seems to be used either to activate a positive connection with the H (by means of using (nick)names) or to establish it (by using Excuses, which implies a disarming, hence softening function), alongside securing the interlocutor’s attention (especially when approaching strangers in the street). The use of Grounders, directed at explaining the reasons for the requests, suggests that providing reasons is perceived by the Italian Ss as most helpful in making the request more acceptable and therefore enhance the chances of compliance by the H. In this sense, both devices seem to signal a preference toward positive politeness, i.e. toward gaining understanding and solidarity from the H (on Grounders as positive politeness devices, see Márquez Reiter, 2000 and Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2012). Furthermore, the use of Disarmers and of CMs indicates the Italian Ss’ preference toward showing consideration for the possible offence and cost to the Hearer, as a means to show respect, and therefore be polite, as confirmed by the parallel use of Please.

However, as mentioned, to have a real grasp of the data it is necessary to unpack it by examining it by groups of D and W, to understand whether and how different levels of such variables led to different linguistic choices, which is the object of the next section.

4.2 The analysis by groups: Friends, Acquaintances and Strangers

The analysis will follow the order of HAs, IM and EM, and it will be presented according to the following groups and sub-groups:

- Friends, which will examine scenarios rated as Low and Medium W by participants;
- Acquaintances, which will examine scenarios rated as Medium and High W by participants;

- Strangers, which will examine scenarios rates as Low, Medium and High W by participants.

The subdivisions by W, as mentioned in section 3.3.3.1.2, are not clear-cut, because participants' ratings of the various requests' W were inconsistent, even, in some instances, of the same type of request, such as asking to borrow a book from a Professor or for an elderly neighbour to turn the TV down, where the evaluations of W span from 2-low to 5-very high. In such cases the analysis will highlight whether and how different perceptions of W influenced the requesters' choice of strategy.

4.2.1 Friends

The group of Friends is characterised by scenarios rated by participants as Low W, with average ratings between 1-2.5 (ratings range 1-3) and as Medium W, with average ratings between 2.5-3.5 (ratings range 2-4). Both evaluations for Low and Medium W showed some divergence across participants, signalling some variation in the interpretations of the scenarios.

4.2.1.1 Friends: Low Weight

The Low W sub-group is characterised by situations such as asking a friend for something to note a number down (RP7), rating ranging between 1-2, and asking to borrow some notes (RP4) or for a cigarette (RP14), rating ranging between 2-3.

4.2.1.1.1 Head Acts

Participants made an overriding use of RPC strategy (11), as in “**mi puoi scrivere questo numero, che ti detto ora?**” [can you write this number down, that I tell you now?] (II1, RP7), or “**me ne dai una vienvia?**” [do you give me one come on?] (II3, RP14) (Table 14).

	RP 04 NOTES FROM FRIEND	RP 07 PEN*PHONE FROM FRIEND	RP 14 CIGARETTE FROM FRIEND
Request Strategy type			
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	1	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	1	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	3	4	4
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0

Table 14_Friends Low W HAS

In one case a request was performed by a combination of HP and SF, as in **“ti posso chiedere se mi presti un po’ i tuoi appunti?...magari...o si studia insieme, oppure me li presti e te li riporto”** [can I ask you if you lend me your notes for a bit?.. maybe..or we could study together, or you lend them to me and I bring them back] (I12, RP4).

This data suggests that the use of strategies, such as RPC forms that check the H’s willingness to comply, rather than the ability/possibility to perform the act, and whose constructions conveyed directness and certainty, were frequently used by the Italian Ss in making Low W requests to Friends. This could indicate that the low W led the participants to perceive the request as one reasonable to ask a friend, hence that does not require too much modulation or, politeness, for its success (for similar results in Uruguayan Spanish, see Márquez Reiter, 2000). This holds particularly true for **“me ne dai una vienvia!?”** above where, not only does the RPC address the willingness of the Hearer, but its illocutionary point is further enforced by the use of the informal Interjection *“vienvia”* (on the exhortative function of *“vieni”* see Scaglia, 2003; see also next section), which is used to persuade and/or urge the H to give the requester a cigarette. All this suggests that directness is not perceived as inappropriate and thus impolite by the Italian participants when the distance is low (Zamborlin, 2004), as between friends, at least when the W is low as well, likely due to the fact that in this case “there is an implicit cultural guarantee of compliance” (Márquez Reiter, 2000, 114), based on the idea of solidarity. This idea implies that interlocutors, when in familiar contexts, seem to rely on the optimistic view that the friend would be willing to help (Paternoster, 2015), therefore they are not much concerned about “negative” face, i.e. with avoiding sounding as if they are imposing on the H by showing tentativeness, for their request to be perceived as appropriate and/or polite. Put differently, when among friends, what matters for the Italian Ss is showing interdependence, companionship and friendliness (i.e. positive politeness), rather than not intruding on others’ freedom (i.e. negative politeness).

4.2.1.1.2 Internal Modification

Requests involving Friends and a Low W were characterised by an overriding use of Syntactic Downgrading by means of HO interrogative forms, alongside some use of Conditional, and by some use of Other Downgraders, such as Understaters (Table 15).

	RP4_NOTES FROM FRIEND	RP7_PEN*PHONE FROM FRIEND	RP14_CIGARETTE FROM FRIEND
Internal Modification			
Request perspective			
Hearer Oriented	5	4	5
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	0	0	0
Speaker Oriented	1	0	0
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	1	0	0
Impersonal	0	0	0
Downgraders			
Syntactic Downgraders			
Embedded 'If' clause	1	0	0
Interrogative	4	4	4
Negation	1	0	0
Subjectiviser	0	0	0
Conditional mood	3	0	2
Past Tense	0	0	0
Other Downgraders			
Consultative Devices	0	0	0
Downtoner	1	0	0
Hedges	0	0	0
Understaters	2	2	0
Softeners	0	0	0
> <i>Please IM</i>	0	0	0
Upgraders			
Expletives	0	0	0
Intensifiers	0	0	0

Table 15_Friends Low W IM

For what concerns Request perspective, all the requests were made with HO (14), by using the informal 'tu', as in "mi **impresti** un attimo il tuo telefono" [do **you** lend me one moment your phone] (I13, RP7). However, in one case the requester used a combination of SO, HSO and HO, as in the following: "ti posso chiedere se mi presti un po' i tuoi appunti? ..magari...o **si** studia insieme, oppure me li **presti** e te li riporto" [can I ask you if you lend me your notes for a bit? ..maybe...or **we** could study together, or **you** lend them to me and I bring them back] (I12, RP4). Though the construction with 'si', as in 'si studia', is classified in the Italian language as an indefinite pronoun (Maiden & Robustelli, 2013) that can be used with different functions, such as impersonal and reflexive (Maiden & Robustelli, 2013), in specific contexts 'si' can be used as a 1st person plural pronoun, e.g. with an emphatic function or in combination with psych-movement verbs (Cinque, 1988). Moreover, in *Fiorentino* [Florentine dialect] the 'si' construction "has virtually replaced the ordinary 1st pers. pl. ending of the verb (*andiamo -> si va (Cinque, 1988, 551, fn 34)", hence it is used as an alternative to "we" and "has the force of a first person plural pronominal" (Burzio, 1986, 81, fn 47), therefore indicating a HSO. Considering all the Italian participants were from Florence, and hence that the request realisation investigated reflected the use of grammatical affordances in the Florentine dialect, this construction has been coded as it is used in Florentine, i.e. as a HSO device. As such, this move indicates more tentativeness, because using the sociative (Scaglia, 2003) "we" shifts the focus away from the H, hence it is used as distancing element (Caffi, 2005) that reduces the imposition.

From this data we can conclude that in Low W requests to Friends the requesters preferred to emphasise the role of the H, by using 'tu' to highlight closeness (Enfield, 2008; Kolková, 2008) and invoke supportiveness and sympathy (Molinelli, 2002), as main strategy for request realisation. This also explains the high use of HO, since the use of 'tu' can only be marked by putting the H at the centre of the utterance, rather than a preference for softening the impact of the imposition by using other perspectives. Indeed, the Italian language provides grammatical resources that allow relational work to be done with a second person pronoun through the use of pronoun forms, such as 'tu', which means that using HO is required to do that relational work. This entails that the connection between pronoun choice and relational work is fundamental to understand request realisation strategies in Italian. This result seems to confirm the previous conclusions on the use of request strategies, i.e. that the Italian Ss appeared to rely on the idea of companionship among friends (i.e. on positive politeness values), which implies an optimistic reliance on the H's willingness to cooperate, and in turn that mitigation strategies are not perceived as necessary. This interpretation is similar to Márquez Reiter's (2000, 107) findings for Spanish speakers, who were found less concerned "to avoid referring to the hearer as actor and thus reducing the level of coerciveness inherent in requests", as hearer-oriented requests appear to be the norm and therefore not to be perceived as demanding for the addressee. Furthermore, as observed in section 4.1, using hearer-orientation also allows to acknowledge the role of the H (Venuti, 2020; Ogiemann, 2009b).

In regard to Downgraders, the data shows wide use of Syntactic Downgraders, and particularly of Interrogatives (12), associated with five Conditionals, once in combination with Negation (1), as in "**unn'è che tu mi potresti prestare i tuoi appunti per poter far l'esame?**" [**is it not that you could lend me your notes to prepare the exam?**] (II1, RP4). Conversely, only one example of Embedded "if" clause was found, such as "ti posso chiedere **se** mi presti" [can I ask you **if** you lend me] (II2, RP4). For what concerns Other Downgraders, four Understaters were detected, mostly 'un attimo' [one moment] (3), used to emphasise brevity (Scaglia, 2003) and minimise the proposition, as in "me li impresteresti **un attimo**" [would you lend me them **one moment**] (II3, RP4). Finally, the data showed only one

instance of Downtoners, such as “**magari...o si studia insieme**” [**maybe...or we could study together**] (I12, RP4).

From this data we can conclude that in situations of Low W requests to Friends the Italian Ss did not make much use of IM, relying consistently only on Interrogatives, often further downgraded with Conditionals, to signal less certainty about the propositional content (Scaglia, 2003), and Understaters to minimise the W of the request. Apart from this, they did not make much use of other Downgraders, such as Downtoners and Embedded “if” clauses, and made no use at all of CD, Hedges, Softeners and of Upgraders, nor, understandably, of CP, as such requests involved informal scenarios among friends. This reflects the previous results and thus reinforces the conclusion about the fact that the Italian Ss in familiar contexts tend to rely on solidarity and on the assumption of compliance amongst friends, which leads to a low concern about the idea of face-threats and of imposing on the H. This interpretation is once again similar to Márquez Reiter’s (2000) results for Spanish, which show how less use of modulation is linked to higher levels of certainty about the positive outcome of the request.

4.2.1.1.3 External Modification

Low W requests to Friends were characterised by high use of Alerters, and particularly of ATs, and Grounders. Conversely, the requesters made little use of other devices, such as Please, CMs and Disarmers. No use of Sweeteners, nor, understandably, as they were situations where the relationship is already established, of ER devices, was detected (Table 16).

	ROLEPLAY 04 NOTES FROM FRIEND	ROLEPLAY 07 PEN*PHONE FROM FRIEND	ROLEPLAY 14 CIGARETTE FROM FRIEND
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act			
Alerters			
> Attention getters	2	0	1
> Address terms	1	2	3
> excuse me_sorry	0	1	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	1	0	0
Checking on Availability	0	0	0
Cost Minimizer	1	0	1
Disarmer	0	1	1
Establishing Relationship	0	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	1	0
Grounder	4	3	6
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	1
Please EM	0	2	1
Requestive Interjections	0	0	2
Sweetener	0	0	0
Pre-requests & request sequences	0	0	1

Table 16_Friends Low W EM

In terms of Alerters (11), the only ATs (6) used were (nick)names, often associated with other Attention Getters (AGs) (3), as in “oh **Fran, guarda**” [oh **Fran, look**] (I14, RP14). The use of forenames/nicknames is indicative of proximity (Enfield, 2008),

solidarity (Scaglia, 2003) and interdependence, therefore signalling a positive politeness strategy.

Grounders (13) were widely used, for every request, as in "senti, **dovrei fare un esame e.. proprio con l'influenza, e un so stato alle lezioni e avrei un po' di problemi, ho avuto un po' di problemi..**" [listen, **I'd have to prepare an exam and... because of the flu I couldn't go to the lectures and I would have a few problems, I had a few problems**] (II1, RP4). Providing many details as grounding elements for the request seems to be used as a positive politeness means to win the H's solidarity and willingness to comply, as also observed for other languages by Márquez Reiter (2000) and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2012), who highlighted how giving reasons activates the interlocutor's empathy.

Some use of Please (3) was detected, once in combination with one Interjection (2), as in "**dai per favore!**" [**come on please!**] (II3, RP13). Only two Disarmers, as in "eh.. scusami **abbi pazienza**, mi devo segnare un numero di cellulare" [eh.. sorry **have patience**, I have to write a mobile number down] (II4, RP7) and two CMs, as in "fo le fotocopie, **te li rendo?**" [I do the photocopies, **give you back?**] (II4, RP4), were used. Finally, the data offers one example each of GP, as in "**me lo fai un favore?**" [**do you do me a favour?**] (II2, RP7) and of a post-request MR, as in "**ci si rifà dopo?**" [**I make it up later?**] (II4, RP14).

This data indicates that in case of Low W requests to Friends the Italian Ss relied overwhelmingly on Alerters and Grounders. Alerters were used to get the attention of the Hearer, and particularly with ATs such as fore/nicknames, which signal closeness, as positive politeness strategies to prepare the ground for the request, by activating the H's companionship. Grounders were used to justify the reasons for their requests, also as positive politeness moves to activate the H's understanding and willingness to comply (Márquez Reiter, 2000; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2012). The infrequent use of Please, CMs and Disarmers signals that the Italian Ss were not much concerned about acknowledging the potential offence, softening and/or reducing the cost of their request, and this is confirmed by the scarce (or none, as for Sweeteners and ER) use of other devices, such as GP and MR. Yet, the lack of usage of ER devices is explicable considering that, as these requests were performed among friends, the relationship was taken as a given. This is confirmed by the fact that the H was always addressed with '*tu*,' which as seen signals closeness and solidarity (Molinelli, 2002; Kolková, 2008), i.e. is relationship-

oriented. This result relates to the previous findings and thus corroborate the previous conclusions, i.e. that the Italian participants did not seem to deem it necessary to employ many mitigators in the case of familiar contexts and Low W. This, we could argue, probably because, being more inclined toward interdependence, they were more concerned about highlighting their relationship with the H and about properly explaining the reasons for their requests, as means to activate the friend’s solidarity and cooperativeness.

4.2.1.2 Friends: Medium Weight

This sub-group is characterised by requests to borrow some money from a friend (RP3) and for a flatmate to turn the volume down (RP10), rating ranging between 2-4, and for a lift (RP12), all rated 3.

4.2.1.2.1 Head Acts

Table 17 offers an overview of the HA strategies used in such scenarios.

	RP 03 MONEY FROM FRIEND	RP 10 STOP MAKING A NOISE - FLATMATE	RP 12 LIFT FROM FRIEND
Request Strategy type			
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	1
5 Scope stating	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	3	1	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	2	2	4
8 Strong Hints	2	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0

Table 17_Friends Medium W HAs

Although in two cases (RP3 and RP10) W was rated differently, varying from low to high, there are not striking differences in terms of strategy choice. The most used strategies were always RPC (8), as in “**puoi abbassare** la musica?” [can you turn the music down?] (I14, RP10), followed by SF (4), as in “**se tu me li presti**” [if you lend them to me] (I12, RP3). The only difference is that one of the requesters who rated W as 4-high used a combination of SH and SF, as in “**come si fa? Me li.. me li anticipa te o.. cambiamo ristorante?**” [what do we do? Do you.. Do you advance them for me or.. do we change restaurant?] (I14, RP3). Although most of the requests were performed in present tense, in these cases they did not seem to express certainty, which they did in the previous section, because here they were often further internally mitigated (see next section).

This shows that in case of Medium W requests among Friends, regardless of the dissimilar ratings, the Italian Ss made consistent use of RPC, as in the Low W scenarios, yet in these cases such strategies were used as means to check H’s

availability/possibility to perform the requested act rather than the addressee's willingness, therefore reflecting less certainty about the positive outcome. This conclusion seems confirmed by the significant use of SF, employed to convey tentativeness and indirectness, possibly as a consequence of the higher perception of the request's W. This holds particularly true for the case of W rated as 4, as in I14, RP3 above, where the SF "me li anticipi te o.. cambiamo ristorante?", used in association with the SH "come si fa?", signals even more obliqueness.

4.2.1.2.2 Internal Modification

Also in the case of Medium W among Friends, as in the previous group, there is an overriding usage of HO interrogative forms, alongside some use of Negation and Conditional (Table 18).

	RP3_MONEY FROM FRIEND	RP10_NOISE-FLATMATE	RP12_LIFT FROM FRIEND
Internal Modification			
Request perspective			
Hearer Oriented	5	4	5
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	0	0	0
Speaker Oriented	0	0	0
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	4	0	0
Impersonal	0	0	0
Downgraders			
Syntactic Downgraders			
Embedded 'If' clause	1	0	0
Interrogative	4	4	4
Negation	1	2	2
Subjectivisers	0	0	0
Conditional mood	2	0	2
Past Tense	0	0	0
Other Downgraders			
Consultative Devices	0	0	0
Downtoner	0	0	0
Hedges	0	0	0
Understaters	0	2	0
Softeners	0	0	0
> <i>Please IM</i>	0	0	0
Upgraders			
Expletives	0	1	0
Intensifiers	0	0	0

Table 18_Friends Medium W IM

In terms of Request perspective, requesters made overriding use of HO (14), always associated with 'tu', as in "me lo dai un passaggio" [do **you** give me a lift?] (I11, RP12).

This seems to confirm the conclusions drawn on the Low W requests' perspectives, i.e. that the Italian Ss considered Hearer-oriented strategies constructed with 'tu' forms as the 'norm' for addressing Friends, therefore not as imposing on the addressee (Márquez Reiter, 2000), but rather in acknowledgment of their role (Venuti, 2020) and as indexing closeness and solidarity (Enfield, 2008; Molinelli, 2002; Kolková, 2008), hence as a way to do relational work.

However, in one out of the four cases where the participants rated the W as 4, the requester adopted a combination of HO and HSO, as in "io non ho i soldi quindi, come si fa? Me li.. me li anticipi **te** o.. **cambiamo** ristorante? Perché li non accettano

carte di credito... cosa **facciamo?**" [I don't have any money.. so what do **we** do? Do **you** advance it to me or.. do **we** change restaurant? Because there they don't accept credit cards.. what do **we** do?] (II4, RP3). Although this example stands alone, it seems to indicate that the perception of a higher W led the requester to avoid emphasising the role of the Hearer too much, as in the other cases. Indeed, the S used HO only once, and employed many instances of the inclusive "we" (as in "come si fa?")⁷ to reduce the impact of the imposition (Scaglia, 2003), by avoiding naming the H as the principal performer of the act (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984), as a distancing element (Caffi, 2005).

In terms of Downgraders, the data shows prevailing use of Syntactic Downgrading, and particularly of Interrogatives (12), as in "**hai mica dieci euro?**" [**do you have by any chance ten euros?**] (II1, RP3). There was some use of Negation (5), twice in combination with Other Downgraders, such as Understaters (2), as in "**non** è che puoi abbassare **un pochino** il volume per favore?" [**is it not** that you can turn the volume down **a little bit** please?] (II2, RP10). All these devices convey a higher level of hesitation, which suggests that the higher the perception of W, the higher the need for modulation, achieved by a combination of different means to express tentativeness, which can be explained as a consequence of less certainty about the positive outcome of the request (Márquez Reiter, 2000). Conversely, the fact that those requests rated as 2-3 were mitigated only by means of Conditional (4), as in "**bisognerebbe** che, per stasera, **se** tu me li presti" [**it would be needed** that, for tonight, **if** you lend them to me] (II2, RP3), which also contains the only example of Embedded "if" clause, could indicate two things. That a low perception of W relates with less need of modulation, achieved mainly by using the Conditional, which in turn seems to be used as a default softening strategy to convey a lesser degree of certainty about the propositional content (Scaglia, 2003) of the request.

From this we can conclude that the Italian Ss, similarly to the findings reported on Low W requests, regularly relied on interrogative forms as main ways to reduce the impact of their Medium W requests to Friends. However, the fact that those requesters who rated W as high used more mitigators, such as Understaters and

⁷ As clarified in section 4.2.1.1.2, in Fiorentino (Florentine dialect) the 'si' construction is used in alternative to "we" (Cinque 1988, 551, fn 34) with the force of a first-person plural pronoun (Burzio 1986, 81, fn 47). In fact, in this case the construction "come si fa?" is an alternative to "come facciamo" [how do we do?].

Negation, which signal more tentativeness, suggests that the higher perception of W inversely impacted on their expectations of compliance (Márquez Reiter et al. 2005), leading them to increase the softening to win the H's cooperativeness. Finally, the Italian Ss made no use, understandably, of CP, being again in situations among friends that did not require formality, nor did they make use of other Hedging devices, except for one instance of Embedded "if" clauses, or CD, to involve Hearer's cooperation, similarly to the results on Low W requests.

In terms of Upgraders, the data shows only one use of Expletive, made by a requester who rated the W as 4, as in "oh Robi, **porca miseria**, la vuoi abbassare questa musica??" [Oh Robi, **for fuck's sake**, do you wanna turn this music down??] (II1, RP10). Yet, in this case the S used the Expletive with a complaining function, to convey and justify the request's urgency, rather than with the intention to aggravate the compelling force of the request. It seems that the S rated the W as high not from the Hearer's perspective, but from his own perspective, which explains why he used the Expletive in a complaining way, i.e. to express his irritation impolitely.

This only example suggests that the Italian Ss did not favour aggravating their requests.

4.2.1.2.3 External Modification

Similarly to the Low W cases, the data shows an overriding use of Grounders, followed by a consistent use of Alerters, and little use of Disarmers and Please (Table 19).

	RP 03 MONEY FROM FRIEND	RP 10 STOP MAKING A NOISE - FLATMATE	ROLEPLAY 12 LIFT FROM FRIEND
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act			
Alerters			
> Attention getters	3	0	1
> Address terms	1	3	3
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0
Checking on Availability	0	0	1
Cost Minimizer	0	0	1
Disarmer	1	2	0
Establishing Relationship	0	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0
Grounder	8	6	4
Making restitutions-Offering awards	1	0	0
Please EM	1	1	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0
Sweetener	0	0	0

Table 19_Friends Medium W EM

In terms of Alerters (11), again the most used are ATs (7), particularly nicknames, as in "Oh Robi" (II1, RP10), which, as we have seen, signals proximity (Enfield,

2008) and solidarity (Scaglia, 2003), followed by AGs (4), such as “**sentì**” [listen] (II3, RP3).

The data also shows predominant use of Grounders (18), as in “**dato che siamo fuori, me ne so accorto ora che non ho contanti, eh... qui in zona un c’è bancomat e nulla, nel pub dove si sta andando non prendano carte nè nulla**” [given that we are out, and I just realised that I have no cash, eh.. here there’s no ATM or anything, the pub where we are going doesn’t take card or anything] (II2, RP3).

Disarmers (3) were used by the Ss who rated the W as 4, also in conjunction with Alerters, as in “**abbi pazienza guarda**” [have patience look] (SDP, II2, RP10).

Requesters made use of Please twice, as in “me li potresti imprestare **per favore?** [could you lend me some please?] (II3, RP3) and once of the following devices: MR, as in “se tu me li presti, **poi te li rendo il prima possibile**” [if you lend them to me, then I give you back as soon as possible] (II2, RP3); CMs, as “**in tanto l’è veloce, gna so dieci minuti.. mi dai uno strappo a casa e poi..**” [anyway it’s quick, it’s only ten minutes.. you give me a lift home and then..] (II3, RP12); CA, as in “**sentì ma eh, ma te sei in macchina?**” [listen but ehm, are you with your car?] (II2, RP12).

From this data we can observe that for Medium W requests to Friends the Italian participants, apart from relying heavily on Grounders and Alerters (and particularly on ATs, i.e. nicknames), as in the Low W contexts, did not make much use of other devices. They also did not make any use of GP, Sweeteners and, as being requests among friends, ER. However, with regard to the latter, once again we can observe that the relationship with the friend was nevertheless invoked, though indirectly, by means of using the H’s nickname, which signals closeness (Enfield, 2008), and by using ‘tu’. Overall, all this seems to confirm that, even in case of Medium W, the familiar context and the still reasonable W of the request led the participants to not use too much modulation, relying on the ideas of solidarity and reciprocity among friends (Márquez Reiter, 2000). Only those who rated the W as high made use of Disarmers, which suggests a connection not only between higher W and higher use of modulation, probably because of less certainty about a positive outcome (Márquez Reiter et al. 2005), but also between higher perception of W and a perception of the request as a potential threat, which made the requesters use Disarmers to counter a possible refusal.

4.2.2 Acquaintances

The group of Acquaintances is characterised by scenarios evaluated as Medium W, average ratings between 2.5-3.5 (ratings range 2-5) and High W, average ratings between 3.5-5 (ratings range 3-4) by the participants. The evaluation for Medium W showed a wide divergence across participants, which indicates highly variable interpretations of the scenarios within this group, while there was more consensus about the High W.

4.2.2.1 Acquaintances: Medium Weight

This group includes two scenarios, requesting a book from a Professor who is not well-known (RP6) and for an elderly neighbour to turn the volume of the TV down (RP15), rating ranging between 2-5.

4.2.2.1.1 Head Acts

There was a variety of HAs employed (Table 20), with a predominant use of RPC (7).

	RP6_BOOK FROM PROF NOT KNOW WELL	RP15_NOISE-ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR
Request Strategy type		
1_Mood derivable	0	1
2_Explicit performative	1	0
3_Hedged performative	1	0
4_Locution derivable	0	0
5_Scope stating	1	0
6_Language specific suggestory formulae	0	2
7_Reference to preparatory conditions	1	6
8_Strong Hints	0	1
9_Mild Hints	0	0

Table 20_Acquaintances Medium HAs

In these scenarios both D and W were rated differently across the participants. Out of 8 requesters, three rated D as Strangers and W as (very) high (4-5), one rated D as Acquaintance and W as high (4) and four rated D as Acquaintance and W as Low (2). This suggests that the Italian participants' (higher) perception of W was influenced by the (higher) perception of D. Yet, these different ratings did not lead to noticeably different linguistic choices, as in both cases we can detect a variety of usage, particularly for the request to borrow a book from a Professor, which does not seem to reflect a more tentative approach where the W was rated higher.

Those who rated the W as 2 used the following strategies: HP, as in “**le vorrei chiedere un piacere.. se ne avesse una copia..per imprestarmelo**” [I would like to ask you -CP- a favour.. if you -CP- have a copy, to lend me] (II1, RP6); RPC, as in “**non è che me la potrebbe prestare (..)?**” [is it not that you -CP- could lend it to me (..)??] (II3, RP6); SF, as in “**se per gentilezza me la può un pochino abbassare**” [if out of kindness you -CP- can turn it down a little bit] and in “E comunque **se l’abbassa un**

po” [And however **if you -CP- turn it down a bit..**] (II4, RP15); a combination of SH and MD, as in “**la televisione a tutto volume anche no, per favore**” [the television at full volume - just not on, please], followed by “Si ma intanto **abbassiamo** la televisione che ho da lavorare!” [Yes but in the meantime **let’s turn** the television’s volume down as I have to work!] (II2, RP15). Most of these strategies, especially the use of the HP, the RPC and the SF “*se per gentilezza me la può un pochino abbassare*” (particularly if we consider them alongside the IM -see next section) seem to reflect more tentativeness, even though the W was rated as Low by these participants. This is noteworthy, considering that the HP is classified in both CCSARP and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain’s (1984) coding schemes (hence in the one in use) as toward the direct end of the (in)directness scale. An exception to this overall tentativeness is represented by the SH + MD where, conversely, the requester appears quite straightforward, especially when he uses the MD “*abbassiamo la televisione*”, which, although modulated by means of the inclusive “we”, bears a high force, because of its construction with the imperative form, with the result of sounding impositive and even impolite (Scaglia, 2003). Nonetheless, also the use of the SF “*E comunque se l’abbassa un po’*” is indicative of less indirectness, being employed as a second request after the addressee has resisted complying with the first request, as shown in example (1).

(1) [II4, RP15] Noise from elderly neighbour

FED.A: (Toc Toc) Mi scusi, ehh, c’è questa televisione, abbia pazienza, ma ho da dare la tesi, so impegnata e non riesco a studiare, se per gentilezza me la può un pochino abbassare, perchè così non riesco veramente gua’, abbia pazienza ma, solo stasera.. [(Knock knock) Excuse me -CP-, ehh, there is this television, have patience -CP-, but I have to work on my thesis, I’m busy and I’m not able to study, if out of kindness you -CP- can turn it down a little bit, as in this way I really can’t, look, have patience -CP- but, only tonight..]

MID.M: Ehh figlia mia hai ragione, però io che ci faccio, non.. non sento, ho perso l’udito ho perso, come.. come fo? Te la posso abbassare per dieci minuti, però io sennò non sento la televisione.. [Ehh my daughter you are right, but what can I do, I can’t hear, I lost my hearing I lost, how.. how do I do? I can turn it down for you ten minutes, but otherwise I cannot hear the television..]

FED.A: Mh, va bene, che le devo dire.. eh.. gli si comprerà un amplifon signore! Eh comunque se l’abbassa un po’.. fra un po’ l’è l’11, anche un po’ meno! (alza tono).. Boh comunque, va bene, grazie.. gentile eh! [Mh, okay, what can I say to you -CP- .. eh.. We will buy you -CP- a hearing device Sir! Eh anyway if you -CP- turn it down a bit.. it’s almost 11 (pm), even a bit less! ..(rises tone) Erm anyway, all right, thanks.. kind uh!]

Here the first request (“se per gentilezza me la può un pochino abbassare”) is expressed very politely and tentatively. However, after MID.M shows resistance to comply, FED.A adopts a disappointed tone, expressed not only by the request form used (“Eh comunque se l’abbassa un po”), marked by the use of “eh comunque”, but also by the comments before (“che le devo dire.. eh.. gli si comprenderà un amplifon signore!”) and after it (“.. fra un po’ l’è l’11, anche un po’ meno!”).

Conversely, those who rated the W as 4-5 used the following strategies: RPC, as in “**potresti aprire per favoreee?!!! (..) dai potresti abbassare questa televisionee?**” [could you open pleasee?! (..) come on could you turn the volume of the television down?] (II3, RP15); SS, such as “**avrei bisogno, se può, imprestarmi il libro**” [I would need, if you -CP- can, lend me the book...] (II4, RP6); EP, as in “**le chiedo** se per caso ha” [I ask you -CP- if by chance you have] (II2, RP6). These strategies seem to convey more directness, particularly by using the Interjection ‘dai’, or the EP “le chiedo”, although the W was perceived as higher. Yet, the SS strategy “avrei bisogno” suggests more tentativeness, because the requester does not explicitly ask the hearer to do anything, but simply asserts his own needs/wants in an attempt to obtain H’s compliance. This conclusion is consistent with Biesenbach-Lucas (2006, 91), who coded ‘want statements’ as conventionally indirect requests and ‘need statements’ as hints, in an adapted version of the CCSARP coding scheme.

Furthermore, as observed by Márquez Reiter (2000) on Spanish request realisation, these sorts of constructions are generally used in cases where there is an ‘institutional’ (e.g. within a work environment) or ‘social’ (e.g. amongst friends) pressure to comply with the request. Considering that the scenario of borrowing a book from a Professor implied a certain urgency, as the student needed the book to complete a task required by the institution in a particular time frame, this request can be included within the idea of ‘institutional pressure’. Hence, the use of this strategy could be deemed as employed, in a conventional way, to indirectly request the addressee to fulfil the S’s need.

Overall, we can conclude that, against the different ratings of D and W, in case of Medium W requests to Acquaintances the Italian requesters showed a much-varied use of strategies, the choice of which does not seem to directly connect with the perception of D and W but, rather, seems to depend on expectations of compliance (Márquez Reiter et al. 2005). Where D and W were rated higher the requesters used

strategies that fall within the more direct end of the scale of indirectness, while where D and W were rated lower the requesters used strategies that fall within the more indirect end of this scale. This phenomenon could be explained in two ways. Firstly, in both cases the illocutionary force of such strategies was reduced by means of IM (see next section), which made those strategies more tentative, hence more polite. Secondly, we could argue that in these contexts the urgency and possibly the feeling of legitimacy of the requests (i.e. the expectation that the Professor would help because of his role and that the neighbour would understand being at fault and therefore would be willing to cooperate) led the requesters not to be too much concerned about sounding too direct. This particularly holds true for the case of requesting the neighbour to turn the volume down, where the data showed more straightforward moves, as in *“Si ma intanto abbassiamo la televisione”*, in *“dai potresti abbassare questa televisionee?”* and even in *“E comunque se l’abbassa un po”*. The use of these blunt strategies seems to stem from an expectation of compliance from the neighbours, which “derives from what the informants deem are the rights and obligations of a given role relationship” (Márquez Reiter et al. 2005, 19), i.e. that the neighbours should not have the TV’s volume very high at night and that it is their right to demand they turn it down. Put differently, as also observed by Márquez Reiter and colleagues (2005, 19), “there is a relationship between expectations of compliance and the actual language employed in the realization of conventionally indirect requests”.

4.2.2.1.2 Internal Modification

There was a varied usage of IM, with an overwhelming use of CP, Embedded “if” clauses, and Hearer-Oriented interrogative forms (Table 21).

	RP6_BOOK FROM PROF NOT KNOW WELL	RP15_NOISE-ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR
Internal Modification		
Request perspective		
Hearer Oriented	3	9
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	6	3
Speaker Oriented	3	0
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	1
Impersonal	0	1
Downgraders		
Syntactic Downgraders		
Embedded 'If' clause	3	2
Interrogative	1	6
Negation	1	1
Subjectivisers	0	0
Conditional mood	4	4
Past Tense	0	0
Other Downgraders		
Consultative Devices	0	0
Downtoner	1	0
Hedges	0	0
Understaters	1	3
Softeners	0	1
> <i>Please IM</i>	0	0
Upgraders		
Expletives	0	0
Intensifiers	0	1

Table 21_Acquaintances Medium IM

In terms of Request perspective, requesters predominantly used HO (12), mainly associated with the CP (9), to pay respect, as in “se **può**, imprestarmi il libro [if **you -CP-** can, lend me the book] (II4, RP6). There was also some use of SO (3), again in association with the CP, as in “**le vorrei** chiedere un piacere” [I would like to ask **you -CP-** a favour] (II1, RP6), one instance of Impersonal, as in “**la televisione** a tutto volume anche no” [**the television** at full volume - just not on] (II2, RP15) and one of HSO, as in “Si ma intanto **abbassiamo** la televisione” [Yes but in the meantime **let’s** turn the television’s volume down] (II2, RP15).

This suggests that requesters mainly relied on strategies that emphasise the role of the Hearer, by means of combination with the CP, which, in the Italian language, is a default strategy employed to show respect and distance (Kolková, 2008; Molinelli, 2015) toward someone, who, as in these cases, is either in a position of authority or of an elder age (Renzi, 1993; Scaglia, 2003). As observed about the use of ‘tu’, also the use of ‘lei’ allows to do relational work, and its use also signal indirectness. The use of the CP is made by addressing someone in the 2nd singular person by using the 3rd singular person. This use, which is reflected in the verbal conjugation, creates displacement. This in turn creates “distantiation” (Silverstein, 2003, 209), which has the overall effect of achieving indirect addressivity (Lempert, 2012), since the H is addressed indirectly by means of 3rd singular pronoun. Yet, its primary function is to acknowledge the H’s status (Ruytenbeek, 2021), and the indirectness created with the distantiation technique is only the direct

consequence. However, as the data shows, the CP can be used in addressing the H also by using the SO, since using SO does not change the fact that the verbal conjugation is in third singular form to respectfully address the H. This generalised use of the CP has two implications. Firstly that, in actual fact, the main way to use the CP to convey R is by using HO, and secondly that, for this reason, using this orientation is the normal form to respectfully address an unfamiliar person. Therefore, although using Hearer-orientation is usually perceived as putting the burden on the H (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984), this is not the case in every lingua-culture, such as Italian, where it can actually be a positive politeness strategy to show, as observed in section 4.1, either familiarity (by means of 'tu') or respectful distance (by means of 'lei'). Considering that the use of the other perspectives (i.e. SO and Impersonal), by removing the focus from the H, signals a concern for softening the impact of the request, overall this shows that the participants adopted a more respectful and tentative approach toward the Acquaintances. The only exception to this is represented by the use of HSO in "*Si ma intanto abbassiamo la televisione*", where the first plural "we" here appears to convey imposition, hence could be deemed as impolite, since it is as if the S, by using "we", is inappropriately invading the H's space (Scaglia, 2003).

In terms of Syntactic Downgrading, the data shows consistent use of Interrogatives (7), as in "**mi può far sto piacere?**" [**can you -CP- do me this favour?**] (II1, RP15), alongside Conditionals (8) and Embedded "if" clauses (5), sometimes combined together, as in "**avrei bisogno, se può, imprestarmi il libro**" [**I would need, if you -CP- can, lend me the book**] (II4, RP6). Negation was used twice in combination with Understaters (4), as in "**può mica abbassare un pò la televisione?**" [**can you -CP- by any chance turn the television's volume down a little bit?**] (II1, RP15). For the Other Downgraders, there was one instance each of Softeners, such as "**se per gentilezza me la può un pochino abbassare**" [**if out of kindness you -CP- can turn it down a little bit**] (II4, RP15) and Downtoners, as in "**le chiedo se per caso ha**" [**I ask you -CP- if by chance you -CP- have**] (II2, RP6).

From this we can conclude that the Italian participants, in case of Medium W requests to Acquaintances, made large use of Downgrading, particularly by means of Interrogatives, often associated with Conditional, Embedded "if" clauses and Understaters, which all together reflects a tentative approach, signalling awareness

of the possibility of non-compliance by the Hearer. This higher use of IM seems to be directly proportional to the higher D, which entails less certainty about the unfamiliar H's willingness to cooperate (Márquez Reiter et al., 2005). Conversely, the data shows no use, once again, of Hedges and PT.

Finally, in terms of Upgraders, there was only one example of Intensifiers, as in “la televisione **a tutto volume** anche no, per favore” [the television **at full volume** - just not on, please] (II2, RP15), which shows that this strategy, employed by the requester's to show annoyance with the situation, which led to over-representing “the reality denoted in the proposition” (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, 204), was not among the preferred ones. Yet, the use of ‘*per favore*’ here could also be considered as an Intensifier, as observed by Fedriani (2019, 235), who argued how in some cases, “when please is characterized by an emphatic intonation”, as it was in this example, “it functions rather as an ‘insistent reinforcement of the directive’”. That is, it is used with an upgrading function directed to aggravate the urgency of the request, whose implied meaning is “now ‘I urge you to do it’” (Wichmann, 2005, 243).

4.2.2.1.3 External Modification

Requesters used many Alerters (7), such as ATs (3), sometimes combined with other AGs, as in “**Professore Buongiorno, senta**” [Professor good morning, listen] (II2, RP6), and Excuses (4), as in “**Mi scusi**” [CP- Excuse me] (II4, RP15), whose consistent use indicates more concern about invading the Acquaintance's space and freedom (i.e. they were used as negative politeness strategies) (Table 22).

	RP6_BOOK FROM PROF NOT KNOW WELL	RP15_NOISE-ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act		
Alerters		
> Attention getters	0	0
> Address terms	3	0
> excuse me_sorry	0	3
> excuse me_sorry+AT	1	0
Checking on Availability	0	0
Cost Minimizer	4	1
Disarmer	0	3
Establishing Relationship	2	0
Getting a precommitment	1	0
Grounder	8	12
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0
Please EM	0	4
Requestive Interjections	0	1
Sweetener	0	0

Table 22_Acquaintances Medium EM

There was overriding use of complex Grounders (20), in some instances also used in long sequences, in association with other features, such as GP (1) and ER (2), as in the following extract (2).

(2) [I11, RP6] Book from Professor

EMA.G: Scusi Professore.. [Excuse me -CP- Professor...]

LOR.B: Sì? [Yes?]

EMA.G: son Gigi e.. sono del suo corso..ho bisogno di un piacere.. [I'm Gigi and... I'm in your course.. I need a favour..]

LOR.B: mi dica.. [tell me -CP-]

EMA.G: non riesco a trovare il suo libro..ehm..per poter studiare per l'esame.. [I cannot find your book.. ehm..to study for the exam..]

LOR.B: mhh

EMA.G: per prendere appunti, e le vorrei chiedere un piacere..se ne avesse una copia..per imprestarmelo..perchè in biblioteca non ce ne è più.. [to take some notes, and I would like to ask you -CP- a favour..if you -CP- would have a copy, to lend me...because there are no more copies in the library..]

LOR.B: capisco..cerco la copia e le faccio sapere, può tornare tra dieci minuti? [I see..I look for the copy and let you -CP- know, can you -CP- come back in ten minutes?]

Here EMA.G starts off with an Alerter (“Scusi Professore”), in the form of Excuse me + AT, to get the H’s attention. After the positive response of LOR.B (“sì?”), which indicates that the H’s attention is captured, the requester proceeds with an ER, i.e. “son Gigi e.. sono del suo corso”, used as a positive politeness strategy to close the distance gap to obtain the H’s understanding and cooperativeness, followed by the GP “ho bisogno di un piacere”, to set the basis for the request. The turn is interrupted by LOR.B’s response “mi dica”, which indicates acceptance of the request for a precommittal. A Grounder follows, such as “non riesco a trovare il suo libro..ehm..per poter studiare per l’esame..”, once again interrupted by LOR.B’s response particle “mhh” in acknowledgment, which is followed by a final Grounder, i.e. “per prendere appunti”, followed by the request, supported by “perchè in biblioteca non ce ne è più”. This sequence shows two things: that the complex use of Grounders is employed to gain H’s understanding of the situation and willingness to help, and that the H’s responses show his solidarity, signalling a willingness to comply, which is confirmed by LOR.B’s positive response.

There was also some use of CMs (5), as in “**e poi glielo riporto**”? [**and I bring it back to you -CP-?**] (I13, RP6), to reduce the cost of the request for the book by signalling the intention of bringing it back, and of Disarmers (3), as in “c’è questa televisione,

abbia pazienza” [there’s this TV, -CP- **have patience**] (I14, RP15), where the requester signals awareness of the possible offence of his request, but also, with this particular disarmer, seeks solidarity (Vincent Marrelli, 1988).

There were four instances of Please, once in combination with one Interjection (*‘dai’*), as in “potresti aprire **per favoreee?!!!** (..) **Per favore dai** potresti abbassare questa televisionee?” [could you open **pleeease?!!** (..) **Please come on** could you turn the volume of the television down?] (I13, RP15).

From this data we can conclude that the Italian participants, in making Medium W requests to Acquaintances, made consistent use, once again, of Alerters, to get the attention of the Hearer, and of Grounders, to give detailed reasons to justify their requests. However, the use of Alerters, in these cases by means of ATs and Excuses, signalled more consideration and respect for the less well-known H. Additionally, the use of complex Grounders could be explainable considering that the relationship type did not allow for expectations of solidarity and interdependence, as amongst friends, which led the requesters to fill the distance gap (alongside by using twice ER with the Professor) by giving detailed accounts of the reasons for their requests to gain the H’s understanding and support (Márquez Reiter, 2000). Further, the requesters showed they preferred conveying consideration for the cost to the Hearer, by means of CMs, rather than indicating awareness of the potential offence of the request, by means of Disarmers. This suggests that the Italian participants, in case of Medium W requests to Acquaintances, perceived the impact of the request more in terms of potential and objective cost, implied in its fulfilment, rather than as an offence, which concept seems to relate more with the idea of imposition/invading other’s space/freedom (i.e. negative politeness).

4.2.2.2 Acquaintances: High Weight

This sub-group is represented by a single scenario, asking a lift from a known Professor (RP9), rating ranging between 3-4.

4.2.2.2.1 Head Acts

The Ss employed various HA strategies for this High W request to an Acquaintance (Table 23).

	RP9_LIFT FROM PROFESSOR
Request Strategy type	
1_Mood derivable	0
2_Explicit performative	0
3_Hedged performative	1
4_Locution derivable	0
5_Scope stating	0
6_Language specific suggestory formulae	1
7_Reference to preparatory conditions	2
8_Strong Hints	0
9_Mild Hints	0

Table 23_Acquaintances High W HAs

Although the slight difference in rating W, i.e. between 3-4, this seems to not be reflected in the choices made by the requesters. The only requester who rated W as 3 used a HP, as in “**gli posso chiedere** un passaggio?” [**can I ask you** -CP- a lift?] (II2), whereas the other three requesters, who rated W as 4, used either RPC (2), as in “**mi può dare** un passaggio?” [**can you** -CP- **give me** a lift?] (II1) or SF as in “**se gentilmente mi può dare** un passaggio” [**if kindly you** -CP- **can give me** a lift] (II4). Yet, all these strategies, by checking the possibility of the act being performed, in combination with the CP, the modal “can” and the interrogative form, reflect a tentative and respectful approach. This, as observed in the previous section on Medium W, in contrast with the classification given in the coding scheme for the HP as closer to the direct end of the scale of (in)directness.

4.2.2.2.2 Internal Modification

Also in case of High W requests to Acquaintances there was wide use of HO interrogative forms, associated with CP and “if” clauses (Table 24).

	RP9_LIFT FROM PROFESSOR
Internal Modification	
Request perspective	
Hearer Oriented	3
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	4
Speaker Oriented	1
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0
Impersonal	0
Downgraders	
Syntactic Downgraders	
Embedded 'If' clause	2
Interrogative	3
Negation	1
Subjectivisers	0
Conditional mood	1
Past Tense	0
Other Downgraders	
Consultative Devices	1
Downtoner	0
Hedges	0
Understaters	0
Softeners	1
> <i>Please IM</i>	1
Upgraders	
Expletives	0
Intensifiers	0

Table 24_Acquaintances High W IM

In terms of Request perspective, the Hearer-orientation (3) in conjunction with the CP (4) was once again predominant, as in “mi **può** dare un passaggio?” [can **you** -CP- give me a lift?] (II1 and II4), followed by only one example of SO +CP, as in “**gli** **posso** chiedere un passaggio?” [can **I** ask **you** -CP- a lift?] (II2). This shows that, as in the previous case, the participants preferred to emphasise the role of the Hearer in formulating their requests, alongside showing respectful distance by using ‘*lei*’, which allows for relational work to be done.

In terms of Syntactic Downgraders, participants mostly used Interrogatives (3), as in “**gli** **posso** chiedere un passaggio?” [can **I** ask **you** -CP- a lift?] (II2). There were two instances of Embedded “if” clauses, as in “**se** non è un problema mi può dare un passaggio?” [If it’s not a problem can you -CP- give me a lift?] (II1) and one instance each of Conditional, Negation and Please, combined together, as in “**mica** mi **potrebbe** dare **per favore** un passaggio, verso l’Impruneta?” [**by any chance** could you -CP- **please** give me a lift, toward Impruneta?] (II3). In terms of Other Downgraders, there was one instance each of Softener and CD, used together, as in “**se** **gentilmente** mi può dare un passaggio... **Le scoccia**?” [if you -CP- can **kindly** give me a lift.. **Do you** -CP- mind?] (II4).

From the above we can conclude that the Italian participants, in case of High W request to an Acquaintance, relied, as in the previous Medium W cases, mainly on

Interrogative forms to address the Hearer, further downgraded with “if” clauses and other devices, which signal awareness of the possibility of non-compliance, therefore uncertainty and tentativeness. However, in the only case where the W was rated as 3 the requester made use only of CP and HO interrogative form, which suggests that these strategies are considered the norm in case of addressing a not very well-known person, regardless of the W of the request. Finally, once more there was no use of Hedges and PT, which corroborates the previous conclusions about being these strategies not among the preferred ones by the Italian Ss, and they made no use of Upgraders.

4.2.2.2.3 External Modification

There was an overriding use of Grounders and CMs, followed by some use of Alerters and CA (Table 25).

	RP9_LIFT FROM PROFESSOR
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	
Alerters	
> <i>Attention getters</i>	0
> <i>Address terms</i>	0
> <i>excuse me_sorry</i>	1
> <i>excuse me_sorry+AT</i>	1
Checking on Availability	2
Cost Minimizer	3
Disarmer	1
Establishing Relationship	0
Getting a precommitment	0
Grounder	4
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0
Please EM	0
Requestive Interjections	0
Sweetener	0

Table 25_Aquaintances High W EM

In terms of Alerters, there were two uses of Excuses, which again seems to convey more concern about sounding as invading the Acquaintance’s space, once combined with an AT, as in “**Scusi Professoressa**” [Excuse me Professor] (II3).

Grounders (4) were used by all requesters, alongside three CMs, two CA and one Disarmer, once combined all together, as in the following extract (3):

(3) [II4, RP9] Lift from Professor

FED.A: Ahhh eh, mi scusi, buonasera, abbia pazienza, per l’appunto ho perso l’ultimo tram per andare a casa, e so che lei abita nella mia zona, che sta andando a casa per caso? Così che se gentilmente mi può dare un passaggio... Le scoccia? [Ahhh eh, excuse me -CP-, good evening, have -CP- patience, as a matter of fact I have missed the last bus to go home, and I know that you -CP- live in my area, are you -CP- going home by chance, so that if you -CP- can kindly give me a lift.. Do you -CP- mind?]

FED.A starts with the Alerter “mi scusi”, followed by a greeting and the Disarmer “abbia pazienza”, then by a Grounder (“ho perso l’ultimo tram per andare a casa”), supported by the CM “so che lei abita nella mia zona” and by the CA “che sta andando a casa per caso?”, even before making the request, in an attempt to soften its impact, by leaving the possibility to the H to refuse (especially considering the use of the CD “le scoccia?”).

From the above we can conclude that the Italian Ss, in making High W requests to Acquaintances, made consistent use, as in the previous case, of Grounders, as the main means to support their requests, accompanied by some Alerters. Furthermore, the significant use of CA, by making sure, first, that the preconditions necessary for compliance with the request hold true, and of CMs, by indicating awareness of the possible cost to the Hearer in complying with the request, signalled a more tentative approach than in the previous case. The higher use of modulation, in an overall attempt to win H’s understanding and solidarity, can be explained in terms of the inverse relationship between D/W and expectations, i.e. the higher D and W entail lower expectations of compliance and higher consideration for H’s freedom of action (Márquez Reiter, 2000). Conversely, the requesters made no use of GP, which could be interpretable as a respect-related strategy, considering the H’s position of authority and therefore the high level of formality of the situation, which might have precluded the use of this device, as it could have possibly been perceived as an inadequate ask, thus impolite.

4.2.3 Strangers

Finally, the group of Strangers is characterised by three sub-groups, with requests on average rated by the participants as Low W, average ratings between 1-2.5 (ratings range 1-3), Medium W, average ratings between 2.5-3.5 (ratings range 2-4), and High W, average ratings between 3.5-5 (ratings range 4-5). Hence, the data shows that there was moderate consensus on the interpretation of the scenarios within each of the three sub-groups, with little variation across participants.

4.2.3.1 Strangers: Low Weight

This category includes two requests for information (RP2 and RP5), rating ranging between 1-3. The distinction between RP2, involving requesting someone of the same age, and RP5, involving requesting from an elderly person, was made to

investigate whether and how the age factor influenced participants' linguistic choices.

4.2.3.1.1 Head Acts

In case of Low W requests to Strangers the Ss made overriding use of RPC strategies (8) in both scenarios (Table 26), as in “sto cercando gli Uffizi, **sa mica...dirmi..?**” [I’m looking for the Uffizi, **can you -CP-** by any chance **tell me..?**] (II1, RP5) and in “**Mi diresti** per favore dov’è la biblioteca?” [**Would you tell me** please where’s the library?] (II3, RP2). There was only one instance of LD, as in “**per la biblioteca**, in via della Scala?” [**for the library**, in della Scala street?] (II1, RP2).

	RP2_INFORMATION FROM STRANGER	RP5_INFORMATION FROM ELDERLY
Request Strategy type		
1 Mood derivable	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0
4 Locution derivable	1	0
5 Scope stating	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	3	5
8 Strong Hints	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0

Table 26_Strangers Low W HAS

This shows that in asking Strangers for information, regardless of their age, the Italian requesters relied mainly on strategies that allow them to check on H’s ability/willingness to help, as a means to show politeness and consideration for the Stranger’s freedom, by not assuming compliance.

4.2.3.1.2 Internal Modification

Participants made overwhelming use of HO interrogative forms, associated with the CP (Table 27).

	RP2_INFORMATION FROM STRANGER	RP5_INFORMATION FROM ELDERLY
Internal Modification		
Request perspective		
Hearer Oriented	3	5
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	3	5
Speaker Oriented	0	0
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0
Impersonal	1	0
Downgraders		
Syntactic Downgraders		
Embedded 'If' clause	0	1
Interrogative	4	5
Negation	2	1
Subjectivisers	0	0
Conditional mood	1	2
Past Tense	0	0
Other Downgraders		
Consultative Devices	0	0
Downtoner	0	2
Hedges	0	0
Understaters	0	0
Softeners	0	0
> <i>Please IM</i>	1	0
Upgraders		
Expletives	0	0
Intensifiers	0	0

Table 27_ Strangers Low W IM

In terms of Request perspective, the requests were mainly Hearer-oriented in association with the CP (8 each), as in “**sa** mica dov’è la biblioteca?” [do **you -CP-** by any chance know where’s the library?] (II4, RP2), or in “mi **potrebbe** dire dove è che si trova?” [could **you -CP-** tell me where it is?] (II3, RP5), except for one use of Impersonal, as in “**per la biblioteca**, in via della Scala?” [**for the library**, in della Scala street?] (II1, RP2).

From the above we can conclude that the Italian Ss, in making Low W requests to Strangers, primarily relied again on the use of Hearer-oriented strategies + CP, as a means to address the H politely and respectfully.

In terms of Syntactic Downgraders, the requesters made consistent use of Interrogatives (9), as in “**sa dov’è per caso?**” [**do you -CP- know where it is, by chance?**] (II4, RP5). Apart from this, the data shows some use of Conditional (3), as in “mi **potrebbe** dire dove è che si trova?” [**could** you -CP- tell me where it is?] (II3, RP2), and Negation (3), as in “sa **mica**...dirmi da che parte devo andare?” [can you -CP- **by any chance** tell me where I have to go?] (II2, RP2) and one instance of Embedded “if” clause, such as “**se** mi sa dire” [**if** you -CP- can you tell me] (II2, RP5). In terms of Other Downgraders, the requesters employed two Downtoners, such as “**per caso** mi saprebbe dire” [**by chance** would you -CP- be able to tell me] (II4, RP5) and one Please, as in “Mi diresti **per favore** dov’è la biblioteca” [Would you tell me **please** where’s the library] (II3, RP2). No use of Upgraders was recorded.

From all this we can conclude that the Italian Ss relied mainly on interrogative forms to soften the impact of their Low W requests to Strangers, alongside some use of Conditional to show uncertainty and indirectness in addressing the Stranger and of Negation to reduce the impact of their requests, by avoiding placing an obligation on the H by signalling that the S anticipates a negative response, as a means to be polite. This seems to confirm the conclusion that the higher the D, the more the Italian participants preferred to soften their requests by signalling uncertainty about the positive outcome (similarly, for Spanish requests, see Márquez Reiter, 2000). Finally, the participants did not favour the use of other devices, such as Subjectivisers, CD and, once again, Hedges, to downgrade their requests.

4.2.3.1.3 External Modification

Requesters predominantly used Alerters and Grounders (Table 28).

	RP2_INFORMATION FROM STRANGER	RP5_INFORMATION FROM ELDERLY
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act		
Alerters		
> <i>Attention getters</i>	0	0
> <i>Address terms</i>	0	2
> <i>excuse me_sorry</i>	4	3
> <i>excuse me_sorry+AT</i>	0	0
Checking on Availability	1	0
Cost Minimizer	0	1
Disarmer	0	0
Establishing Relationship	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0
Grounder	4	5
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0
Please EM	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0
Sweetener	0	0

Table 28_Strangers Low W EM

The Alerters (9) were employed to get the H's attention, mainly by using Excuses (7), as in "mi scusi" [excuse me -CP-] (I12, RP2), followed by two instances of ATs, such as "Buonasera signora" [Good evening Madame] (I13, RP5), signalling awareness of the possible disturb and respect. The requesters made large use of Grounders (9), as in "Sto cercando il museo della scienza" [I'm looking for the museum of the science] (I14, RP5), to justify their requests, while used only one CM, as in "vedo che.. sta venendo nella mia direzione.." [I see.. you -CP- are coming in my direction..] (I12, RP5) and one CA, as in "scusa, scusa, posso fare una domanda?" [Sorry, sorry, can I ask a question?] (I13, RP2).

From the above we can conclude that the Italian participants, in making Low W requests to Strangers, mainly relied on Alerters, to get the H's attention by apologising for the possible inconvenience and by showing respect, and on

Grounders, to give reasons to foreground their requests. In this case, however, where Grounders were less complex than in the previous cases and were used to give basic information in support of the request, we would argue that they can be interpreted as negative politeness strategies, used to signal consideration for the stranger, “providing a ‘good enough’ stance from which to ask the addressee to interrupt his/her course of action in order to help the speaker” (Márquez Reiter, 2000, 129). Other than that, the participants did not make any use of other devices, such as Disarmers, CMs, ER or Sweeteners to downgrade their requests, possibly considering the Low W, nor of GP or MR, which can be explained by the type of context, where these type of moves would not be pertinent.

4.2.3.2 Strangers: Medium Weight

Within this sub-group falls the request to the stranger for a cigarette (RP8) and for something to note some details down from an ad (RP13), rating ranging between 2-4.

4.2.3.2.1 Head Acts

Although the different rating of W, spanning from low to high (2-4), there are not noticeable differences in HA strategy choice, as the most used strategy was, again, RPC (10), as in “**Avrebbe** una pena?” [**Would you -CP- have** a pen?] (I14, RP13) (Table 29).

	RP 08 CIGARETTE FROM STRANGER	RP 13 FAVOUR FROM A STRANGER
Request Strategy type		
1 Mood derivable	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0
3 Hedged performative	1	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	4	6
8 Strong Hints	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0

Table 29_ Strangers Medium W HAs

The only notable difference was detected in asking for a cigarette, where the requester who rated the W as 4 used a HP, as in “**ti posso chiedere** una sigaretta? [**can I ask you** a cigarette?] (I12, RP8), which once more, as observed in case of requests to Acquaintances, although it is classified in the coding scheme in use as closer to the direct end of the (in)directness scale, here seems to signal more tentativeness. Its construction as question form + the use of the modal in present indicative form “ti posso” appears to be used to check whether the act can be performed, therefore signalling hesitation and uncertainty.

From this we can conclude that the Italian participants, in making Medium W requests to Strangers, relied mainly on the use of strategies that allow the S to ascertain the H's willingness/possibility to comply, showing that compliance is not taken for granted, as a means to be polite. The more hesitant approach here is significant, particularly if compared with the previous results about friends, where the Italian Ss showed more certainty of compliance and therefore less tentativeness in their approach, which corroborates the previous conclusions about the Italian Ss being mostly influenced by D, where more distance leads to less certainty.

4.2.3.2.2 Internal Modification

Participants mainly made use of HO, alongside the CP, interrogative forms and Negation, while made no use of Upgraders (Table 30).

	RP8_CIGARETTE FROM STRANGER	RP13_FAVOUR FROM A STRANGER
Internal Modification		
Request perspective		
Hearer Oriented	4	8
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	3	5
Speaker Oriented	1	0
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0
Impersonal	0	0
Downgraders		
Syntactic Downgraders		
Embedded 'If' clause	0	0
Interrogative	5	6
Negation	3	4
Subjectivisers	0	0
Conditional mood	1	2
Past Tense	0	0
Other Downgraders		
Consultative Devices	0	0
Downtoner	0	3
Hedges	0	0
Understaters	0	0
Softeners	0	0
> <i>Please IM</i>	0	0
Upgraders		
Expletives	0	0
Intensifiers	0	0

Table 30_Strangers Medium W IM

In terms of Request perspective, the data shows overwhelming use of HO (12), mainly in combination with the CP (8), as in “**c’ha** mica una sigaretta da offrirmi” [do you –CP- have by any chance a cigarette to offer me] (I14, RP8). The high use of this strategy, regardless of the perception of W, corroborates the conclusion that Hearer-orientation, modulated by the CP, is the main means to show consideration and respect for the unknown Hearer (Molinelli, 2015; Kolková, 2008), by allowing to do relational work. There was only one use of SO, such as “ti **posso** chiedere una sigaretta? [can I ask you for a cigarette?] (I12, RP8) which was employed by one of

the two requesters who rated the W as high. This perspective was used without association with the CP, which could be interpretable as an attempt to close the D gap and activate H's companionship. Indeed, we could argue that the fact of both (S and H) being smokers is a common ground and that highlighting this "has the function of building an epistemological bridge with the interlocutor" (Venuti, 2020, 134). Still, the fact that the requester chose to stress the role of the S implies the choice to avoid identifying the addressee as the principal performer of the request, to reduce its imposition (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984), therefore as a way to be polite and show consideration for the H. This conclusion seems to support the one drawn in section 4.2.2.1.2, where the use of SO was associated with tentativeness. Overall, this data shows that in Medium W requests to Strangers the participants were concerned with showing consideration to the H, by mostly using HO, modulated by the CP, to show respect to the unknown addressee.

In terms of Syntactic Downgraders, the participants made consistent use of Interrogatives (11), often associated with Negation (7) and sometimes with Conditionals (3), as in "*non avrebbe mica una sigaretta..?*" [*wouldn't you -CP- have by any chance a cigarette?*] (II1, RP8) or with Other Downgraders, such as Downtoners (3) (i.e. '*per caso*'), as in "*mica ha una penna per caso?*" [in this case translatable as: *don't you happen to have a pen by chance?*] (II3, RP13). The frequent use of this combination of devices, regardless of the perception of W, suggests that this type of Downgrading was employed as a default strategy to convey more indirectness and uncertainty about a positive outcome.

From the above we can conclude that the Italian requesters, in the case of Medium W, downgraded their requests to Strangers mainly by using interrogative forms and Negation, alongside some Conditionals and Downtoners, whose overall usage show tentativeness and the awareness of the possibility of non-compliance by the H. The fact that in such cases the lack of relationship did not allow for the expectation of reciprocity and solidarity to take place, as among friends (Márquez Reiter, 2000), could explain the higher use of Negation, whose use signals the Italian participants' pessimistic view about the unknown H's willingness to cooperate.

4.2.3.2.3 External Modification

Requesters made consistent use of Grounders and Alerters, followed by some use of Please (Table 31).

	RP 08 CIGARETTE FROM STRANGER	RP 13 FAVOUR FROM A STRANGER
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act		
Alerters		
> Attention getters	0	0
> Address terms	0	0
> excuse me_sorry	3	3
> excuse me_sorry+AT	1	1
Checking on Availability	1	0
Cost Minimizer	0	0
Disarmer	0	1
Establishing Relationship	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0
Grounder	5	5
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0
Please EM	1	2
Requestive Interjections	0	2
Sweetener	0	0

Table 31_Strangers Medium W EM

In terms of Alerters (8), requesters only used Excuses, twice combined with ATs, as in “**Mi scusi...signorina**” [Excuse me -CP-...Miss] (II4, RP8) which use denotes, as observed in section 4.2.3.1.3, a way to politely get the attention of the H, especially if associated with the CP, by showing concern about the possible inconvenience and respect.

Participants also made consistent use of Grounders (10), often used together with Alerters, and sometimes in combination with other devices, such as Interjections (2) and Please (3), as in the following example (4):

(4) [II3, RP13] Favour from Stranger

SAR.B: Scusi scusi signore?...mmh mica ha una penna per caso? [Excuse me excuse me -CP- Sir, eh don't you happen to have a pen by chance?]

ENR.F: una penna dietro un ce l'ho.. [I don't have a pen with me..]

SAR.B: mah e dai per favore, guardi, ho trovato un annuncio molto interessante per un appartamento in affitto, mi servirebbe segnarmi il numero, dai per favore, ha qualcosa che posso, per, con cui scrivere..? [but eh, come on please, look -CP-, I found this very interesting ad for a flat to rent, I would need to write the number down, come on please, do you -CP- have anything that I can, for, with which to write..?]

ENR.F: no c'ho il cellulare, casomai ti mando un messaggio dopo sul.. cellulare.. su WhatsApp.. [no I have the phone, maybe I send you a text later to.. your phone.. on WhatsApp..]

Here the requester starts off with an Alerter, by means of Excuse me + AT (“Scusi scusi signore”), to get the attention of the Stranger politely, addressing him with the CP and by apologising, before performing the request. After the addressee’s negative response (“una penna dietro un ce l’ho”), SAR.B reinforces the request twice by using a combination of Interjection and Please (“dai per favore”) and supports it with a detailed Grounder (“ho trovato un annuncio molto interessante

per un appartamento in affitto, mi serverebbe segnarmi il numero”), which this time obtains H’s cooperation. It is noteworthy that the use of the Interjection ‘*dai*’, with the exhortative function of urging the H to do something (Benigni & Nuzzo, 2018; Ghezzi & Molinelli, 2014), showing no consideration for H’s freedom, could be deemed as more threatening, hence inappropriately direct and thus impolite. However, this blunt approach could be explained in terms of urgency, where the requester used this device to signal the importance of the act being requested, yet softened it by using Please, in an appeal for H’s cooperation (Schiffrin, 1987), i.e. as a positive politeness strategy. This interpretation seems supported by the fact that this strategy received a positive response from the H, i.e. succeed in activating H’s cooperativeness, which leads to concluding that it was not perceived as impolite by the addressee.

Finally, the data shows one example each of CA, such as “**ehmmm lei fuma?**” [**ehhmmm, do you -CP- smoke?**] (II1, RP8) and of a Disarmer, such as “Eh mi scusi, **abbia pazienza**” [Eh excuse me -CP-, **have -CP- patience**] (II4, RP13), used to preface the request, in an attempt to anticipate the possible refusal. This latter use was made in one of the two cases where the W was rated as high, which could indicate, though it is only one example, that the high(er) perception of W led to the use of a device that acknowledges the possible offence in an attempt to avoid a refusal.

From the above data we can conclude that the Italian participants, in making Medium W requests to Strangers, regardless of the perception of W, made ample use of Alerters and Grounders, as they did in the Low W cases. The Alerters, in the form of Excuses, were used to get the unknown H’s attention in an apologetic and therefore polite way, especially when associated with the CP. The Grounders, in this case, were used in complex constructions, i.e. by giving detailed reasons in support of the requests, which seem to reflect positive politeness moves directed to obtain the H’s understanding and cooperation (Márquez Reiter, 2000). They also used some Please, again, regardless of the perception of W, which suggests that their use was dependent on D only, where the unfamiliarity with the stranger led the requesters to show more tentativeness and politeness. Conversely, the fact that the participants did not make much use of other devices could indicate that the perception of W as Medium meant that the request was not considered so big to require that much modulation.

4.2.3.3 Strangers: High Weight

This category is represented by a single scenario (RP11), involving requesting some help from a new neighbour in moving things into a new flat, W rating ranging between 4-5.

4.2.3.3.1 Head Acts

In this case there was a variety of HA strategies used (Table 32).

	RP 11 FAVOUR FROM NEW NEIGHBOUR
Request Strategy type	
1 Mood derivable	0
2 Explicit performative	0
3 Hedged performative	1
4 Locution derivable	0
5 Scope stating	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	2
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	2
8 Strong Hints	0
9 Mild Hints	0

Table 32_ Strangers High W HAs

RPC were used twice, once combined with a SF (2), as in “**c’hai mica, per caso, la possibilità di darmi una mano?**” [don’t you happen to have, by chance, the possibility to give me a hand?], followed by “**si va a prender ste cose**” [we go to get those things] (II1). There was one use each of SF, as in “**se gentilmente hai due minuti, facciamo un viaggio, prendiamo le ultime mie cose**” [if kindly you have two minutes, we do a journey, we take my last things] (II4) and of HP, as in “**ti volevo chiedere se mi potresti dare una mano**” [I wanted to ask you if you could give me a hand] (II2).

This data indicated that, although with different strategies, the Italian participants, in making High W requests to Strangers, always showed tentativeness. They either checked on H’s availability/willingness to comply and/or made suggestions or, when they used a HP, defined as close to the direct end of the (in)directness scale, they employed a past tense as a distancing element. This again suggests that the higher perception of W entailed a higher awareness of the possible cost to the H and therefore of the possibility of non-compliance.

4.2.3.3.2 Internal Modification

Participants made use of much-varied strategies, such as different Request perspectives and many Downgraders, while they made no use of Upgraders (Table 33).

	RP11_FAVOUR FROM NEW NEIGHBOUR
Internal Modification	
Request perspective	
Hearer Oriented	4
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	0
Speaker Oriented	1
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	2
Impersonal	0
Downgraders	
Syntactic Downgraders	
Embedded 'If' clause	2
Interrogative	2
Negation	1
Subjectivisers	0
Conditional mood	2
Past Tense	1
Other Downgraders	
Consultative Devices	0
Downtoner	2
Hedges	0
Understaters	6
Softeners	1
> <i>Please IM</i>	0
Upgraders	
Expletives	0
Intensifiers	0

Table 33 *Strangers High W IM*

In terms of Request perspective, there was predominant use of HO (6), twice combined with HSO, as in “se gentilmente **hai** due minuti, **facciamo** un viaggio, **prendiamo** le ultime mie cose” [if **you** kindly have two minutes, **we** do a journey, **we** take my last things] (I14) and once with SO, as in “**ti** volevo chiedere se mi **potresti** dare una mano” [I wanted to ask you if **you** could give me a hand] (I12).

This combination of different perspectives suggests that the participants, in making High W requests to Strangers, although still mainly relying on HO, also attempted to reduce the impact of the proposition, by avoiding naming the H as the principal performer of the action (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984), by using the inclusive “we” (Scaglia, 2003) or SO. This choice seems to correlate with the higher perception of W, which justifies the higher need of attempting to reduce the impact of the request. Conversely, and remarkably, in this case the Italian requesters always used HO with ‘tu’, which indicates that the requesters considered the relationship with the neighbour, though rated as Stranger, still as not requiring that level of formality involved with the use of the CP. This could be explained along the lines that the Italian Ss, because of their orientation toward solidarity, interdependence and hence positive politeness (in this sense, Paternoster, 2015; about Mediterranean cultures in general, Wierzbicka, 2006), preferred to establish rapport with the new neighbour to win H’s help and fill the distance gap with someone that, although a stranger, is not likely to remain as such for a long time. Therefore, they chose to

use devices that signal friendliness and activate solidarity, such as the informal 'tu'. In other words, the use of 'tu' appear to be founded in the fact that, although the new neighbour was still considered a Stranger, because of the common ground they shared (i.e. they live in the same road), D was not perceived as the same as with a complete Stranger, as in the previous Medium W cases, making this neighbour a special case of Strangers, which can explain the Italian Ss' use of 'tu'. This conclusion seems in line with Márquez Reiter and colleagues' (2005) findings on Spanish request strategies, which show how Spanish speakers, in addressing a new neighbour, although considering the relationship as distant, chose to highlight the common ground with the addressees, as a means to create a connection with them (on creating common ground see also Venuti, 2020), to activate their solidarity.

In terms of Syntactic Downgraders, the data shows two uses of Embedded "if" clauses, in one case in combination with the Conditional (2) and PT (1), as in "**volevo chiedere se mi potresti dare una mano**" [I **wanted** to ask you **if** you **could** give me a hand] (I12), whose complex construction is indicative of a high level of tentativeness. There were also two uses of Interrogatives, once combined with the Negation (1) '*mica*' and the Downtoner (2) '*per caso*' as in "**c'hai mica, per caso, la possibilità di darmi una mano?**" [**don't you happen to have, by chance, the possibility to give me a hand?**] (I11), which again signals more hesitation. In terms of Other Downgraders, there was a high use of Understaters (6), once associated with a Softener, as in "**se gentilmente hai due minuti, facciamo un viaggio**" [if you **kindly** have **two minutes**, we make a journey] (I14).

Overall we can observe that the Italian participants, in making High W requests to Strangers, made large use of modulation, and particularly by means of Understaters, used in an attempt to minimise the action required from the H, whose high use appears directly linked to the higher perception of W. This was followed by some use of other devices, such as Interrogatives, Downtoners and Embedded "if" clauses to soften the impact of the requests. These all conveyed higher consideration for the unknown H and for the W and therefore the potential cost of the request and, especially considering the complex combinations, a higher level of uncertainty about compliance and a tentative and more polite approach toward the Stranger (Márquez Reiter, 2000). Conversely, the Italian requesters

made no use of other devices, such as CD or Negation and, once again, Hedges, to modulate their requests.

4.2.3.3.3 External Modification

Participants made ample use of EM devices (Table 34).

	RP 11 FAVOUR FROM NEW NEIGHBOUR
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	
Alerters	
> <i>Attention getters</i>	2
> <i>Address terms</i>	1
> <i>excuse me_sorry</i>	0
> <i>excuse me_sorry+AT</i>	0
Checking on Availability	1
Cost Minimizer	1
Disarmer	6
Establishing Relationship	1
Getting a precommitment	0
Grounder	7
Making restitutions-Offering awards	1
Please EM	1
Requestive Interjections	2
Sweetener	1

Table 34_ Strangers High W EM

In terms of Alerters (3), the data shows two use of AGs, such as “**senti**” [listen] (II3) and one instance of AT, such as “**Gigi giusto?**” [Gigi right?] (II1). The use of the H’s first name here is significant because, by showing to know the addressee’s name, the requester tries to establish a relationship with the H, to fill the distance gap and create proximity (Enfield, 2008).

Many Grounders (7) were employed, once in combination with Alerters, Interjections (2), Please (1) and MR (1), as in extract (5):

(5) [II3, RP11] Favour from neighbour

SAR.B: oh ciao Marco, noi ancora non ci conosciamo, l’ho saputo da Stefania, la nostra ..vicina.. che te sei Marco, sei quello nuovo, che sei arrivato qui da.. meno di un mese.. però io ti stupirò con effetti speciali, sono arrivata qui da molto meno di te, mi ci sono appena trasferita.. ho... ciao piacere..senti.. ma.. ti andrebbe per caso di.. ehm aiutarmi un attimo a sistemare un po’ di mobili? ..perchè c’ho dei problemi con il con il trasloco, non trovo nessuno che me li può portare con la macchina.. [Oh hello Marco, we haven’t met yet, I have known from Stefania, our.. neighbour.. that you’re Marco.. you’re the new one, arrived here ..less than a month ago.. but I will surprise you with special effects, I am newer than you, I’ve just moved in.. I have... hello nice to meet you...listen.. but.. would you be willing by chance to help me one moment to arrange my furniture? .. because I have some problems with the moving, I cannot find anyone that can take them here with the car..]

ENR.F: Ma quanti mobili?? No ora, ora un posso, cioè c’ho da fare.. [But how many?? No now, I cannot now, well I have stuff to do..]

SAR.B: Dai eh, è un viaggio solo, dai per favore! Ti ti, ti invito subito a cena, appena posso..! [Come on uh, it's only one trip, come on please! I, I invite you for dinner straight, as soon as I can..!]

ENR.F: vabbè dai, un quarto d'ora però, di più non posso eh [alright, well, but only 15 minutes, I cannot any longer eh]

Here SAR.B starts off with a long preamble as a way to establish relationship with the H (“oh ciao Marco, noi ancora non ci conosciamo, l’ho saputo da Stefania, la nostra ..vicina.. che te sei Marco, sei quello nuovo, che sei arrivato qui da.. meno di un mese.. però io ti stupirò con effetti speciali, sono arrivata qui da molto meno di te, mi ci sono appena trasferita.. ho... ciao piacere”). The use of the H’s first name, here embedded within this device, expresses and reinforces the overall attempt to fill the distance gap with the new neighbour to win the addressee’s understanding and willingness to cooperate. This is followed by the use of the AG ‘*senti*’ to introduce the request, followed by the Grounding reasons (“perchè c’ho dei problemi con il con il trasloco, non trovo nessuno che me li può portare con la macchina”). After the H’s dubious and negative response (“Ma quanti mobili?? No ora, ora un posso, cioè c’ho da fare”), SAR.B reinforces the request in an exhortative, though softened way (“dai eh, è un viaggio solo, dai per favore!”), by using the Interjection + Please, and supports it with a MR, such as “Ti ti, ti invito subito a cena, appena posso..!”, which successfully gains H’s acceptance to comply. This long sequence shows that the requester performed the request by means of different softening devices that can be deemed as positive politeness strategies. Alongside the use of ER, the provision of detailed reasons for the request indicates an attempt to win the H’s understanding and cooperation, and the final offer of a reward focuses on reciprocity and friendliness, aiming at activating the H’s willingness to cooperate, which it achieves.

Participants also made wide use of Disarmers (6) (e.g. ‘*scusami*’), once combined with one Sweetener, as in “**mi faresti un grande favore, scusami** gua’ ma non so come fare sennò!” [**you would do me a big favour, excuse me** look but otherwise I don’t know how to do!] (I14).

There was also one use each of CM and of (post-request) CA, combined together, as in “**che io abito poi non tanto lontano**” [**because I live not much faraway**], followed by “**insomma se tu c’hai la macchina disponibile**” [**well if you’ve got the car available**] (I11).

From these data we can conclude that the Italian participants, in making High W requests to a new neighbour, once again mostly made use of Grounders, to support their requests, and also of Disarmers, as a means to anticipate a possible refusal, often combined together or with other strategies. The large use of complex combinations of EM devices also conveyed more hesitation and consideration for H's autonomy. This all together shows how, in this particular case, the D, i.e. the peculiar relationship with the new neighbour, and even more the higher perception of W, led the requesters to employ more moves to soften the impact of their requests. Put differently, in this scenario D seems to have influenced the Ss' moves in both directions, i.e. by signalling closeness (by using 'tu') and distance (by using many mitigators) at the same time. Yet, the higher use of Disarmers appears to correlate only with the perception of a higher W. If we compare the use of Disarmers in this case (i.e. 5 uses in 1 scenario) with the use of this device in other cases of higher D, we can see that its use was much lower in both cases of Low and Medium W requests to Strangers (i.e. 1 use across 2 scenarios) and even in the case of Medium W requests to Acquaintances (i.e. 4 uses across 3 scenarios). Conversely, the findings on Medium W requests to Friends, where the little use of Disarmers was made only by those participants who rated the W as 4 (section 4.2.1.2.3), seem to confirm this conclusion, which could be explained by the fact that the higher W might have led the requesters to perceive the request more as a threat, hence the use of many Disarmers to acknowledge awareness of the potential offence.

4.3 Conclusions

This chapter has analysed the Italian Intracultural data. The analysis was conducted by groups, distinguishing among Friends, Acquaintances and Strangers and among Low, Medium or High W requests, according to participants' perceptions of D and W, to understand whether and how such variables influenced participants' linguistic choices.

The data has shown that, in the case of requests to Friends, the main strategy used was RPC. However, while in scenarios rated as Low W by the participants RPC were mainly employed to check H's willingness to comply, which reflected more directness and certainty, in case of scenarios rated as Medium W by the participants this strategy was also employed to check H's possibility/availability, signalling a more tentative approach, achieved also by using mainly SF. The

requests were overwhelmingly Hearer-oriented, but always combined with *'tu'*, used to signal closeness and familiarity (Molinelli, 2002; Kolková, 2008). This shows that requesters preferred to highlight the position of the H by invoking such relationships, i.e. by doing relational work, rather than reducing the impact of the imposition, which reflects a tendency toward positive politeness strategies which rely on expectations of companionship and reciprocity from the H (Márquez Reiter, 2000). Yet, the requests were mostly made with interrogative forms and often further downgraded with Conditionals and Understaters and, in case of Medium W, Negation, reflecting in this latter case more tentativeness. These results seem to indicate two things. Firstly, Interrogatives, but also to some extent Conditionals, appeared to be used as default strategies to perform polite requests. As observed by Scaglia (2003, 131), addressing someone with the Conditional is the “courtesy mode” par excellence, which seems to imply that its use is the norm when aiming at being polite. Secondly, the higher use of IM was directly proportional to the less certainty about the positive outcome, due to a higher W of the request, as also suggested by Márquez Reiter and colleagues’ (2005) findings on Spanish requests. There was also wide use of EM, particularly of Alerters and Grounders, which seem to be the most used and preferred strategies, alongside some use of CMs, in case of Low W, and of Disarmers, in case of higher perception of W. As we have seen, the large use of Alerters, in the form of fore/nicknames, and of Grounders, to provide reasons for the requests, can be both interpreted as positive politeness strategies used to, respectively, indicate familiarity and win H’s understanding and willingness to cooperate (Enfield, 2008; Márquez Reiter, 2000).

In the case of requests to Acquaintances, although the preferred strategy was still RPC, there was a varied use of other strategies, such as SF and HP, which overall conveyed more tact and tentativeness, especially by means of IM. Here the participants, although still relied mostly on HO interrogative forms, always (except one case) combined them with *'lei'*. The CP was used consistently (even with SO), regardless of W, indicating that this is the main means used by the Italian Ss to do relational work, by showing respectful distance toward someone who is not a friend, i.e. whenever there is D (Molinelli, 2015; Kolková, 2008), which is considered a positive politeness strategy (Félix-Brasdefer, 2004). Furthermore, the fact that in these situations there was also some use of other perspectives, such as Impersonal and the inclusive “we”, both aiming at removing the focus from the H to reduce the

impact of the proposition, signals a more indirect approach, as it does the higher use of Downgrading, such as of Conditional, Embedded “if” clauses and Understaters. Once again, Alerters, Grounders and CMs seem to be the most preferred moves in terms of EM, alongside some use of CA in case of Higher W, whose use also signals more obliqueness and uncertainty, as it does the fact that the use of Alerters was made by means not only of ATs, but also of Excuses, which indicates how, in addressing Acquaintances, because of the higher D, the requesters expressed more concern for the possible inconvenience for the H. Yet, the use of complex Grounders suggests, again, that detailed reasons were used to support the requests to win H’s understanding, i.e. as positive politeness strategies. Finally, in the case of requesting from Strangers, regardless of the W, the data shows similar usages, and particularly for requests rated as Low and Medium by the participants. In both cases the most used strategies were RPC that checked for H’s ability/possibility/willingness to comply. Again, the main means to perform Low and Medium requests with Strangers was by using HO interrogative forms, predominantly softened by the use of the CP, to show respect toward the stranger. The requests were also often downgraded by using Conditionals and Downtoners and, particularly for requests rated as Medium W, Negation, which again signalled more hesitation, which can be explained in terms of less certainty about the unknown H’s willingness to cooperate. Once more, EM was achieved primarily by means of Alerters, mainly Excuses, which conveyed more concern for disturbing the unknown H, showing more tentativeness and uncertainty, and of Grounders. Further, the use of more complex constructions with Grounders in case of Medium W suggests a correlation between giving detailed reasons and W, which in turn seems to indicate how these devices were used to attempt winning H’s understanding and cooperativeness, considering the higher W, as also observed for the Acquaintances.

Slightly different were the strategies used in the single case of requests to the new neighbour, rated as High W. Here the data showed a much-varied use of strategies, such as RPC and SF, which nevertheless were all used to show tentativeness, and of perspectives, which indicates that in such a case the requesters were more inclined to avoid naming the H as the main performer of the act, to soften the higher impact of the request. In turn, the use of other perspectives, such as SO and the inclusive “we” used in suggestions, implied less use of interrogative forms. This case also

showed more use of Modification, by means of complex combinations of different devices, such as “if” clauses, Downtoners, Alerters and Grounders, or by large use, in term of IM, of Understaters, to minimise part of the required action and, in terms of EM, of Disarmers, to signal awareness of the possible offence in an attempt to avoid a refusal. Overall, this wide use of modulation reflects a more doubtful and hesitant approach, used as a polite strategy to address the unknown addressee, which seems to relate more to the higher W than to the special type of relationship. This particularly holds true for the significant use of Disarmers, which is higher than in the other cases of requests to Strangers or even to Acquaintances, and which seems indicative of a shift in the Italian participants’ perceptions of the request, as a consequence of the high W. That is, the higher use of Disarmers suggests a shift from a view of the request’s W in terms of objective cost, which was marked by the frequent use of CMs, as in the other cases, to a perception of W more in terms of potential offence (signalled by the use of Disarmers) when the W is higher. Considering that the preoccupation with causing offence suggests concern for imposition/invasion of others’ freedom, this change of focus seems significant as it could indicate a move from more positive to more negative politeness.

Yet, the fact that the requesters, although they perceived the new neighbour as Stranger, addressed the H with ‘*tu*’, alongside the use of devices, such as ER and MR, still signals an inclination toward positive politeness moves directed at closing the D gap with the ‘special’ stranger and at activating the H’s understanding and cooperation.

To conclude, the data suggests that the Italian participants’ linguistic choices were influenced more by D than by W and that this affected their strategy choice, reflected particularly through the choice of pronouns. They either employed ‘*tu*’ and/or direct moves when addressing a friend, to indicate closeness, or when attempting to close the D gap with a new neighbour, or the CP and/or more tentative strategies when addressing strangers or acquaintances of a different age (e.g. the elderly neighbour) or with a higher social status (e.g. the Professor), to show respectful distance. The use of less indirect request strategies and less modulation with friends shows not only more certainty of compliance, but also that directness among friends is perceived as appropriate, and even expected, as also suggested by Márquez Reiter (2000) for Spanish, as the shared common ground is

what drives the speaker' certainty about the H's willingness to comply to the request (Paternoster, 2015). Addressing the new neighbour, considered as stranger, with 'tu', confirms the higher influence of D on participants' linguistic choices, in terms of the Italian speakers' inclination toward the positive politeness values of interdependence and solidarity (Scaglia, 2003), which led them to prefer moves that close the D gap. This conclusion is in line with Bravo's (2017) and Hernández Flores's (1999) findings on Spanish speakers, who observed how they are more concerned with creating affiliation than with avoiding imposition. Conversely, the use of 'lei' with unfamiliar people, which creates distantiation and achieves indirect addressivity, reflects a more tentative approach which conveys respect, and also not taking compliance for granted (Molinelli, 2015).

Most importantly, the fact that the Italian requesters relied mainly on the pronoun choice to signal the relationship with their recipients is a positive polite means that in turn involves and explains the high use of HO, since in the Italian grammar the use of this request perspective is, as we have seen, an important means for doing relational work, through choosing how to address the H. Hence, this study has highlighted that HO, usually associated with the idea of imposing on the H, can also be employed for politeness reasons, according to the grammatical affordances of a particular language. This study has shown that the social deixis function of HO in Italian plays a key role in the selection of this linguistic device as a strategy for creating polite forms of requests. The study has therefore shown the importance of paying attention to the grammatical features of a language for understanding linguistic politeness, and that HO needs to be understood in a more nuanced way, as it is not necessarily the case that its use is associated only with imposing on the H, as research has argued (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Leech, 1983). This result adds to previous research (House, 2006), which has highlighted that HO can be associated with different functions, depending on the language system of the lingua-culture under investigation.

Overall, although the use of modification increased proportionally with the increased D and/or W, indicating more tentativeness and less expectation of compliance, the Italian Ss' preference for positive politeness means appears also to be corroborated by the higher use of devices such as (detailed) Grounders or ATs, in the form of fore/nicknames, employed to activate the H's understanding and

cooperativeness, rather than of negative politeness strategies that avoid imposition, such as Excuses.

Chapter 5 Data analysis and discussion: The Intracultural British-English dataset

This chapter follows the same structure as chapter 4, i.e. it offers an overall analysis of British-English request strategies across all scenarios, followed by an analysis by (sub)groups of D and W.

5.1 General features: Head Acts and Modification

This section gives an overview of the general features of British-English' request realisation by examining the strategies used as HAs, IM and EM.

In terms of HAs, the data shows, across all 14 scenarios/56 roleplays (4 dyads), a predominant use of RPC (57), against a sporadic usage of other strategies (Table 35). The HAs analysed were in total 65.

	RP2	RP3	RP4	RP5	RP6	RP7	RP8	RP9	RP10	RP11	RP12	RP13	RP14	RP15	TOTALS
Request Strategy type															
1 Mood derivable	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	4	4	4	3	3	3	7	4	4	3	4	5	5	4	57
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
															65

Table 35_Intracultural English Roleplays_HAs total

The RPC were mostly employed to check H's availability/possibility to comply, as in **"is there any chance that I can borrow some cash from you?"** (EE3, RP4), and in some cases to inquire about H's willingness, as in **"do you mind, giving me a lift home?"** (EE2, RP12).

Little use was made of other strategies, such as SS (3), as in **"I was just hoping that I could borrow one of the books you have"** (EE4, RP6), MD (2), as in **"please give me, some money"** (EE4, RP3), SH (2), as in **"your TV is really loud.."** (EE1, RP15) and SF (1), as in **"if you could just.. WhatsApp me.."** (EE1, RP13).

Overall, the overriding use of RPC, usually in the form of polar questions, mostly with modal interrogatives, employed to solicit H's assistance, unsurprisingly appears to be the preferred strategy, as other research has shown (e.g. Barron, 2008; Zinken & Oigermann, 2013).

In terms of IM, Table 36 offers an overview of the results, across all scenarios.

	RP2	RP3	RP4	RP5	RP6	RP7	RP8	RP9	RP10	RP11	RP12	RP13	RP14	RP15	TOTALS	
Internal Modification																
Request perspective (PVO)																
Hearer Oriented	4	2	2	3	0	2	4	4	5	4	3	6	1	3	43	
Speaker Oriented	0	3	2	1	4	1	3	2	0	1	0	1	4	0	22	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	POV
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	3	68
Downgraders																
Syntactic Downgraders																
Embedded 'If' clause	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	1	3	13	
Interrogative	3	4	4	3	2	3	7	4	4	3	3	4	5	2	51	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Subjectiviser	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	2	0	2	11	
Conditional mood	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	4	2	3	3	3	2	3	25	
Past Tense	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	
Other Downgraders																
Consultative Devices	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	11	
Downtoner	0	2	1	1	1	0	2	3	1	2	1	2	0	2	18	
Hedges	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	
Understaters	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	6	1	0	2	0	4	17	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
> Please IM	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Upgraders																
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM-POV
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	160

Table 36_Intracultural English Roleplays_ IM totals

For the Request perspective, participants mainly used HO (43), as in “do **you** know where it is?” (EE2, RP2), in line with Zinken and Ogiermann’s (2013) findings on British marked preference for hearer-oriented polar questions, closely followed by SO (22), as in “can **I** borrow some?” (EE3, RP3). Conversely, they made little use of Impersonal (3), as in “would **it** be possible to, get a lift back?” (EE3, RP12) and no use of HSO.

In terms of Syntactic Downgraders, the requests were primarily Interrogative (51), such as “can **I pinch one?**” (EE1, RP14), similarly to Zinken and Ogiermann’s (2013) findings on the British tendency to use polar questions in informal everyday conversation, and were very often mitigated by using Conditionals (25), as in “**would** you.. help me out.. maybe?” (EE3, RP11). There was also some use of Embedded “if” clauses (13), mostly in combination with Subjectivisers (11), such as “I was wondering” (9), as also captured by Barron (2008), utilised to signal that compliance is not taken for granted (Zinken & Ogiermann, 2013), as in “**I was wondering** maybe **if** you could like, turning it down, a little bit” (EE2, RP15), whose combination was half times associated with PT (4), as in the above example (i.e. “if you **could**”). Finally, only one instance of Negation was recorded, as in “you **wouldn’t** have any on you?” (EE4, RP14). In regard to Other Downgraders, requesters often used Downtoners (18), particularly with constructions such as “is there **any chance** I can borrow yours? (EE1, RP4), Understaters (17), such as “just” and little bit”, sometimes used together, as in “could you **just** turn the music down **a little bit?**” (EE4, RP10). Lastly, they employed some CD (11), such as “**would you mind lending me some?**” (EE4, RP4), four Hedges, such as “if you could **like** turn it

down” (EE2, RP15), and only one Please, as in “could you possibly **please** help me?” (EE4, RP5).

In summary, the data shows a marked preference for moves that either focused on the Hearer, or the Speaker, whereas the inclusive “we” was never employed. The requests were largely mitigated with different devices that overall convey uncertainty and tentativeness, thus consideration for the addressee, by showing that the request’s compliance was not taken for granted, as a means to be polite. Particularly, the requests were predominantly softened by Interrogatives, alongside consistent use of Conditionals, Downtoners and Understaters, and significant usage of Subjectivisers, generally combined with “if” clauses and CD. In terms of Upgraders, there was only some use of Intensifier (4), employed to increase the compelling force of the request, as in “I’d be **really** grateful if you could do that for me..” (EE4, RP9), which shows that these devices were not among the requesters’ preferred ones.

For what concerns EMs, numerous devices were employed across all scenarios (Table 37).

	RP2	RP3	RP4	RP5	RP6	RP7	RP8	RP9	RP10	RP11	RP12	RP13	RP14	RP15	TOTALS
External Modification-Adjunction to Head															
Alerters															
> Attention getters	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	6
> Address terms	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	2	11
> excuse me_sorry	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	6
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	5
Cost Minimizer	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	9
Disarmer	2	1	1	2	1	1	4	1	3	3	1	3	3	5	31
Establishing Relationship	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Grounder	3	4	5	3	6	5	3	7	7	4	2	5	4	5	63
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	6
Please EM	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweetener	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
															148

Table 37_Intracultural English Roleplays_ EM totals

The most used were Grounders (63), such as “**I can’t find the library**” (EE3, RP2), followed by Disarmers (31), as in “I’m really **sorry to bother you**”⁸ (EE4, RP5) and Alerters (26 in total), mostly in the form of ATs (11), as in “hi **Sir**” (EE2, RP15) and employed in the same turn as the HA, though a few times used as Pre-Request moves, as with the AG “Oh **hey!** Ehm so.. I’m just moving in next door..” (EE1, RP11). Participants also used some CMs (9), as in “**obviously if you’re going that way**

⁸ According to Márquez Reiter (2008), expressions such as “sorry to bother you” could be considered attention getters when they are used to preface a request for information. However, in this thesis these types of expressions were coded as Disarmers whenever other elements were employed as attention getters to start the conversation, e.g. “Hey”.

anyway.." (EE2, RP9) and MR (6), such as **"I'll pay you back"** (EE4, RP3), alongside a few CA (5), as in **"you have any fags on you?"** (EE1, RP14), Please (4), as in **"please give me, some money"** (EE4, RP3), and ER (3), such as **"I'm a student of one of your lectures"** (EE3, RP6). Finally, there was only one instance of GP, as in **"I was wondering whether you'd do me a favour"** (EE3, RP11).

Overall, the data shows a marked preference for Grounders, and particularly for pre-request ones, and these results are in line with Barron's (2008) work on English requests, which also detected this pattern. The observation made in chapter 4 (section 4.1.1) on the use of such devices as positive politeness strategies for gaining H's understanding and solidarity (Márquez Reiter, 2000) seems to hold even more true here, when used as pre-requests. Furthermore, Alerters were mostly employed to secure the addressee's attention, whereas the significant use of Disarmers, signalling awareness of the possible offence and cost to the Hearer, indicates that this was the main move used to show tentativeness, and ultimately be polite.

However, as in the previous chapter, to get a real grasp of the data the analysis will require unfolding according to the three groups of Friends, Acquaintances and Strangers, and sub-groups of Low, Medium and/or High W, to unearth whether and how different levels of D and W influenced requesters' strategy choice. It is worth recalling that the subdivisions by W do not reflect a clear-cut rating, because of the diverse evaluations given by participants to the various requests, even within the same scenario, and that the analysis will highlight whether and how different perceptions of W affected such choices.

5.2 The analysis by groups: Friends, Acquaintances and Strangers

The analysis will follow the order of HAs, IM and EM, and it will be presented according to the following groups and sub-groups:

- Friends, which will examine scenarios rated as Low, Medium and High W by participants;
- Acquaintances, which will examine scenarios rated as Medium and High W by participants;
- Strangers, which will examine scenarios rates as Low and Medium W by participants.

5.2.1 Friends

This group examines scenarios rated by participants as Low W, average rating between 1-2.5 (ratings range 1-3), Medium W, average rating between 2.5-3.5 (ratings range 1.5-4) and High W, average rating between 3.5-5 (all ratings of 4).

This indicates that, while the evaluations for Low W and Medium W showed some divergences across participants, signalling some variability in the interpretations of the scenarios within both groups (and especially for the Medium W), there was complete consensus about the High W.

5.2.1.1 Friends: Low Weight

The Low W sub-category includes requests to a friend (for something) to note a number down (RP7), rating ranging between 1-2, and to the flatmate to turn the volume down (RP10), rating ranging between 1-3.

5.2.1.1.1 Head Acts

In this case only 7 requests were recorded, as one dyad did not perform a request in RP7. All participants used only RPC (7) (Table 38), once associated with one MD, as in “**could you just turn the music down** a little bit?”, followed by “**turn it down** a little bit please” (EE4, RP10), which clearly signals that RPC that check on H’s possibility/willingness to comply was the preferred strategy.

	RP 07 PEN~PHONE FROM FRIEND	RP 10 NOISE - FLATMATE
Request Strategy type		
1 Mood derivable	0	1
2 Explicit performative	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	3	4
8 Strong Hints	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0

Table 38_Friends Low W HAs

5.2.1.1.2 Internal Modification

In terms of Request perspective, participants mostly made use of HO, as in “do **you** mind turning the music down a bit?” (EE2, RP10), with only one case of SO, such as “can I take a paper really quick and like, a pen or ehm?” (EE4, RP7) (Table 39), which indicates a marked preference for an orientation that focuses on the addressee.

	RP 07 PEN~PHONE FROM FRIEND	RP 10 NOISE - FLATMATE
Internal Modification		
Request perspective		
Hearer Oriented	2	5
Speaker Oriented	1	0
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0
Impersonal	0	0
Downgraders		
Syntactic Downgraders		
Embedded 'If' clause	0	0
Interrogative	3	4
Negation	0	0
Subjectiviser	0	0
Conditional mood	0	2
Past Tense	0	0
Other Downgraders		
Consultative Devices	0	2
Downtoner	0	1
Hedges	1	0
Understaters	0	6
Softeners	0	0
> <i>Please IM</i>	0	0
Upgraders		
Expletives	0	0
Intensifiers	1	0

Table 39_Friends Low W IM

The requests were all downgraded by using Interrogatives (7), as in the above examples. These forms were further Syntactically Downgraded, yet only in requesting the flatmate to turn the volume down, twice by means of Conditional, as in “**could** you just turn the music down a little bit?” (EE4, RP10) and also, in terms of Other Downgraders, by using Understaters (6) (e.g. “a little bit”), once combined with a Downtoner (i.e. “any chance”), as in “**any chance** you can knock that down **just a little bit**?” (EE1, RP10). Requesters also used two CD, as in “**would you mind** turning it down a bit please?” (EE1, RP10), and one Hedge, used in combination with the only instance of Intensifier (i.e. “really”), such as “can I take a paper **really** quick and **like**, a pen or ehm?” (EE4, RP7).

No other Upgraders were used.

To conclude, participants, in addressing Friends for Low W requests, relied mainly on interrogative forms to mitigate the impact of such requests, but also on Understaters, to minimise the required action, particularly when asking the flatmate to turn the volume down.

5.2.1.1.3 External Modification

Participants used little EM (Table 40).

	RP 07 PEN~PHONE FROM FRIEND	RP 10 NOISE - FLATMATE
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act		
> <i>Attention getters</i>	0	0
> <i>Address terms</i>	1	2
> <i>excuse me_sorry</i>	0	0
> <i>excuse me_sorry+AT</i>	0	0
Checking on Availability	0	0
Cost Minimizer	0	0
Disarmer	1	3
Establishing Relationship	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0
Grounder	5	7
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0
Please EM	1	2
Requestive Interjections	0	0
Sweetener	0	0

Table 40_Friends Low W EM

In terms of Alerters, only three ATs were employed, as a means to get the H's attention, as in "hey **man**" (EE2, RP10). Many Grounders (12) were used, as in "**I just need to take a note of this telephone number**" (EE4, RP7), followed by some use of Disarmers (4), as in "**I know that you're having a really good time**" (EE3, RP10). Finally, three instances of Please were used, as in "can you get your phone out so I can put the number in your notes **please?**" (EE3, RP7).

Overall, the data seems to suggest that the Low perception of W influenced the requesters' choices insomuch as they did not make much use of EM, relying mainly on Grounders to justify and support their requests (particularly in the case of RP7). This could possibly be explicable in terms of (association) rights and obligations (see Spencer-Oatey, 2008; Márquez Reiter et al. 2005), as perceived among Friends in asking a Low W request, i.e. the perception of having the right to ask led to expectations of compliance, therefore to less use of modulation, as if it was perceived as not needed. Nonetheless, the consistent use of Disarmers in RP10 - asking the flatmate to turn the volume down, shows acknowledgement of the potential offence, and hence less expectation of compliance.

5.2.1.2 Friends: Medium Weight

This sub-group is characterised by requests to borrow some notes (RP4), rating ranging between 3-4, for a lift home (RP12), rating ranging between 2-3, and for a cigarette (RP14), rating ranging between 1.5-4.

5.2.1.2.1 Head Acts

In this case participants used only RPC (13), as in “**can I use your notes..?**” (EE2, RP4) (Table 41), which seems to corroborate the previous conclusion about the British-English participants preferring strategies that allow them to check H’s willingness/availability to do the act.

	RP 04 NOTES FROM FRIEND	RP 12 LIFT FROM FRIEND	RP 14 CIGARETTE FROM FRIEND
Request Strategy type			
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	4	4	5
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0

Table 41_Friends Medium W HAs

5.2.1.2.2 Internal Modification

In terms of Request perspective, Ss either employed HO (6), such as “would **you** mind, lending me some?” (EE4, RP4), or SO (6), as in “Can I.. borrow one?” (EE2, RP14), and only one Impersonal, as in “would **it** be possible to get a lift back?” (EE3, RP12) (Table 42), showing, differently from the Low W case, a slight preference for a perspective that allowed them to reduce the perceived burden on the H, probably because of the perception of the W as Medium.

	RP 04 NOTES FROM FRIEND	RP 12 LIFT FROM FRIEND	RP 14 CIGARETTE FROM FRIEND
Internal Modification			
Request perspective			
Hearer Oriented	2	3	1
Speaker Oriented	2	0	4
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0
Impersonal	0	1	0
Downgraders			
Syntactic Downgraders			
Embedded 'If' clause	0	1	1
Interrogative	4	3	5
Negation	0	0	1
Subjectiviser	0	1	0
Conditional mood	2	3	2
Past Tense	0	0	0
Other Downgraders			
Consultative Devices	2	1	1
Downtoner	1	1	0
Hedges	0	0	0
Understaters	0	0	0
Softeners	0	0	0
> Please IM	0	0	0
Upgraders			
Expletives	0	0	0
Intensifiers	0	0	0

Table 42_Friends Medium W IM

In regard to Syntactic Downgrading, once again the requests were always modulated by using Interrogatives (12), often further downgraded with the

Conditional (7), as in **“would it be possible to get a lift back?”** (EE3, RP12). There were two instances of Embedded “if” clauses, once in association with a Subjectiviser, as in **“I was just wondering** ehm, if you haven’t been drinking, that is, **if you’d be able to give me a lift back?”** (EE4, RP12), and one of Negation, such as **“you wouldn’t have any on you?”** (EE4, RP14). There was also some use of Other Downgraders, such as CD (4), as in **“would you mind.. if I borrow a cigarette?”** (EE3, RP14), as in the Low W case, and Downtoners (2), such as **“is there any chance I can borrow yours?”** (EE1, RP4).

No upgraders were employed.

To sum up, the data shows that participants, in making requests to Friends rated as Medium W, mainly relied on interrogative forms to mitigate the impact of such requests, as in the previous case. However, they also often used Conditionals, signalling they did not take compliance for granted, alongside some CD and a few Downtoners, both employed to convey tentativeness, which suggests that the higher perception of W led them to use more mitigation.

5.2.1.2.3 External Modification

Grounders (11) were again the most employed strategies, as in **“would it be possible to, get a lift back? Cos.. you know I, I walked here and, it’s a bit cold and dark now”** (EE3, RP12) (Table 43).

	RP 04 NOTES FROM FRIEND	RP 12 LIFT FROM FRIEND	RP 14 CIGARETTE FROM FRIEND
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act			
> Attention getters	1	1	1
> Address terms	0	0	1
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0
Checking on Availability	0	3	1
Cost Minimizer	1	1	0
Disarmer	1	1	3
Establishing Relationship	0	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0
Grounder	5	2	4
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	1
Please EM	0	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0
Sweetener	0	0	0

Table 43_Friends Medium W EM

In terms of Alerters (4), requesters mainly used AGs (3), such as **“hey”** (EE3, RP12), once paired with an AT (**“hey man”**, EE1, RP14). They also employed four CA, as in **“you have any fags on you?”** (EE1, RP14) and two CMs, such as **“and I know you’ve got to pass me when you’re driving home”** (EE3, RP12). There was again some use of Disarmers (5), yet mainly in asking for a cigarette, as in **“sorry man”** (EE1, RP14) and one use of MR in asking for a cigarette, as in **“I’ll give you one back later?”**

(EE3, RP14). The high use of Disarmers, combined in one instance with a MR, in performing RP14, could be explicable considering that cigarettes are consumable goods and, particularly with the high cost of cigarettes in England, they might be perceived as not being free goods (Thomas, 1983; see also Márquez Reiter, 1997). To conclude, in the case of requests rated as Medium W, participants relied mostly on Grounders and sometimes on Disarmers (though mainly in asking for a cigarette), as in the previous case, but also on some CA. The latter use could be explicable considering the higher perception of W, which could have led the requesters to choose to ascertain whether the preconditions necessary for compliance were present, before having to perform the request, which could be interpreted as a means to avoid sounding as if imposing on the H.

5.2.1.3 Friends: High Weight

This sub-group is characterised by only one request, i.e. to borrow some money (RP3), all rated 4.

5.2.1.3.1 Head Acts

Requesters once again predominantly relied on RPC (4), which were employed by three out of four Ss, as in **“do you mind if I just like, take some off you?”** (EE2) (Table 44), which confirms the previous conclusions about their preference for moves that check on H’s willingness/possibility to comply, with only one exception, where a MD was employed, such as **“give me some money”** (EE4).

	RP 03 MONEY FROM FRIEND
Request Strategy type	
1 Mood derivable	1
2 Explicit performative	0
3 Hedged performative	0
4 Locution derivable	0
5 Scope stating	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	4
8 Strong Hints	0
9 Mild Hints	0

Table 44_Friends High W HAS

However, in this case the impact of the MD was softened by means of various pre-request modifiers (i.e., in order, Disarmers, Grounders, MR, please), as in **“I’m really really sorry but I don’t have any money on me.. I’ve just got my card (laugh), I’ve just got my cards, and, I’ll pay you back, please** give me, some money, and I will.., yeah”, which shows that even this requester wanted to convey tentativeness and was not taking compliance for granted (see section 5.2.1.3.3).

5.2.1.3.2 Internal Modification

Requesters employed, as in the previous case, either HO (2), as in “is there any chance of.. **you** can spot me some cash while we are out of here” (EE1), or SO (3), as in “is there any chance that **I** can borrow some cash from you?” (EE3) (Table 45).

RP 03 MONEY FROM FRIEND	
Internal Modification	
Request perspective	
Hearer Oriented	2
Speaker Oriented	3
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0
Impersonal	0
Downgraders	
Syntactic Downgraders	
Embedded 'If' clause	1
Interrogative	4
Negation	0
Subjectiviser	0
Conditional mood	0
Past Tense	0
Other Downgraders	
Consultative Devices	1
Downtoner	2
Hedges	1
Understaters	1
Softeners	0
> <i>Please IM</i>	0
Upgraders	
Expletives	0
Intensifiers	0

Table 45_Friends High W IM

To note, SO was used twice by the same requester in EE3, which means that requesters made equally use of both strategies. This corroborates the conclusion that the higher perception of W partially influenced the Ss in the choice of moves that allowed to reduce the burden on the H, similarly to what happened in the Medium W scenarios.

In terms of Syntactic Downgraders, all requesters again used Interrogatives (4), once embedded with an “if” clause, as in “**do you mind if I just like take some off you?**” (EE2), which also shows some use of Other Downgraders, such as one instance each of CD (i.e. “do you mind”), Understater (i.e. “just”) and Hedge (i.e. “like”). Finally, two Downtoners were employed, such as “is there **any chance** of.. you can spot me some cash (..)?” (EE1).

Overall, the data shows that in this case, apart from interrogative forms as in the previous cases, half times Ss also relied on Downtoners, as a way to soften the request, by means of signalling the possibility of non-compliance, possibly because of the higher perception of W.

5.2.1.3.3 External Modification

Once more, Ss mainly employed Grounders (4), but also MR (4) (Table 46).

	RP 03 MONEY FROM FRIEND
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	
Alerters	
> <i>Attention getters</i>	1
> <i>Address terms</i>	1
> <i>excuse me_sorry</i>	0
> <i>excuse me_sorry+AT</i>	0
Checking on Availability	0
Cost Minimizer	0
Disarmer	1
Establishing Relationship	0
Getting a precommitment	0
Grounder	4
Making restitutions-Offering awards	4
Please EM	1
Requestive Interjections	0
Sweetener	0

Table 46_Friends High W EM

In terms of Alerters, Ss employed only the AG “**hey**” (EE2) and the AT “**dude**” (EE1). MR were always combined with Grounders and once with one Disarmer and one Please, as in the following extract (6):

(6) [EE4, RP3] Money from friend

MAR.W: I’m really really sorry but I don’t have any money on me..I’ve just got my card (laugh), I’ve just got my cards, and, I’ll pay you back, please give me, some money, and I will.., yeah

Here MAR.W starts off with the Disarmer “I’m really really sorry”, followed by the Grounder “I don’t have any money on me..I’ve just got my card (laugh), I’ve just got my cards”, used to justify the reason for the upcoming request, also supported by the MR “I’ll pay you back”. Once the request is performed, softened by the use of “please”, MAR.W reinforces her promise of restitution (“and I will..yeah”) to win the friend’s willingness to comply.

Overall, in this case the data shows a marked preference for, not only Grounders, as in the previous cases, but also MR, which latter usage is explicable considering the type of request, but also the higher perception of W, which led requesters to employ this strategy in an attempt to win H’s cooperativeness. In this sense, this could be interpreted as a positive politeness move.

5.2.2 Acquaintances

This group examines scenarios rated by participants as Medium W, average rating between 1-2.5 (ratings range 2-4) and High W, average rating between 3.5-5

(ratings range 4-5). The evaluations provided for Medium W showed some divergence across participants, signalling some variability in the interpretation of the scenarios, whereas there was more consensus about the High W.

5.2.2.1 Acquaintances: Medium Weight

This sub-group is represented only by the request to the elderly neighbour to turn the volume down (RP15), rating ranging between 2-4.

5.2.2.1.1 Head Acts

Also in addressing Acquaintances RPC was the preferred HA strategy, employed in three out of four cases, as in **“I was wondering maybe if you could like turn it down a little bit”** (EE2) (Table 47), which indicates, once again, a marked preference for moves that allow to check for H’s willingness/availability to comply, whereas the fourth requester used a SH, such as **“your TV is really loud”** (EE1).

	RP 15 NOISE FROM ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR
Request Strategy type	
1 Mood derivable	0
2 Explicit performative	0
3 Hedged performative	0
4 Locution derivable	0
5 Scope stating	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	4
8 Strong Hints	1
9 Mild Hints	0

Table 47_Acquaintances Medium W HAS

5.2.2.1.2 Internal Modification

Ss made a varied use of IM (Table 48).

	RP 15 NOISE FROM ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR
Internal Modification	
Request perspective	
Hearer Oriented	3
Speaker Oriented	0
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0
Impersonal	2
Downgraders	
Syntactic Downgraders	
Embedded 'If' clause	3
Interrogative	2
Negation	0
Subjectiviser	2
Conditional mood	3
Past Tense	1
Other Downgraders	
Consultative Devices	0
Downtoner	2
Hedges	1
Understaters	4
Softeners	0
> <i>Please IM</i>	0
Upgraders	
Expletives	0
Intensifiers	2

Table 48_Acquaintances Medium W IM

Concerning the Request perspective, requesters used HO (3), as in “is it possible if **you** could turn the volume down a little bit?” (EE4), and Impersonal (2), as in “would **this** be really possible?” (EE4). The use of the latter in half the cases, rarely used with Friends, seems to indicate that addressing a not very familiar person led those requesters to choose a means that, by not mentioning either H or S, allows to soften the request (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984) even more than by using SO.

In regard to Syntactic Downgrading, requesters used some Interrogatives (2), as in the above examples, but mainly Embedded “if” clauses (3) combined with Conditionals (3), twice also further downgraded by means of the Subjectiviser “I was wondering”, as in “**I was wondering whether** there’s any chance you’d be able to just turn it down a little bit for me..” (EE3). Only one instance of PT was detected, as in “I was wondering maybe if you **could** like, turn it down a little bit” (EE2). In terms of Other Downgraders, the requests were also softened by using the Understater (4) “a little bit” and half the time Downtoners (2) (e.g. “maybe”), often combined together, and once with one Hedge (i.e. “like”), as in “**maybe** if you could **like**, turn it down **a little bit**” (EE2).

Overall, this shows that participants relied heavily on the use of different Downgraders, all used to signal uncertainty and awareness of the possibility of non-compliance or to reduce the impact of the proposition, as a means to be polite toward the Acquaintance.

Only two Upgraders were detected, in the form of the Intensifier “really”, such as “your TV is **really** loud..” (EE1), which indicates that these were not among the preferred strategies.

5.2.2.1.3 External Modification

All participants made use only of Disarmers (5), always followed by Grounders (5), as in “**I’m really sorry to bother you** ehm but I’m, **I’m trying to concentrate on this work that I need to get done, and your TV is quite loud**” (EE3), and twice used Alerters (2), only in the form of ATs, such as “**Sir**” (EE2) or the nickname “**lovely**” (EE1), to catch the H’s attention in a polite or nice way (Table 49).

	RP 15 NOISE FROM ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	
> Attention getters	0
> Address terms	2
> excuse me_sorry	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0
Checking on Availability	0
Cost Minimizer	0
Disarmer	5
Establishing Relationship	0
Getting a precommitment	0
Grounder	5
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0
Please EM	0
Requestive Interjections	0
Sweetener	0

Table 49_Acquaintances Medium W EM

This shows a marked preference for moves that not only justify and support the requests (i.e. Grounders), as in the requests to Friends, but also acknowledge awareness of the potential offence, trying to anticipate a possible refusal (i.e. Disarmers). The consistent use of Disarmers here could be explicable considering the higher D (together with the Medium W), which suggests the requesters’ higher concern for invading an unfamiliar other’s space and freedom, i.e. as negative politeness means directed at avoiding imposition.

5.2.2.2 Acquaintances: High Weight

This sub-group is characterised by requests to borrow a book (RP6), all rated 4 or for a lift (RP9) from a Professor, rating ranging between 4.5-5, or for help from the new neighbour (RP11), rating ranging between 4-5.

5.2.2.2.1 Head Acts

As in the previous case, Ss employed mainly RPC (10), such as “**is there any chance I can blag a lift off you?**” (EE1, RP9) (Table 50), showing to heavily rely on, once more, moves that allow to check for H’s willingness/availability to comply.

	RP 06 BOOK FROM PROF	RP 09 LIFT FROM A PROFESSOR	RP 11 FAVOUR FROM NEW NEIGHBOUR
Request Strategy type			
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	1	1	1
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	3	4	3
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0

Table 50_Acquaintances High W HAs

There were also three instances of SS, such as “**I was just hoping that I could borrow one of the books you have**” (EE4, RP6), which seem to be utilised to convey hesitation.

5.2.2.2.2 Internal Modification

In terms of Request perspective, Table 51 shows only usage of HO (8) and SO (7), as in, respectively, “if **you** could help” (EE4, RP11) and “is there any chance I just take it?” (EE1, RP6). This suggests that, in line with the previous cases (i.e. Acquaintances/Medium W, but also Friends/Medium and High W), because of D and W perceived as High(er), the requesters were less prone to focus on the H, and favoured more moves, such as SO, that soften the request by reducing the burden on the addressee.

	RP 06 BOOK FROM PROF	RP 09 LIFT FROM A PROFESSOR	RP 11 FAVOUR FROM NEW NEIGHBOUR
Internal Modification			
Request perspective			
Hearer Oriented	0	4	4
Speaker Oriented	4	2	1
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0
Impersonal	0	0	0
Downgraders			
Syntactic Downgraders			
Embedded 'If' clause	1	1	1
Interrogative	2	4	3
Negation	0	0	0
Subjectiviser	2	1	2
Conditional mood	1	4	3
Past Tense	2	0	0
Other Downgraders			
Consultative Devices	2	2	0
Downtoner	1	3	2
Hedges	0	0	0
Understaters	3	0	1
Softeners	0	0	0
> Please IM	0	0	0
Upgraders			
Expletives	0	0	0
Intensifiers	0	1	0

Table 51_Acquaintances High W IM

In terms of Syntactic Downgrading, the requests were predominantly mitigated with Interrogatives (9) and, as in the previous case, mostly with Conditionals (8), as in **“would you.. help me out.. maybe?”** (EE3, RP11) and some Subjectivisers (5), in two cases combined with PT (2) and in one with also an Embedded “if” clause (3), as in **“I was wondering if I could borrow your copy”** (EE3, RP6). For what concerns Other Downgraders, Ss employed, as in the previous case, half time Downtoners (6), such as **“is there any chance you’re free?”** (EE1, RP11), plus CD (4) and Understaters (4), once used together, as in **“do you think I could borrow yours for a little while?”** (EE2, RP6).

To sum up, for requests to Acquaintances rated as High W, Ss employed a variety of strategies, such as interrogative forms, Conditionals and Downtoners, all directed to signal tentativeness and minimise parts of the propositions, as in the previous case, which seems to suggest that these are the preferred moves in approaching an acquaintance, to show courtesy and that compliance is not taken for granted.

5.2.2.2.3 External Modification

Participants made a varied use of EM (Table 52).

	RP 06 BOOK FROM PROF	RP 09 LIFT FROM A PROFESSOR	RP 11 FAVOUR FROM NEW NEIGHBOUR
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act			
> Attention getters	0	0	1
> Address terms	2	2	0
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	1
Checking on Availability	0	0	0
Cost Minimizer	3	3	1
Disarmer	1	1	3
Establishing Relationship	1	0	2
Getting a precommitment	0	0	1
Grounder	6	7	4
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	1
Please EM	0	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0
Sweetener	0	0	0

Table 52_Acquaintances High W EM

In terms of Alerters (6), requesters used mainly ATs (4), e.g. **“Sir”** (EE2, RP6), once combined with an Excuse, as in **“Excuse me.. Paul is it?”** (EE1, RP11), and one AG (**“hey”**, EE2, RP11). As previously, Grounders (17) were largely employed, though in this case often very detailed, as in **“I’ve had a little bit of trouble with this assignment and .. I tried to.. the book you told us to rent out is not in the library, I can’t find it online, the only copy I know in existence is the copy you’ve got on that shelf over there...”** (EE1, RP6). There was also consistent usage of CMs (6) when asking the Professor, as in **“obviously if you’re going that way anyway..”**

(EE2, RP9). Conversely, when asking the new neighbour more use of Disarmers (5), as in **“this is a weird one, I’m really sorry”** (EE1, RP11), and of ER (3), as in **“I’m just moving in next door..”** (EE2, RP11), was detected, alongside one use each of GP, such as **“I was wondering whether you’d do me a favour”** (EE3, RP11) and of MR, such as **“I give you some money..”** (EE1, RP11).

Overall, in the case of High W requests to an Acquaintance, two patterns can be teased out. In addressing the Professor, participants used more ATs, detailed Grounders to support the requests and CMs, as a way to show respect and consideration for the H. In addressing the new neighbour, alongside again consistent use of Grounders, the requesters relied also on ER moves to elicit H’s solidarity and on Disarmers, in an attempt to avoid a possible refusal.

5.2.3 Strangers

This group examines scenarios rated by participants as Low W, average rating between 1-2.5 (ratings range 1-3.5) and Medium W, average rating between 2.5-3.5 (ratings range 1.5-4). Hence, the evaluations for both Low and Medium W revealed a wide divergence across participants, showing highly variable interpretations of the scenarios.

5.2.3.1 Strangers: Low Weight

This sub-group includes requests for information from someone of same (RP2), rating ranging between 1-3.5, or different age (RP5), rating ranging between 1-2.

5.2.3.1.1 Head Acts

Also with Strangers the main HA strategy used was RPC (7), as in **“do you know what way it is from here?”** (EE3, RP2), with only one exception, where one SH was utilised, such as **“we’re looking for this museum on the arts”** (EE1, RP5) (Table 53), which corroborates the conclusion about requesters’ preference for moves that check on H’s willingness/availability to comply.

	RP 02 INFORMATION FROM STRANGER	RP 05 INFORMATION FROM ELDERLY
Request Strategy type		
1 Mood derivable	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	4	3
8 Strong Hints	0	1
9 Mild Hints	0	0

Table 53_ Strangers Low W HAs

5.2.3.1.2 Internal Modification

In terms of Request perspective, HO (7) was predominant, as with Friends Low W cases, as in “do **you** know where is the library around here?” (EE1, RP2), with only one usage of SO, such as “**we**’re looking for this museum on the arts” (EE1, RP5) (Table 54), which suggests that the Low W led Ss to consider reducing the burden on the H not necessary.

	RP 02 INFORMATION FROM STRANGER	RP 05 INFORMATION FROM ELDERLY
Internal Modification		
Request perspective		
Hearer Oriented	4	3
Speaker Oriented	0	1
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0
Impersonal	0	0
Downgraders		
Syntactic Downgraders		
Embedded 'IF' clause	1	0
Interrogative	3	3
Negation	0	0
Subjectiviser	1	0
Conditional mood	0	1
Past Tense	1	0
Other Downgraders		
Consultative Devices	0	0
Downtoner	0	1
Hedges	0	0
Understaters	0	0
Softeners	0	0
> Please IM	0	1
Upgraders		
Expletives	0	0
Intensifiers	0	0

Table 54_ Strangers Low W IM

Again mirroring the results on Friends and Acquaintances, the requests were largely Syntactically Downgraded with Interrogatives (6), as in “**could you possibly please help me?**” (EE4, RP5), which also contains the only instance of Conditional employed. Other than that, there was only one use each of Subjectiviser, associated with one PT and one “if” clause, as in “**I was wondering if you could** point me in the right direction..” (EE4, RP2). In regard to Other Downgraders, only one Downtoner (i.e. “possibly”) and one Please were employed, as in the above example “could you **possibly please** help me?” (EE4, RP5).

No Upgraders were found.

Overall, this indicates that participants, though addressing a Stranger, in making a Low W request, did not consider it necessary to use too much modulation, except for the use of interrogative forms, reflecting the linguistic choices made with Friends/Low W. This was probably due to the Low W and to a certain extent to the set context, considering that requesting information involves a certain type of fixed formulae.

5.2.3.1.3 External Modification

In this case participants did not make much use of EM either (Table 55). Apart from using Alerters (5), in the form of Excuses (3), often associated with ATs (2), such as “**excuse me Sir**” (EE2, RP5), requesters only employed some Disarmers (4), mostly prefacing the subsequent Grounders (6), as in “**I’m really sorry to bother you, but I can’t find the library**” (EE3, RP2), which once again was the main strategy employed.

	RP 02 INFORMATION FROM STRANGER	RP 05 INFORMATION FROM ELDERLY
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act		
> Attention getters	0	0
> Address terms	0	0
> excuse me_sorry	2	1
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	2
Checking on Availability	0	0
Cost Minimizer	0	0
Disarmer	2	2
Establishing Relationship	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0
Grounder	3	3
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0
Please EM	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0
Sweetener	0	0

Table 55_ Strangers Low W EM

This low use of EM seems again to directly depend on the type of context. The set scenarios do not require speakers to employ many mitigators, if not for the use of Alerters to gain H’s attention and the usage of, as in the previous cases, Disarmers and Grounders, to avoid a possible unwillingness to cooperate by showing awareness of the nuisance and by giving the reasons for the request, in an attempt to gain H’s cooperativeness. However, the consistent use of Disarmers and Grounders, which we have already observed in addressing Acquaintances (and is some cases with Friends, e.g. the request to the flatmate (RP10) and for a cigarette (RP14)), suggests that these are preferred and default moves for the British-English Ss, regardless of D and W.

5.2.3.2 Strangers: Medium Weight

This sub-group involves requests for a cigarette (RP8), rating ranging between 1.5-4, and for something to note an ad’s details down (RP13), rating ranging between 2-4.

5.2.3.2.1 Head Acts

As previously, requesters overwhelming used RPC (12), such as “**Can I ..use one of your cigarettes?**” (EE2, RP8), and only one SF, such as “**if you could just.. WhatsApp**

me” (EE1, RP13) (Table 56), confirming once again a marked preference for moves that allow for checking H’s willingness or the possibility of the act to be performed.

	RP 08 CIGARETTE FROM STRANGER	RP 13 FAVOUR FROM A STRANGER
Request Strategy type		
1 Mood derivable	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	1
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	7	5
8 Strong Hints	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0

Table 56_ Strangers Medium W HAs

5.2.3.2.2 Internal Modification

In terms of Request perspective, as in the previous case, HO (10) was the preferred one, particularly when asking for something to note the ad’s details down, as in “is there any chance **you** can take a photo of this advertisement and send it to me?” (EE1, RP13). However, in the case of requesting a cigarette SO (4) was more consistently employed, as in “any chance I can take one of yours?” (EE1, RP8) (Table 57), which suggests more concern for reducing the burden on the addressee.

	RP 08 CIGARETTE FROM STRANGER	RP 13 FAVOUR FROM A STRANGER
Internal Modification		
Request perspective		
Hearer Oriented	4	6
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0
Speaker Oriented	3	1
Impersonal	0	0
Downgraders		
Syntactic Downgraders		
Embedded 'If' clause	0	3
Interrogative	7	4
Negation	0	0
Subjectiviser	0	2
Conditional mood	1	3
Past Tense	0	0
Other Downgraders		
Consultative Devices	0	0
Downtoner	2	2
Hedges	0	1
Understaters	0	2
Softeners	0	0
> Please IM	0	0
Upgraders		
Expletives	0	0
Intensifiers	0	0

Table 57_ Strangers Medium W IM

This could be explainable considering that cigarettes are consumable goods that cannot be returned, so that the hearer, in complying with the request, is losing the good, whereas in the case of borrowing something to note some details down the favour in question does not involve any loss of goods, therefore it might be perceived as less threatening. Put differently, in asking for cigarettes, given the more tangible cost to the H, the requesters used a construction that, by means of

SO, allows them to reduce the imposition of the request by asking permission for using/having the H's object (on the functions of "can I have x" request forms, see Zinken, 2015). This higher tentativeness can also be explicable considering the high cost of cigarettes in England, which may have influenced the requesters' cultural perception of them as not free-goods (Thomas, 1983; see also Márquez Reiter, 1997).

Conversely, asking for a favour was more downgraded than asking for a cigarette, which was modulated only with Interrogatives (7), once in combination with one Conditional, as in **"do you happen to have a, a, a cigarette that you *could* lend me?"** (EE4, RP8). In asking for something to note the ad's details down Ss employed not only Interrogatives (4), but also Conditionals (3) and Embedded "if" clauses (3), once associated with one Subjectiviser, such as **"I was just wondering if** you have anything that I **could** write a couple ehm ..of contact details down" (EE4, RP13). Similarly, in regard to Other Downgraders, in requesting a cigarette Ss employed only Downtoners (2), as in **"any chance** I can take one of yours?" (EE1, RP8), whereas in asking for something to note the ad's details down, apart from two Downtoners, requesters also used two Understaters, such as "I think **just..** do you have WhatsApp?" (EE1, RP13) and one Hedge, as in "I don't suppose you've got **like**" (EE2, RP13). This higher use of Downgraders in asking for a favour, in comparison with asking for a cigarette, could be interpretable as a way to compensate for addressing the H directly with HO.

No upgraders were employed.

To sum up, participants, also in addressing a Stranger for a Medium W requests, preferred to modulate their impact by predominantly using -as in all the previous cases- interrogative forms, followed by some use of Conditional and Downtoners, to signal uncertainty and tentativeness.

5.2.3.2.3 External Modification

Requesters again consistently employed only detailed Grounders (8), especially in asking for a favour, as in **"It is just..yeah I need this number of of the advertisement.. but but.. my battery is dead so.."** (EE1, RP13), and Disarmers (7), such as **"I'm really really sorry to bother you"** (EE3, RP8). Conversely, they made little use of Alerters (4), which were mostly Excuses (3) (e.g. **"excuse me,** EE3, RP13), except for one use of AG (i.e. **"hey"**, EE2, RP8), and used only one CA, such as **"or you do?"** (EE2, RP13) (Table 58).

	RP 08 CIGARETTE FROM STRANGER	RP 13 FAVOUR FROM A STRANGER
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act		
> <i>Attention getters</i>	1	0
> <i>Address terms</i>	0	0
> <i>excuse me_sorry</i>	1	2
> <i>excuse me_sorry+AT</i>	0	0
Checking on Availability	0	1
Cost Minimizer	0	0
Disarmer	4	3
Establishing Relationship	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0
Grounder	3	5
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0
Please EM	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0
Sweetener	0	0

Table 58_ Strangers Medium W EM

This corroborates the conclusion about the requesters marked reliance mainly on moves that allow them to ground and justify their requests, employed to activate H's understanding and cooperation, alongside acknowledging the potential offence, in an attempt to avoid a possible refusal, regardless of D and W. Conversely, the lack of usage of other moves, such as GP or MR, can be explained in terms of the types of scenarios, where the D and the contexts did not allow for their use.

5.3 Conclusions

This chapter has examined British-English request realisation strategies in terms of HAs, IM and EM, across the three groups of Friends, Acquaintances and Strangers, and distinguishing among Low, Medium or High W scenarios, as rated by the requesters, to identify whether and how different levels of D and W influenced Ss' strategies choice.

In general, the data showed, across all scenarios, an overwhelming reliance, in terms of HAs, on RPC, and, in terms of Request perspective, on HO, closely followed by SO, predominantly employed with interrogative forms and often downgraded with Conditionals, in regard to IM, and Grounders and Disarmers, for what concerns EM, in line with other research on English requests (e.g. Barron, 2008; Zinken & Ogiemann, 2013).

Specifically, in the case of Friends, requesters mainly used HO, in case of Low W, alongside using SO in case of Medium and High W, to reduce the perceived burden on the H, probably because of the higher perception of W. They also employed some Alerters, to get the H's attention, regardless of W and, in case of Medium W,

they employed more Conditionals. Yet, they largely employed Understaters (and often Disarmers) in requesting the friend to turn the volume down, to soften the impact of the request by acknowledging the potential cost to the H, though rated as Low W, and used many MR when asking for money, rated as High W, again as a means to reduce the cost to the H, but also as moves that could be deemed as positive politeness strategies directed at activating H's willingness to cooperate.

In requests to Acquaintances, the HO was employed alongside some use of either Impersonal (in case of Medium W) or SO (in case of High W), which suggests that having to address a not very familiar person, be it a Professor or a neighbour, led them to utilise more moves that soften the impact of the request by reducing the burden on the H, as a means to be polite. The greater variety of usage of IM, such as "if" clauses or Understaters (in case of Medium W) or Subjectivisers (particularly in case of High W) signals a more tentative approach, which was made even more evident by the use, in terms of EM, of CMs, employed to soften the impact of the request by conveying a non-impositive consideration for the H, in the case of High W requests.

Finally, when addressing Strangers, the requesters mainly used HO in both Low and Medium W cases. Other than that, in case of Low W not much modification was employed, which seems explainable considering that asking for information does not require too much modulation, other than the use of interrogative forms, Grounders, Alerters and Disarmers. In case of Medium W, apart from using Grounders and Disarmers, a slightly greater use of SO was adopted in asking a cigarette, possibly because of its perception as not a free-good (Thomas, 1982), which led requesters to prefer mitigating the burden on the H to soften the impact of the request. Conversely, "if" clauses and Conditionals were employed to ask for something to note the ad's details down, signalling a tentative approach.

To sum up, participants, by using predominantly RPC, mainly as polar questions with modal interrogatives, regardless of D and W, showed a marked preference for indirect moves that inquiry about H's willingness/availability, or the possibility to comply, i.e. for negative politeness strategies that index non-imposition and respect for H's autonomy and independence, in line with pragmatic research on English requests (e.g. Barron, 2008; Fukushima, 2000; Zinken & Ogiemann, 2013). As found by Fukushima (2000), British-English speakers tend to use a narrower

variety of strategies, avoiding direct moves even when they perceive the threat as low, and pay less attention to factors, such as D, when choosing the appropriate strategy. Furthermore, as observed by Zinken & Ogiermann (2013, 275), “by selecting the polar question format, a speaker displays their awareness that the request might dislodge the recipient from an unrelated activity” and therefore consideration for the addressee. The wide use of RPC could explain the apparently opposite tendency for HO, considering that polar questions in 2nd singular person are very common and that the (claimed) burden put on the H by using this perspective is at the same time mitigated by using such interrogative forms, alongside other mitigation. This provides further evidence for the conclusions made in chapter 4 (section 4.3) that HO needs to be understood in a more nuanced way, because it is not necessarily the case that its use is associated with the idea of imposing on the H, especially if it is employed in combination with other mitigating moves, such as interrogative forms. This study has thus revealed the importance of considering whether and how elements of speech act construction, such as HO, interact with other features of the linguistic system of the language under investigation to produce politeness effects, and thus demonstrated the importance of studying speech act forms in an integrated way. Additionally, the fact that SO was also frequently used, especially whenever W and/or D were perceived as higher, as a way to reduce the impact of the requests, which were also further modulated mostly with Conditionals and Disarmers, appears to corroborate the conclusion about Ss’ main concern for using means that avoid imposition.

Yet, though the use of modification was less when addressing Friends, and more with Acquaintances and Strangers, requesters were more inclined to downgrade their requests to Acquaintances, such as the Professor and the neighbour, than with Strangers, signalling more concern for showing uncertainty and tentativeness. This could be explained, as argued by Wolfson (1986), along the lines that in the case of Friends and Strangers the relationships are fixed, whereas in the case of Acquaintances such relationships might be perceived as unfixed and ambiguous, which can lead to a more hesitant approach in addressing them. This higher tentativeness in addressing Acquaintances could also be explicable as employed out of respect because of D, specifically due to dissimilarities in status, as in the case of the Professor, or in age, as in case of the elderly neighbour, alongside the

fact that the requests to the Professor were all perceived of High W, whereas those to the Strangers were rated as Low or Medium W.

To conclude, these results suggest that British-English requesters' linguistic choices were significantly influenced by the variables of D and even more W only in terms of IM. Indeed, the use of RPC -in regard to HAs- and of Disarmers and Grounders - for what concerns EM- was consistent across all (sub)groups, regardless of different levels of D and W.

Chapter 6 Data analysis and discussion: Cross-cultural investigation

6.1 Introduction

Drawing on the two sets of intracultural findings (chapters 4-5), this chapter compares the Italian and the British-English intracultural datasets and outcomes, to examine any similarities/differences in terms of linguistic choices. However, since how each set of participants perceived the sociopragmatic variables of D and W, and underpinning values, rights and obligations, is what influenced their linguistic behaviour, this chapter starts from a cross-cultural comparison of each group's evaluations, as provided in the retrospective interviews. This will offer the basis for better understanding, from a comparative perspective, the two groups' request patterns, as they emerged from the roleplays, since relating these two types of findings will help highlight how the (different) participants' evaluations affected their linguistic choices.

The analysis unfolds in two sections. A sociopragmatic section compares how the two sets of participants evaluated the request scenarios in terms of D and W, alongside how they evaluated their own and other's linguistic behaviour and the reasons behind such evaluations, and draws on the individual retrospective interviews (RI) conducted with the participants straight after the roleplays. A pragmalinguistic section, following the same structure of the intracultural chapters, compares the two sets of participants' linguistic choices in making different requests, when they rated D and W in the same way, and it draws on the roleplay data (RP).

6.2 Sociopragmatics

6.2.1 Introduction

This section investigates the sociopragmatic dimension of language use, by examining how participants from the two intracultural groups perceived and interpreted the sociopragmatic variables of D and W and how such perceptions and interpretations affected their evaluation of their own and others' linguistic behaviour when performing the roleplays.

In doing so, it will show how cross-cultural comparison can be difficult to conduct in cross-cultural pragmatics. The main challenge regards the fact that, as we have

seen (chapter 2), different people, particularly if from different lingua-cultures, may perceive, understand and interpret certain linguistic behaviours, the context in which they happen and certain sociopragmatic variables, such as D and W, differently, which in turn can lead to different evaluations of the same linguistic behaviour (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). As such perceptions, interpretations and evaluations are influenced by socio-culturally-embedded values, beliefs and expectations about appropriate behaviour (Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003), people from different cultural backgrounds may attach different importance to different variables (Holtgraves & Yang, 1992) and underlying values within the same context or perceive and interpret them differently. This implies that the use of the same speech act, e.g. requesting money from a friend, might not reflect the same request situation if the linguistic choice, alongside the contextual situation and the variables of D, W and rights and obligations are perceived, interpreted and evaluated differently by different people. This is why cross-cultural comparison may be difficult to conduct, as it cannot be done on a clear-cut basis if there is no linear correspondence between interactants' perceptions, interpretations and evaluations of the same behaviours. Therefore, to be able to acknowledge the subtleties that cross-cultural pragmatic analysis entails, it is pivotal to tease out such differences and even more to understand the reasons behind them. This section aims to do this and, to do so, the analysis unfolds in three sections, focusing on the three main levels of difference that emerged across the two lingua-cultures, i.e. differences in:

1. *Importance* attached to different variables (and/or underpinning values) within the same request situation;
2. *Interpretation* of the same variables (and/or underpinning values) within the same request situation;
3. *Expectations* underpinning such interpretations of these variables and/or underpinning values.

Each section discusses those request scenarios that, by drawing on the evaluations given by each set of informants, are best examples of cross-cultural differences in importance, interpretation and expectations attached to the variables of D, W, and any underpinning values, and/or in evaluation of their own and other's linguistic behaviour. Furthermore, the recourse to participants' comments will also allow for unfolding the reasons behind such differences.

6.2.2 Analysis and Discussion

As mentioned, the analysis and discussion will consider three different lines of cross-cultural diversity that emerged from the participants' evaluations, i.e. divergences in importance, in interpretation and in expectations connected with the sociopragmatic variables of D and W. However, it is important to bear in mind that these three aspects of divergence are not clear-cut categories, therefore there can be overlap between them.

6.2.2.1 Divergence in importance attached to different variables (and/or values)

This section analyses those request scenarios for which there was a divergence in importance attached to the variables of D and W, i.e. in how the relevance given to either D or W shaped participants' evaluation of their own and other's linguistic behaviour. Particularly, the focus will be on the requests for notes (RP4) and for money (RP3) from a friend, for a cigarette from a stranger (RP8), and to an elderly neighbour to turn the volume down (RP15).

6.2.2.1.1 Understanding of D as influencing the perception of W

One first point of divergence can be detected cross-culturally in terms of how the understanding of (and importance given to) D influenced the perception of W.

In the case of asking to borrow some notes from the friend (RP4), the different significance attached to D seemed to have affected the two sets of informants' evaluations of W, which was rated as Low by the Italian Ss (average rating of 2.25) and as Medium by the British-English Ss (average rating of 3.37). The Italian requesters mostly mentioned that they were influenced by D (rather than by W), as a request between friends meant *it had another* (i.e. lesser) *weight* ("perchè essendo molto amici c'ha un altro peso", EMA.G, RI), signalling that the way they evaluated D, i.e. the importance of being close (D), made them perceive the W as Low. Similar comments came from half the addressees, who also mentioned that *we are friends and the thing is minimal* ("perchè siamo amici e la cosa e' minima", LOR.B, RI), again showing that the importance attached to D influenced their perception of W as Low. In turn, this connection between closeness and Low W seems to be grounded on the idea of solidarity among Friends, where such a request is *a common thing* to ask (ENR.F, RI). Conversely, all the British-English requesters differed from their Italian counterparts in two ways. Firstly, they mostly underlined that the request was "not a small thing" (CAM.B, RI), overall showing more reluctance in asking, *feeling bad that they had to ask* (AB, RI) and "nervous in

case they'd say "no" (CAM.B, RI), which, in turn, made them ask very politely (AB, RI; GAB.G, RI). Secondly, they also viewed this request as a threat to possessions, as in "well I'm taking your notes away for a little bit" (MAR.W, RI), which suggests that they were more concerned about the possible W, and specifically about not sounding as if they were imposing on others and invading the other's space. In fact, these concepts can be widely interpreted, not only in terms of respect for others' freedom of action, but, arguably, also in terms of respect for their freedom of property (as in this case), which implies not restricting the other's right to enjoy their possessions by requesting personal things.

Similar considerations can be drawn in regard to the request for money (RP3), where again the Italian participants evaluated D as more important than W, while their British-English counterparts evaluated W as more important than D, and this affected their average ratings, since the former rated this request as Medium W, while the latter rated it as High W. What stands out in this case is the different importance given to either D or W from the two sets H's viewpoint. Though both sets of Hs rated the W of the request quite similarly (between 1.5-4 the Italian Hs and between 2-4 the British-English Hs), they attached different importance to these variables. The British-English addressees showed a certain uneasiness about lending the money (W), which was only lent as long as they would get the money back (CAM.B, RI; MOL.G., RI), as in "it's not a sort of "yeah yeah sure", it's more like "yeah but, give me back!" (MOL.G, RI), showing they were more influenced by W. Conversely, the Italian addressees were more driven by the low D, in the sense that they did not see the thing as problematic (EMA.G, RI; SDP, RI), being *an easy thing, without problems* ("e' una cosa tranquilla, senza problemi", EMA.G, RI), which was reflected in the fact that two of them even chose to offer to pay for the friend during the roleplays (EMA.G, II1; SDP, II2). In other words, the Italian Hs, because they attached more importance to D (i.e. the closeness), were easier about this request, and overall appeared more inclined to be supportive. On the contrary, the British-English Hs seemed more influenced by W and, possibly as a consequence, more concerned about the idea of getting the money back. These different stances appear to reflect two different underpinning values, i.e. solidarity (for the Italian speakers) and non-invasion of possessions (for the British-English speakers). However, one cannot underestimate the fact that 6 out of 8 British-English

participants were undergraduate students, with therefore limited amount of money available for themselves, whereas all the Italian participants were working people, with a secure monthly income, which might have influenced them in terms of feeling less worried about the “money thing”.

Nevertheless, the same patterns can also be observed in the cases of asking the friend for a lift (RP12) or the flatmate to turn the volume down (RP10). The British-English Ss seemed to be more concerned about either the possible imposition (W) on the recipient, in terms of *having to get the friend out of her way* (MOL.G, RI, RP12) or on the requester, for *causing* them *grief* (AB, RI, RP10), which led them to act (more) politely (e.g. see AB, RI, RP12). Conversely, the Italian Ss indicated they gave more importance to D, being not much worried about the request as it was between friends, where the close relationship allowed for *asking with confidence* (ENR.F, RI, RP12) or even abruptly (EMA.G, RI, RP10), showing they relied more on the idea of compliance (Márquez Reiter et al., 2005) from someone close (i.e. on the positive politeness values of solidarity and interdependence). This cross-cultural difference in ways of approaching a request to a friend according to the importance given to either D or W mirrors Webmar Shafran’s (2019) study of Arab and English lingua-cultures, which highlighted how the former were shown to prefer direct strategies as expression of closeness and solidarity when talking to familiar people and equals, whereas the latter seemed to value freedom of action more and therefore to prefer indirectness regardless of D.

6.2.2.1.2 Different emphasis on and understanding of D and W

This section focuses on scenarios where there was a cross-cultural difference in emphasis or understanding of the variables of D and W. In the request to a stranger (D) for a cigarette (RP8), though both sets of informants rated the W as Medium, they placed a different emphasis on these variables, and as a consequence attached different importance to either D or W, as one group valued more W, whereas the other one valued D more. The Italian Ss were more influenced by the W (i.e., not so high), since *it was just a cigarette* (AND.L, RI), and therefore seemed more casual in requesting. Conversely, the British-English Ss felt more at discomfort with this request, by indicating the need to be apologetic, “even before asking for anything” (GAB.G, RI), considering the D, as it was “a bit rude to ask a stranger” (AB, RI), which made them ask (more) politely (e.g. see AB, RI). However, this cross-cultural

difference in importance given to D and W could also be explicable in terms of different evaluations of this request as either being a “free-good” or not (Márquez Reiter, 1997; Thomas, 1983). Drawing on Thomas’s (1983) observation about the difference between Russian and British in conceptualising what constitutes “free-goods”, and on Márquez Reiter (1997) on differences between Spanish and English, we could argue that there is a similar dynamic at work between Italians and British-English. That is, the Italian Ss were more casual about requesting a cigarette, being influenced by the (not high) W, as they perceive it as a free-good, whereas the British-English Ss were more influenced by D, feeling uncomfortable in asking a stranger, because of their cultural perception of it as not a free-good.

Although these different perceptions of cigarettes as either free-goods or not could be caused by their different cost in the two countries to which the two groups belong, as in Italy they cost one third less than in the UK, still such dissimilarities reflect different stances. The Italian participants, similarly to what was observed by Márquez Reiter (1997) for Spanish, seemed to regard cigarettes as something that, being a free-good, they felt they could ask for, in accordance with the values of solidarity and companionship. Conversely, the British-English participants, because they perceived this item as a non-free good, might have felt that asking for a cigarette, especially from a stranger, is a sort of imposition, which explains why they were overall more reluctant in making such requests.

Also in the case of asking an elderly neighbour to turn the volume down (RP15), though the rating was uniform across the two groups in terms of type of relationship, rated as Acquaintances (D) and of W, rated as Medium (average rating of 3.25 for the Italian Ss and of 3 for the British-English Ss), the two sets of informants gave different importance to these variables, giving more emphasis to either D or W, showing they understood them differently. The Italian requesters signalled that they were influenced in their linguistic choices by W, either because they considered it *a normal thing to ask, as the walls were ‘falling down’* (“per me l’era normale l’abbassasse la televisione, vien giù i muri, cioè!” FED.A, RI), or in terms of annoyance, which led them to be less polite, or even impolite. Paradigmatic, in this sense, is the following comment: “eh si perchè mi aveva rotto i coglioni quindi sono stato scortesissimo” [well yes because she was a pain in the ass so I was very impolite] (AND.L, RI). In one case one requester commented that

the age factor (D) made him mitigate his linguistic behaviour, yet still acknowledging the annoyance, as in “vista la differenza di età cerchi di essere, nè cortese nè scortese però gli fai capire che sei seccato” [considering the age gap, you try to be, neither polite nor impolite, yet you let him understand that you are upset] (LOR.B, RI). Conversely, the British-English requesters appeared to be more influenced by D and particularly by the age factor, mentioning that it was necessary to be *more polite* (MAR.W, RI; AME.H, RI) and that they even *felt bad* in asking once they realised that the elderly neighbour had the volume high because s/he could not hear very well (B.BEL, RI; MW, RI), commenting that “now the imposition has switched on to me, I’m being the problem by asking if she can turn it down” (MW, RI).

Overall, this suggests that the two groups, because of the different emphases put on either D or W, had different understandings of W, which led them to behave differently. The British-English requesters, because of D, and specifically because of the difference in age, were more concerned about not inconveniencing the H, whereas the Italian counterparts showed they did not have such a concern, but rather, because they perceived W in terms of inconvenience on themselves, they were more upfront.

6.2.2.1.3 Summary

To sum up, by looking at this divergence in importance attached to different variables, we can observe two different patterns across the two sets of informants. In requesting from a friend (RP3-4) the Italian Ss were more influenced by the closeness (D), which affected their perceptions of W, therefore they were more casual about such requests, whereas the British-English Ss were more focused on and therefore concerned about the (possible) W, regardless of D, which shows that ultimately the two groups evaluated these requests differently. In fact, the British-English Ss tended to rate the W higher than their Italian counterparts. In requesting from a person who is not close (either an acquaintance or a stranger, RP8 and RP15), the Italian Ss gave more importance to W, yet showing again they were not worried about the possible burden on the H, while the British-English Ss were more concerned about disturbing the other (W), because of the higher D, which shows, once more, that the two groups perceived the requests differently. Yet, though the two groups gave importance to different variables, depending on whether they were with friends, or with acquaintances and strangers, these different stances led

to the same linguistic behaviour, that is, in both cases the British-English Ss were more worried about the possible imposition on the H than the Italian Ss, who instead showed to be more concerned about seeking solidarity (RP8) or about the W on themselves (RP15).

6.2.2.2 Divergence in interpretation of the same variables (and/or underpinning values)

This section focuses on request situations where there was a divergence in interpretation of the variables of D and W, such as the requests to borrow a book from a Professor (RP6), to a flatmate to turn the volume down (RP10), for help from a new neighbour (RP11) and for a favour from a stranger (RP13).

6.2.2.2.1 Different interpretations of W

This section examines cases where a different interpretation of W was detected across the two groups.

In the case of requesting to borrow a book from a Professor (RP6), the two sets of informants evaluated both D and W differently, both within the same group and between the two groups. Half of the Italian requesters rated this relationship as Acquaintances, while the other half as Strangers (D), and rated the W as Medium. Conversely, the British-English participants mostly rated this relationship as Acquaintances and the W as High. What is striking is that they appeared to interpret W differently. The British-English addressees consistently stressed the idea of property, linking the perception of the high W to the fact that a *personal thing* was being requested (B.BEL, RI; AME.W, RI; MAR.W, RI), as in “I needed to make it clear like, you’re having something from me” (AME.W, RI). Conversely, the Italian addressees did not make any reference to the idea of property in relation to the thing being requested, but rather mentioned that they were willing to help the student, as it was *part of their job* (“è parte del mio lavoro” LOR.B, RI), showing they did not consider it as a personal thing, but more like a work-related object.

These different interpretations of W seem to reflect, again, two opposite stances, i.e. a British-English speakers’ tendency toward the negative politeness value of not invading the other’s personal space/property, or of independence (Scollon et al., 2012) and autonomy (Hernández Flores, 1999), and an Italian speakers’ inclination for the positive politeness value of solidarity, or of involvement (Scollon et al. 2012) and affiliation (Bravo, 2008; Hernández Flores, 1999).

Similar observations can be made for the request for a lift from the Professor (RP9), where, although both sets of informants rated the relationship (D) as Acquaintances and the W as High, the latter was interpreted differently by them, which probably reflects why the British-English Ss rated the W higher than the Italian Ss (4.75 vs 3.75). The British-English requesters interpreted the W as a *massive inconvenience* (MW, RI) for the Professor, being asked for a *personal thing* (B.BEL, RI) that required them to *apologise* for making such a request (GAB.G, RI; B.BEL, RI), putting the stress on the idea of burden. The Italian Ss just saw it as a big thing to ask, yet not acknowledging any concern for burdening the H, as long as they were polite and respectful in asking, as in “essendo uno studente e lui un Professore, persona di rispetto, giustamente (..) chiedo con molto garbo” [being a student and him a Professor, a person to respect, rightly (..) I ask very tactfully] (EMA.G, RI), showing they relied more on activating the H’s willingness to cooperate. Again, we can argue that such different interpretations of W reflect different underpinning values, i.e. the British-English Ss were more influenced by the idea of non-imposition and respect for the H’s independence, whereas the Italian Ss seemed more driven by the idea of solidarity and involvement (Scollon et al., 2012; Bravo, 2008; Hernández Flores, 1999). However, in this case it cannot be underestimated that such cross-cultural differences could also result from how the two sets of participants perceived and understood the nature of the relationship and the underpinning rights and obligations (in these terms, Spencer-Oatey, 1993) and related expectations, which means that such perceptions, though they can still be considered as socio-culturally influenced, did not necessarily represent the interactants’ personal perceptions of W. This aspect is further analysed in section 6.2.2.3.1.

Finally, also in the case of asking a stranger (D) for a favour (RP13), though it was evaluated in terms of W as Medium by both sets of informants, the two groups gave different, and actually opposite interpretations of W. The Italian requesters considered the W in terms of a normal request *that does not require any particular embellishment* (“non é che gli abbia chiesto chissà come”, SAR.B, RI), being something that *you would ask anyone* (“una cosa che chiedi a chiunque”, LOR.B, RI). Instead, half the British-English requesters viewed this request as *a weird one*, that required them to be *very cautious* (AB, RI), because it meant *interrupting the*

other's day (MOL.G, RI), showing they linked the *weirdness* with taking up the other's time and, ultimately, to interpret W in terms of an invasion of others' space/time, which, in turn, led them to be more polite (see AME.H, RI; MOL.G, RI). Therefore, also in this case the main difference in interpretation lies in the British-English Ss' perception of W as an invasion/imposition, which is not paralleled by the Italian Ss, who showed they did not attach to this request any idea of burden but, rather, viewed it as a normal thing to ask anyone, probably as a consequence of their inclination toward the value of solidarity.

Put differently, the British-English participants showed they constantly interpret the concept of W in terms of burden/invasion, which implies that the higher the perception of time or effort involved in complying with the request, the higher is the perception of the imposition (Goldschmidt, 2009), whereas the Italian participants showed they did not necessarily understand W in such terms. Similarly to what was observed by Bravo (2017) for Spanish, their concern was not about non-imposition, but rather about creating affiliation.

6.2.2.2.2 Different interpretations of D

This section focuses on cases where a different interpretation of D was detected across the two groups.

For instance, although the request to the flatmate to stop making a noise (RP10) was mostly rated, in terms of D, as Friends, the two groups gave different interpretations of this variable. While the Italian Ss considered the flatmate as a proper friend, half of the British-English requesters signalled uncertainty about the level of familiarity with the addressee, i.e. whether they were just flatmates (i.e. some sort of acquaintances) or friends (MW, RI) or about the length of acquaintance (CAM.B, RI), which influenced their choices, because "if I knew them I'd probably be allowed to be a bit more impolite" (CAM.B, RI).

This different interpretation of what it means to be a "flatmate" could be explicable from a cultural perspective, where in England it is quite common that students move out from the family house and end up living with strangers, i.e. they may not choose their flatmates, and so they would not know them (Holton, 2017), while in Italy it is less common to move out from the family house and, when people do, it usually happens with friends. Thus, the idea of "flatmate" naturally tends to connote a different degree of familiarity amongst the two groups.

In turn, this divergence in interpretation could also explain why the Italian Ss, though they rated the W higher than the British-English Ss did (i.e. Medium vs Low) were more abrupt than the latter (especially if we consider that one of the Italian Ss -ENR.G, I13- did not even ask, but simply switched the H's radio off during the roleplay). The Italian participants, both requesters and addressees, mentioned that D influenced them, in being more direct/abrupt in asking (EMA.G, RI) or responding, as in "siamo in casa insieme, dopo un pochino, non mi rompere i coglioni.. (..) cioè mi sono sentito un pochino più libero di rispondergli" [we live together, after a bit, don't be a pain in the ass.. (..) thus I felt a bit freer to respond] (AND.L, RI), and were evaluated as impolite by their counterparts. Conversely, though also the British-English requesters declared that they had been influenced by the closeness (D) in taking a more direct approach, mentioning that "I wasn't very polite, because we were closer, I felt like I could like be, more abrupt with her" (GAB.G, RI), they were not perceived as such by their counterparts, which shows how evaluations of the same linguistic behaviour can be highly subjectively-dependent (Haugh, 2014). Specifically, these examples suggest that the requesters and the addressees' different perceptions were driven by how they viewed the request. The British-English requesters perceived their linguistic behaviour as impolite, possibly as a consequence of considering the request as an imposition and therefore of feeling bad for asking in the first place, which made them evaluate the act of asking itself, rather than the way they actually asked, as such. Conversely, their addressees, not being influenced by "feeling bad", evaluated the speech act for what it was and for how it was performed, and therefore rated it as polite. Furthermore, the British-English Hs were straightaway receptive and accepting, feeling bad for *causing grief* (AB, RI) or considered compliance a *common courtesy* (AME.H, RI), even when they felt annoyed by the request (MOL.G, RI; B.BEL, RI), thus conveying that they were more oriented to consideration for the other's autonomy and freedom.

Cross-comparatively speaking we can notice that, although both groups said they were influenced by D, the Italian speakers appeared to be more direct and upfront, because of the closeness, than their British-English counterparts. Although, as mentioned, this is likely due to different interpretations of "flatmate", nevertheless these different attitudes suggest that the Italian speakers were more influenced by the idea of closeness (and affiliation), which allowed them to be more direct, while the British-English speakers were more influenced by the values of non-imposition

and respect for the others' space/freedom and independence, which led them to behave with more tact.

A different interpretation of D was also detected in the case of requesting information from an elderly person (RP5), where the British-English Hs showed they had a different perception of the elderly in comparison to the Italian Hs. Two British-English Hs mentioned that they felt they had to behave *reluctantly*, as if they did not want to comply with the request, because they were elderly (MW, RI; CAM.B, RI), and along the same lines a requester expressed that, "because he's an old person (...) I really don't wanna put you out like" (AME.H, RI), whereas no Italian H made such a comment but, rather, observed that the thing being asked was normal and easy to do. This difference in viewing the elderly seems to reflect, again, a higher consideration of and concern toward the idea of non-imposition by the British-English participants, which made them think the elderly could feel more pressure in being approached by a stranger, against an easiness and tendency toward cooperativeness (and interdependence) by the Italian participants.

6.2.2.2.3 Different interpretations of D and W

This section examines scenarios where different interpretations of D and W were detected across the two groups.

In the case of asking the new neighbour for some help (RP11), the two sets of informants, even if they both rated the W as High (both with an average rating of 4.25), they interpreted both D and W differently. For what concerns D, the Italian requesters rated the relationship as Strangers, whereas the British-English requesters rated it as Acquaintances (though one requester rated it as 2.5, i.e. in between Acquaintances and Strangers). In regard to W, and particularly from the H's perspective, there was a different focus given to W. Almost all the British-English addressees stressed the idea that the S was asking them "to, take time" (GAB.G, RI) and "using my, quite a lot of energy" (CAM.B, RI), signalling a concern for the invasion of their space/time, which was a *massive thing* that *should have been locked down* and "just say "no sorry I'm busy" (MW, RI). Conversely, the Italian Hs' only comment on W was that *I could have been busy*, therefore *she could have asked me before so that we could have been planned it before* ("io c'avevo da fare magari..che ne sa questa qui..magari me lo poteva chiedere prima..si poteva organizzare e fissare prima", ENR.F, RI), showing a different approach to the matter.

Indeed, the Italian H's concern was more organisational, around the idea of planning ahead, rather than about the invasion of his time. This, once more, seems corroborating the hypothesis that the British-English speakers were overall more influenced by the underlying values of non-imposition and independence, which made them attach W to the idea of time and effort involved in the request (Goldschmidt, 2009), whereas the Italian speakers did not seem to view W in such terms, probably because they were more inclined toward creating affiliation (Bravo, 2017).

6.2.2.2.4 Summary

To sum up, the main divergences in interpretation were related to the sociopragmatic variable of W, apart from those connected with the perception of fuzzy relationships, such as the flatmate (RP10) and the new neighbour (RP11). In all the above cases, where D was fundamentally higher than in the previous cases (section 6.2.2.1), the British-English speakers interpreted W more in terms of imposition and invasion of other's space/time/property, whereas the Italian speakers never perceived the W in such terms, even when they rated the W higher than the former did (e.g. in the case of RP10). Actually, overall it seemed that the Italian speakers felt more at ease, or less worried, in making (e.g. RP10 and RP13) or receiving (e.g. RP11 and RP6) these requests. From this, we could argue that these two attitudes seem to reflect once more a British-English speakers' sensitivity to the negative politeness values of non-imposition/respect for other's freedom, autonomy (and property) and an Italian speakers' inclination toward the positive politeness values of cooperativeness, interdependence and supportiveness.

6.2.2.3 *Divergences in expectations underpinning the same variables (and/or underpinning values)*

This section analyses request scenarios where there was a divergence in expectations related to the same variables, in terms of perceptions of own/others' rights and responsibilities and of face issues, such as the requests to a stranger for information (RP2, RP5), to a flatmate (RP10) and to an elderly neighbour (RP15) to turn the volume down, and for a cigarette from the friend (RP14).

6.2.2.3.1 Different perceptions of rights and obligations

This section examines scenarios where there were cross-cultural differences in perceptions of rights and obligations.

When requesting information (RP2, RP5), although both sets of informants rated this request to a stranger as Low W, they had different perceptions of and expectations related to their right to ask. The British-English Ss were more concerned about it being “weird” to approach a stranger (GAB.G, RI, RP2), as they could possibly be “stopping someone’s day” (MOL.G, RI, RP2), whereas the Italian Ss considered it something that *you could ask anyone* (LOR.B, RI, RP5), and only one requester acknowledged the possibility of *disturbing the person, therefore kept the distance* [potevo disturbare questa persona quindi ehm, diciamo ho mantenuto la distanza per non essere troppo invadente, SDP, RI, RP2]. Note that something similar emerged in RP8 (asking a stranger for a cigarette), which was analysed in section 6.2.2.1.2. This, again, suggests that the British-English Ss expressed more concern than their Italian counterparts about not sounding like they were imposing on others, either with unusual/inappropriate requests or by interrupting them, but it also tells us something about different expectations. Indeed, these different attitudes reflect different perceptions of their rights and obligations, which include cost-benefit considerations (Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003). The Italian Ss seemed to feel more at ease about such requests (i.e. to have more right to ask), whereas the British-English Ss seemed to consider these requests to be more of a possible inconvenience for the unknown H (i.e. to have less right to ask). More specifically, the Italian Ss seemed influenced by their association rights (Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003), since the entitlement of social involvement, which seems to reflect the idea of interdependence, in turn mirrors an expectation of having a right to ask. Conversely, the British-English Ss seemed to give more importance to the H’s equity rights (Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003) to not be unduly imposed upon, which made them be more concerned about such requests. This explanation about the British-English appears confirmed by Spencer-Oatey and Jiang (2003), who pointed out that the British seem to treat face/rapport matters differently, depending on if they believe they have the right to expect compliance -i.e. to have the right to ask- or not, as in the case of asking for favours. Put differently, the importance given to equity rights and to the idea of balance between costs and benefits based on the idea of reciprocity is what seems to lead the British to perceive asking for a favour as an imposition, because favours, not entailing any obligation on the recipient, fall outside their right to ask. Interpreting favours as such appears to mirror, again, a British-English Ss’ orientation toward the idea of non-imposition/invasion and

autonomy, which made them feel uncomfortable in asking for a favour, worrying about invading the other's space/freedom. This conclusion seems corroborated by the fact that, as observed in section 6.2.2.2, the British-English addressees perceived that elderly strangers were supposed to behave reluctantly, signalling they did not want to comply (MW, RI, RP5; CAM.B, RI, RP5). This reluctance can be interpreted as if the elderly people did not perceive themselves as having an obligation to comply, which goes hand in hand with the requesters' perception of not having the right to ask in the first place. In comparison, the ease of such requests for the Italian participants, and particularly for the recipients, suggests more sensitivity toward the idea of being supportive and helpful, hence about the idea of interdependence, regardless of whether there is an obligation/expectancy of compliance or it is just a matter of doing a favour. This conclusion seems in line with Spencer-Oatey and Jiang (2003), who observed that sociopragmatic interactional principles (SIPs), such as concerns about face, rights and obligations, are typically value-linked and can be culturally and/or situationally context-dependent. Indeed, perceptions and interpretations of such principles are deeply driven by the importance attached to different values, such as supportiveness or autonomy, which may vary across cultures (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2016, 2021).

Similar conclusions can be drawn in the cases of the requests for a book (RP6) and for a lift (RP9) from a Professor, analysed in section 6.2.2.2.1. Although in these cases the D was less, as the Professor was rated as an Acquaintance by both groups, different interpretations of the institutional role seem to have played a role in influencing the participants' expectations, in terms of different perceptions of their own rights and obligations (Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003). In the case of the book (RP6), the Italian speakers seemed to feel they had more right to ask the Professor, and the Professor had an obligation to help the student, due to the Professor's role (e.g. see comment of LOR.B, RP6, about *it being part of his job*, section 6.2.2.2.1), possibly, once again, because of their inclination toward interdependence and supportiveness, i.e. to be more influenced by their association rights and obligations. Conversely, the British-English speakers, underlining that the item they (were) asked for was a *personal copy* belonging to the Professor, showed they felt less right to ask (as students) and less obligation to help (as Professors), as a consequence of perceiving this request as outside the scope of their (equity) rights

and obligations (i.e., just a favour), probably because of their inclination toward independence and respecting others' property. This is even more striking in the case of the lift (RP9), where the participants' different perceptions of W, particularly from the H's viewpoint, seemed to have affected their expectations. All British-English Hs mentioned they were *dismissive* (AB, RI) or *reluctant* and *uncomfortable* (CAM.B, RI) about this request, whereas the Italian Hs were more comfortable with helping the student, as *being a Professor, a person of another level, a more mature person, it was right to be courteous with the student* ("sei una persona, un Professore, un altro livello, una persona piu grande ehh, quindi é giusto avere anche cortesia per uno studente", EMA.G, RI). This again suggests different perceptions of their expectations in terms of rights and obligations. The Italian Hs seemed to feel more inclined, if not "obliged", to help the students, reflecting a predisposition for solidarity and supportiveness, influenced by their perceptions of their association obligations, whereas the British-English Hs seemed to interpret the request, because of their role, more in terms of crossing boundaries and of invasion of their space, as they were asked for a favour outside their duty, which in turn influenced their perceptions of their (equity) rights and obligations. Indeed, out of four Hs, even those two who accepted the request for the lift admitted they pulled rank on the students, as in "I was just like "yes that's okay, it's no problem, but next time.."" (GAB.G, RI). This seems to reflect once more the idea underlined by Spencer-Oatey and Jiang (2003) about the British' tendency to behave differently according to whether they perceive the request as falling within their duty or exceeding it, which is not paralleled by the Italian speakers, who showed they were more supportive, regardless of whether they had an obligation to comply or not. Yet, as noted in section 6.2.2.2.1, in these cases it cannot be underestimated that such cross-cultural differences could also be a consequence of how the two sets of requestees perceived and understood the nature of the Professor-student relationship (Spencer Oatey, 1993) or thought they were expected to behave according to certain rules related to their institutional role. This means that, though they can still be considered as socio-culturally influenced perceptions, yet they do not necessarily represent the interactants' personal view of W. In other words, even if the Hs were happy to comply with the request, they might have thought they were expected to refuse to comply, due to expectations associated with appropriate behaviour related to their institutional role. This shows that not only

personal perceptions of D and W, but also different perceptions of what certain specifics of certain scenarios may involve may affect participants' linguistic behaviour and evaluation.

6.2.2.3.2 Different perceptions of rights, responsibilities, face and of the idea of fairness

This section focuses on cases where there were cross-cultural differences in perceptions of rights and obligations, plus of face and of the idea of what counts as fair.

In the case of the request to the flatmate to turn the volume down (RP10), analysed in section 6.2.2.2.2, we have seen that, despite the Italian Ss rating the W as Medium and the British-English Ss as Low, the former behaved more abruptly than the latter. The Italian speakers gave more importance to the closeness (D), which led them to feel more at ease in being *quite harsh in asking* ("glielo ho chiesto in modo molto forte", EMA.G, RI) or responding (AND.L, RI), whereas the British-English speakers, particularly the Hs, were more receptive and accepting, feeling bad for *causing grief* (AB, RI) or considering compliance a *common courtesy* (AME.H, RI). As in the previous cases, the two sets of participants' overall attitudes seem to reflect different stances taken on the perception of their rights and responsibilities, and, in this case, also of face. The Italian speakers appeared more driven by their right, both to ask and to respond, which can explain why they overall acted with less redressive action, and did not seem to be concerned about their or the other's face. However, in this case their linguistic behaviour seemed influenced not only by their perceptions of their association rights, but also of their equity rights. That is, because of the closeness and of the idea of interdependence, the Ss felt confident in asking, i.e. to have more right to ask, regardless of W, and the Hs felt similarly at ease in claiming their right to do as they wished and therefore to respond accordingly. Yet, we can argue that such perceptions of their association rights might have influenced their perceptions of their equity rights in such terms, i.e., because of the relationship and the situation. Conversely, the British-English speakers seemed more concerned about the impression they would make on the other and about avoiding conflict, i.e. about their face, and were also more polite and accepting, i.e. seeming to be more aware of the other's right to ask, and in turn of their responsibility to comply with the other's request, according to their perception of equity rights in terms of avoiding imposition and respecting others'

independence. Paradigmatic in this sense is one S's comment, who mentioned that he did not want to sound like a *bad flatmate* (MW, EE1, RI), since the H had the right *to sit everywhere in the house and listen to music* (MW, EE1, RI). In turn, these different expectations appear to reflect different underlying values, i.e. solidarity, which in this case could be interpreted as an expectation of compliance (for the Italian speakers) and non-imposition, which implies more awareness and respect for the other's freedom (for the British-English speakers).

Similar considerations can be drawn for the other request to turn the volume down, this time to an elderly neighbour (RP15), where we can see that, though both groups, as observed in section 6.2.2.1.2, evaluated D and W similarly, they seemed to attach different expectations, in terms of rights and obligations, to such variables, probably because of the different importance given to them, and to treat face issues differently. The Italian requesters' stress on the W, particularly in terms of annoyance for themselves, led them to be quite abrupt, if not impolite (two out of four), as the neighbour *was a pain in the ass* ("eh si perchè mi aveva rotto i coglioni quindi sono stato scortesissimo", AND.L, RI), and this attitude was also reflected in some Hs' comments. This suggests that the Italian participants were strongly influenced by the idea of being in right, either for requesting or for behaving as they wished, and therefore had no concern about face-threats, which can explain why overall their linguistic behaviour was more upfront, unresponsive or even impolite. Similar observations can be made here about the fact that their perceptions of their association rights and obligations based on the idea of solidarity and interdependence seem to have influenced their perceptions of their equity rights and obligations in terms of being in right to ask or respond and thus to expect compliance from each other. Conversely, the British-English Ss used more indirectness in dealing with the other in two ways. Either by showing they felt *bad in asking* (B.BEL, RI; MW, RI) and that they needed to be *extra polite* (AME, RI), signalling more orientation to the H's equity rights and concern for not sounding as if they were invading the personal space of the other, or, from the H's side, though they sometimes highlighted annoyance with the request, by still complying, showing more awareness of their equity obligations and to prefer avoiding conflict and saving face.

From another viewpoint, we could also argue that, drawing on Spencer-Oatey and Kádár's (2016) findings on British and Chinese peoples' different views of fairness, which showed how, although the two groups seemed to be upholding "the same moral foundation of fairness/reciprocity", they had "differing views as to what actually counted as fair" (2016, 18), these results evoke a similar pattern. Even if in both requests to stop the noise both sets of participants seemed to be driven by the idea of fairness, in actual fact they had different interpretations of and expectations in regard to it. The Italian Ss viewed it from an egocentric perspective, driven by the idea of having the right, whereas the British-English Ss viewed it from a more global perspective, which led them to take into consideration not only their own rights, but also the rights of the other (to do as they wished), probably as a consequence of their concern for avoiding imposition.

Overall, we can observe that the Italian speakers, being more driven by their rights, relied more on the idea of solidarity and interdependence, in this case, again, interpretable as expectation of compliance, whereas the British-English speakers put more stress on their responsibility and on the other's rights, probably as a consequence of their inclination for the negative politeness values of autonomy and non-imposition.

Furthermore, also in the case of the request to the friend (D) for a cigarette (RP14), whose W was evaluated as Low by the Italian Ss (average rating of 2.5) and as Medium by the British-English Ss (average rating of 2.75), these different ratings seem to reflect different expectations in terms of rights and obligations connected not only to W but also to D, i.e. the fact of asking a friend this sort of question. The Italian requesters showed that D strongly impacted on their linguistic behaviour, as they felt *confident in making such a request without the need for begging* ("c'è confidenza, sono comunque gentile perchè ovviamente gli sto chiedendo di darmi una cosa sua ehm, però insomma, non era una cosa da, da pregare più di tanto", SDP, RI). This perception of easiness and companionship, which seems grounded on the closeness of the relationship, was also shared by the Italian recipients, who commented that *being friends they possibly have been scrounging from each other for years* ("essendo amici magari ci si scroccano a vicenda da una vita", LOR.B, RI). Moreover, not only did this sort of request *not require any politeness nor impoliteness* ("non richiede nessuna nè cortesia nè scortesia, mi dai una sigaretta,

mì tieni, e viceversa”, LOR.B, RI), but overpoliteness was even perceived negatively (“lei anche anche troppo, l’ha infiocchettata anche troppo, paraculo, per arrivare a farsela offrire” [she [was] even too much (polite), she embellished it too much, smart ass, to get to the point to have it offered] AND.L, RI). This finding is in line with Culpeper (2011) and Locher (2010), who observed how (negative) overpoliteness can be perceived with a negative connotation. Finally, this easygoingness about this request was also marked by the Hs making jokes, i.e. using mock impoliteness about the request in a sort of joking complaint, as in “gli ho detto “gna’ ven via, l’è un modo per non fumare [sic: scroccare?]”, pero' in maniera scherzosa, pero' alla fin fine ma in maniera cortese” [I told her “come on is that a way to scrounge?”, but in a joking way, but at the end it was in a polite way] (AND.L, RI). Overall, we can observe that this easiness, conveyed either by being fine with the request, or by making a fuss about it, but in a friendly way, was clearly influenced by the friend-relationship, and seems based on the idea of camaraderie among friends (on the use of mock-politeness to signal solidarity, see Haugh, 2014). In turn, this attitude also seems to reflect a stance on their rights and obligations, i.e. feeling more at ease, they felt more in right to ask, but also to respond, according to how they felt about the request (i.e., using mock politeness to pull rank on the friend), which is indicative of their inclination toward the idea of association rights and obligations based on interdependence.

Conversely, the British-English requesters, though they also highlighted the importance of D, which led them to be *less apologetic* (GAB.G, RI) or *casual, but still polite* (CAM.B, RI) about this request, also mentioned the idea of repayment (“we made a little agreement to hit the shop on the way out as well, you know like, “look if we run out I’ll buy the next packet”, MW, RI), which highlights the underlining value of reciprocity, based on the idea of equity rights and of cost-benefit considerations (Spencer-Oatey & Jing, 2003). This idea of repayment was acknowledged also by one H, who commented that he *was happy for that to happen, cos we’re friends*, yet “happy to be like “oh I mean next time you can lend me one back (..)” making sure he knows that (..) “oh you owe me one now”” (BEN.B, RI), therefore underlying the importance of having the favour repaid at some point. These different attitudes toward the favour, which can also explain the different rating given to W by the two groups, show different expectations based on D and W in terms of rights and obligations, i.e. toward the friend, according to W, but also

in terms of face management. The Italian Ss seemed to attach the expectation of compliance (i.e. more right to ask) to the close relationship (D), alongside the Low W, and to be influenced by their association rights and the underlining values of camaraderie and interdependence, where friendship entails sharing cigarettes and the like easily, without worrying about having to be polite or to make sure to return the favour, as between friends returning the favour is kind of implicit within the idea of sharing. This conclusion is similar to Sifianou's (2005, 220) findings for Greek, who observed that participants seem more at ease with such requests, probably because "the 'free goods' available, such as a cigarette (...) can be obtained without even asking for them, but rather by just taking them, and perhaps stating what one is doing", as "such acts are understood as part of sharing whatever is available, which is the behavior expected from all members of the in-group". This, in turn, meant that they had no concern in asking, but also in responding to this request, nor were they concerned for possible face-threats, which explains the overall participants' directness in addressing the other. Conversely, the British-English speakers seemed to take a different stance on their rights and obligations, possibly also because of their perception of cigarettes as not free goods (Márquez Reiter, 1997; Thomas, 1983), which led them to attach a different value to the requested item, to perceive the request as an imposition and to rate the W higher than the Italian Ss did. Their expectations seemed to be linked to the idea of equity rights (Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003) and to the related idea of reciprocity, which implied the need of returning the favour, to keep costs and benefits in balance (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). Furthermore, the British-English speakers' overall more indirect and polite approach can be interpretable as a signal of more orientation to possible face-threats. However, we could also argue, again, that these different stances led indeed to different interpretations of the idea of reciprocity (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2016), which was interpreted either as sharing among friends (for the Italian speakers) or as returning the favour (for the British-English speakers), and that these different interpretations were directly dependent on the underlying values these interpretations were based on. In fact, once more, it seems that the Italian speakers' interpretation of reciprocity was driven by the values of solidarity and interdependence, whereas the British-English speaker's interpretation was driven by the idea of respect for the other's property (which involved making sure

there was redress), which reflects the stress on the values of independence and non-imposition.

The same patterns can be observed in the case of requesting money from a friend (RP3), where, as noted in section 6.2.2.1.1, particularly the Italian Hs were more at ease with the request, considering D, than the British-English Hs, who were more influenced by W. These different perspectives, or rather, this different importance attached to different values, appear to reflect different perceptions and expectations connected to how they evaluated D and W. Though both seemed to rely on the idea of reciprocity, they seemed to interpret it in different ways, as driven by different underlying values. The Italian speakers' idea of reciprocity seemed to be driven by the idea of association rights and the underlying value of camaraderie, which led them to take reciprocity "for granted", where this sort of favour is a normal thing between friends, without having to make clear that a favour has been done and needs to be repaid and, as a consequence, to not worry about possible face-threats. Conversely, the British-English speakers' idea of reciprocity appeared to be driven by the idea of equity rights and the underlying concept of fairness, which led them to feel the necessity to state their rights (to have the money back) and the others' obligations (to return it), to keep a balance between costs and benefits and, in turn, avoid possible face-threats.

Finally, a different cross-cultural stance on face was also detected in the case of asking a new neighbour for a favour (RP11), and particularly from the H's perspective. The British-English addressees mentioned their willingness to cooperate, yet stressed the fact that they wanted *to make a good impression* (MOL.G, RI; CAM.B, RI), signalling concern for their face. Conversely, the Italian Hs commented that they wanted to be *accommodating with the neighbour* ("essendo un vicino, ero predisposta a ehm a assecondarlo", SDP, RI), showing an inclination toward solidarity, regardless of any concern about face in terms of making a good impression.

6.2.2.3.3 Summary

To sum up, in all these cases the Italian speakers have been shown to generally feel a greater right to ask than the British-English speakers or, in other words, to be more influenced by their association rights (and by a consequent perception of

their equity rights and obligations in such terms), whereas the British-English speakers were more influenced by their equity rights, in terms of keeping costs-benefits in balance. The former signalled they felt more comfortable in asking/more inclined to help when the request involved asking a stranger or a Professor for favours, whereas the British-English speakers have been shown to feel they had fewer rights/obligations in the case of mere favours. Also, the Italian speakers showed they felt a greater right to ask and respond when they were either annoyed by the other or felt more at ease because of the close relationship, not worrying about face, while the British-English speakers in such cases showed they were more oriented to the others' rights and thus their obligation to respect them, alongside being more concerned about face issues. Overall, these different stances appear to reflect different underlying values (solidarity/interdependence vs non-imposition/independence) and highlight the impact that such values have on the perception of one's rights, obligations, and concerns for face-threats.

6.2.3 Conclusive remarks

This section has focused on how perceptions/understandings of the sociopragmatic variables of D and W can vary across cultures and can influence evaluations of linguistic behaviour. It has shown cross-cultural differences between the Italian and British-English speakers in terms of the importance, interpretations and expectations attached to such variables and underpinning values, and has attempted to unearth the underlying reasons for such differences.

In case of divergence in importance attached to different variables, the data showed that the two sets of participants tended to give different importance to different variables, depending on how they viewed the relationship at play between the participants. When the requests were performed among friends, the Italian Ss gave more importance to the closeness (D), whereas the British-English Ss were more concerned about the possible W (e.g. in the case of the notes, perceived as "invading" the H's possessions), which meant that the former were more comfortable in making such requests than the latter. Conversely, when the requests were performed among acquaintances and strangers, the Italian Ss showed they were more driven by W, whereas the British-English Ss were more focused on D. However, even in these cases, this meant that the Italian requesters felt more comfortable in asking, because the W was not high (e.g. the cigarette) or because of a right to ask (because of the W on them, e.g. the noise) than the British-English

requesters, who were more worried about bothering the not well known/unknown H.

This idea of bothering, or burdening the addressee, which characterised the British-English participants' perspectives, also represents the most interesting divergence in terms of different interpretations of the same variables, i.e. W. The British-English Ss tended to view the requests, particularly when directed to people who are not very close, i.e. acquaintances or strangers, more in terms of imposition on/invasion of the H's time, freedom, space and even property (e.g. when requesting a book or lift from the Professor). Conversely, the Italian Ss never constructed the W in such terms, and actually seemed to perceive these requests as less of a burden, and, from the H's perspective, to be more driven by the fact that, regardless of the W, they wanted to be supportive and helpful. This finding seems in line with those of Bravo (2017) and Hernández Flores (1999) for Spanish, who showed how non-imposition is not a necessary feature of Spanish request realisation.

In terms of different expectations, overall the Italian speakers seemed to feel more strongly about their association and equity rights driven by the idea of interdependence, against the others' obligations. Conversely, the British-English speakers appeared to move more from the idea of equity rights and of balance between costs and benefits and to take the others' rights and thus their own obligations more into consideration than their own rights, and this led them to behave differently. The Italian speakers were shown to be more direct and upfront, and even abrupt, signalling they had stronger expectations in terms of compliance/support from the other (mainly because of D), and therefore more right to ask, which led them to show less concern about face (either their own or others). The British-English speakers showed they had fewer expectations in terms of their own rights against the others' rights and to be more preoccupied with avoiding face-threats, by trying to be more polite, accepting or compromising.

Overall, all this suggests that the two sets of participants' different evaluations, perceptions and interpretations were strongly influenced by different values. The British-English participants appeared more driven by the negative politeness values of autonomy, independence, non-imposition and respect for others' space/time/freedom, which also led to more indirectness in order to avoid conflict

and save face. The Italian participants appeared more driven by the positive politeness values of solidarity, interdependence, affiliation, camaraderie and friendliness, which led them to be more direct with friends and less worried about W with acquaintances and strangers, when they felt the W was not so high or, in contrast, when the impact of the W on the S was high enough to justify their request. And, as we have seen, these different perspectives highly affected their perceptions of their rights and responsibilities.

Although the small sample cannot allow for any generalisation, and further research is needed to shed more light, these results suggest that people with different cultural perspectives not only can perceive and evaluate the same speech act differently in terms of D and W, but that this is directly related to differences in importance, interpretation or expectations that are attached to such variables and to their underpinning values. Moreover, as also observed by Holtgraves and Yang (1992), divergences in perceptions of context and weighting of sociopragmatic variables can explain different levels of politeness within the same situations, which reflect different speakers' views of the interpersonal situation. This, as the authors highlighted, shows that "politeness is a function of more than one variable" (Holtgraves & Yang, 1992, 254). Put differently, as pointed out by Spencer-Oatey and Jiang (2003), these divergences reflect different interactional concerns (e.g. for being friendly versus respecting other's autonomy), which are culturally-driven. This is not to imply that people from the same national background will inevitably evaluate certain linguistic behaviours in the same way. Rather, it aims to highlight that a shared cultural background can potentially lead to a shared recourse to certain frames of assumptions, expectations and perceptions on interpersonal relationships, rights and responsibilities and preferred social behaviours (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2016) "that are ideologically constructed within and beyond the nation" (McConachy, 2019, 170). In other words, in line with Spencer-Oatey and Jiang's (2003) findings, these results support the idea that "national culture can be a relevant influencing factor" in determining "the overall importance that people attach to a given SIP" (2003, 1644), which can vary not only from context to context, but also across lingua-cultures. The findings also showed how individual retrospective interviews are an indispensable means to tease out such evaluations, interpretations and perceptions, to bring to light any differences and, most importantly, their underlying reasons.

6.3 Pragmalinguistics

6.3.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the pragmalinguistic use of language, by cross-comparing what speech acts and moves participants from the two intracultural groups employed in making different requests, and how their linguistic choices were influenced by different levels of D and W. Along the same lines as in the previous intracultural chapters (4-5), it will show how much variation was detected in the datasets, both at a general level (i.e. across all scenarios) and at a group level (according to the group categories of D and W) and compare such outcomes.

Considering that the number of requests performed varied for each subgroup, the total number of requests will always be mentioned for each section, to allow for the comparison of the datasets. However, the ratings given by the requesters, in terms of D and particularly of W, were inconsistent, either within the same cultural group, but mostly across the two groups, and this was reflected in the categorisation of the requests per D and W, which, as we will see in section 6.3.3, are not cross-culturally uniform. In two cases it was not possible to do a cross-cultural comparison because of the different ratings across the two groups. RP3 was rated as Friends High W, but only by the British-English Ss, since it was rated as Friends Medium W by the Italian Ss. RP11 was rated as Strangers High W, but only by the Italian Ss, as it was rated as Acquaintances High W by the British-English Ss. Since these categories of Friends and of Strangers High W did not contain any other Friends/Strangers High W roleplay, they could not be used for comparison.

6.3.2 General features

This section examines the usage made by the two sets of informants in terms of HAs, IM and EM, across all scenarios, to attempt unpack some general patterns.

Regards HAs (Table 59), the data showed a similar pattern across the two intracultural datasets and there were no striking differences in usage.

	Italian Ss	English Ss
Request Strategy type		
1_Mood derivable	1	2
2_Explicit performative	1	0
3_Hedged performative	5	0
4_Locution derivable	2	0
5_Scope stating	1	3
6_Language specific suggestory formulae	9	1
7_Reference to preparatory conditions	49	57
8_Strong Hints	3	2
9_Mild Hints	0	0
TOTALS	71	65

Table 59_HAs totals: Italian Ss vs English Ss

The British-English requesters used predominantly RPC (57 out of 65) and similarly the Italian requesters, though they used a greater variety of moves, still overwhelmingly used RPC (49 out of 71), plus the other moves (22) were mostly employed in association with this strategy.

In terms of modification, although both datasets showed predominant use of interrogative forms and Grounders, followed by some use of Conditional, they also presented interesting differences, as some devices were used mostly or only by one group.

Regarding IM (Table 60)⁹, for what concerns the Request perspective, only the Italian Ss used HSO, although in a limited number of cases (8), while they made little use of SO (7) and employed Impersonal only twice. They also made consistent use of the Italian CP (26), which, being a polite means to address the hearer that is (usually) employed with HO, explains the high use of this perspective (63). In contrast, the British-English Ss used HO and SO in a more balanced way (respectively, HO - 43 and SO - 22 times) and made little use of Impersonal (3).

⁹ Note that, the higher numbers shown for Request perspective in the Italian data result from the inclusion of the CP in this data and the numbers for the CP should not be considered as additional instances of Request perspectives, but as information about how they are encoded in the data.

Internal Modification	Italian Ss	English Ss
Request perspective (PVO)		
Hearer Oriented	63	43
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	26	-
Speaker Oriented	7	22
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	8	0
Impersonal	2	3
TOTALS PVO	80	68
Downgraders		
Syntactic Downgraders		
Embedded 'if' clause	12	13
Interrogative	56	51
Negation	20	1
Subjectivisers	0	11
Conditional mood	25	25
Past Tense	1	4
Other Downgraders		
Consultative Devices	1	11
Downtoner	9	18
Hedges	0	4
Understaters	16	17
Softeners	3	0
> <i>Please IM</i>	2	1
Upgraders		
Expletives	1	0
Intensifiers	1	4
TOTALS IM-PVO	147	160

Table 60_IM Totals: Italian Ss vs English Ss

This suggests that the Italian Ss relied mainly on the use of the formal 'lei', in conjunction with the HO, as a way to show politeness and respect, whereas the British-English Ss seemed to rely more on other moves to convey indirectness and politeness, such as SO. In terms of Downgraders, only the British-English Ss employed Subjectivisers (11) and some Hedges (4), and made more use of CD (11) and of Downtoners (18), whereas the Italian Ss employed more Negation (20), while they made less use of Downtoners (9), which indicates that the latter overall employed fewer Syntactic and Other Downgraders than the former (British-English Ss 160 IM -PVO vs Italian Ss 147 IM -PVO). From this we can conclude that the Italian Ss appeared generally less concerned than the British-English Ss about internally mitigating their requests.

Finally, in regard to EM (Table 61), the main differences concern the fact that certain devices were used more by one group, while others more by the other group.

External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	Italian Ss	English Ss
Alerters		
> Attention getters	9	6
> Address terms	19	11
> excuse me_sorry	18	6
> excuse me_sorry+AT	5	3
Checking on Availability	6	5
Cost Minimizer	13	9
Disarmer	16	31
Establishing Relationship	3	3
Getting a precommitment	2	1
Grounders	81	63
Making restitutions-Offering awards	3	6
Please EM	12	4
Requestive Interjections	7	0
Sweetener	1	0
TOTALS	195	148

Table 61_EM Totals: Italian Ss vs English Ss

Grounders and Alerters (and particularly Excuses) were used in higher number by the Italian Ss in comparison to their British-English counterparts (i.e. Grounders 81 vs 63; Alerters 51 vs 26), while Disarmers were used twice as often by the British-English requesters (i.e. 31 vs 16). Overall, this means that the Italian Ss employed more external moves than the British-English Ss (i.e. 195 vs 148), and that they were more inclined to use modifiers, such as Grounders and Alerters, to soften their requests, whereas their British-English counterparts favoured more Disarmers that acknowledge the potential offence.

To sum up, this analysis highlighted that the two sets of informants, apart from the common traits of both using mostly RPC, interrogative forms, Conditionals and Grounders, showed different preferences. The Italian requesters used a greater variety of HAs, and relied mostly on HO, which as we have seen in chapter 4, allows them to manage their relationship with the recipients, by either addressing the familiar H with 'tu' or the unfamiliar H with 'lei', alongside employing more Negation, Grounders and Alerters as modifiers. Conversely, the British-English Ss relied predominantly on RPC, used both HO and SO significantly, alongside using more CD, Downtoners and Disarmers as modifiers. These different patterns also reflect a different use of Modification as a whole, as the Italian Ss employed more EM, whereas the British-English Ss employed slightly more IM. The Italian Ss' higher

use of EM, particularly in the form of Grounders and Alerters employed to activate H's understanding and cooperation, could be explicable as a way to compensate for the lower use of IM, by mitigating the greater directness embedded in the speech act by means of solidarity seeking devices, as also remarked by Venuti (2020) in her work on Italian request realisation strategies, who detected the same pattern.

Yet, once again, to get a real grasp of these cross-cultural differences, it is necessary to cross-compare the two datasets by (sub)groups of D and W, as rated by the requesters, which is the object of the next section.

6.3.3 Patterns by groups

This section analyses, discusses and compares the cross-cultural patterns that emerged within each (sub)group across the two intracultural datasets. However, it is important to emphasise that the categorisations into groups and subgroups are not cross-culturally consistent, because the Italian and the British-English Ss rated some D and W differently, as noted in the sociopragmatic section (6.2.2). Therefore, this section cross-compares the linguistic choices made by the two groups of informants within each group/subgroup, i.e. whenever both groups rated equally D and W (e.g. Friends and Low W), regardless of whether the two sets of participants included different request scenarios in certain (sub)groups, according to their perceptions of D and W, to tease out similarities and/or differences. The aim is to unearth how each set of Ss dealt with the requests, i.e. what speech act forms they employed when they evaluated D and W in the same way, i.e. within each group of Friends, Acquaintances and Strangers, and sub-group of Low, Medium and/or High W. The analysis distinguishes, as in the previous chapters, among HAs, IM and EM.

6.3.3.1 Friends

This requests' group categorisation is the most inconsistent across the two datasets in terms of rating of W (Table 62).

	Low W	Medium W	High W
Italian group	RP4 RP7 RP14	RP3 RP10 RP12	-
English group	RP7 RP10	RP4 RP12 RP14	RP3

Table 62_Friends _Italian Ss vs English Ss' ratings of W

Both groups rated only two requests in the same way – for something to note a number down (RP7), rated as Low W, and for a lift (RP12), rated as Medium W,

whereas they rated all the other requests differently. These were evaluated as Low or Medium W by one group and as Medium or High W by the other. Therefore, as mentioned, to allow comparability the cross-cultural analysis will unfold per each sub-group of W to tease out whether and how, whenever W was rated in the same way by the two sets of informants, the perception of W influenced their linguistic choices and if there were differences between the two groups. As mentioned in section 6.3.1, the High W category, containing only one scenario (RP3), rated as such only by the British-English Ss, will not be object of comparison.

6.3.3.1.1 Low Weight

In the case of requests made to friends (D) and rated by both groups as Low W, the Italian Low W subgroup includes three request scenarios (i.e. 12 requests, though 13 HAs, as in RP4 one requester used two HAs to perform the request for notes) while the British-English Low W subgroup includes only two request scenarios (i.e. 8 requests). Hence, the following comparison of data needs to be understood considering these differences in total requests.

This said, both groups showed the same patterns in terms of HAs, as they both made predominant use of RPC, i.e. the Italian Ss employed 11/13, the British-English Ss used 7/8 (Table 63).

	Italian Ss	English Ss
Request Strategy type		
1_Mood derivable	0	1
2_Explicit performative	0	0
3_Hedged performative	1	0
4_Locution derivable	0	0
5_Scope stating	0	0
6_Language specific suggestory formulae	1	0
7_Reference to preparatory conditions	11	7
8_Strong Hints	0	0
9_Mild Hints	0	0
TOTALS	13	9

Table 63_Friends Low W HAs: Italian Ss vs English Ss

Yet, while the Italian Ss used four present indicative forms, such as “me lo segni” [do you note it down], alongside five Conditionals and two modals [equivalent to “can” forms], the British-English Ss used mainly “can” (4), followed by “would/do you mind” forms (2) and one Conditional. These results reflect similar patterns as detected by Márquez Reiter (1997) for Spanish and English request realisation, who noted how Spanish speakers were shown to use mostly indicative, which signals

certainty and focuses on involvement, or conditional to mitigate their requests, whereas English speakers were shown to use more elaborated forms. It is also noteworthy that “would/do you mind” forms, typical of the English language, are not used in Italian, were they would sound very odd.

In terms of Modification, the British-English requesters employed more IM than their Italian counterparts, (i.e. British-English Ss 28/8 (8 Request perspectives) vs Italian Ss 40/12 (16 Request perspectives), but less EM (i.e. British-English Ss 22/8 vs Italian Ss 34/12), mirroring the overall pattern (Tables 64-65).

Internal Modification	Italian Ss	English Ss
Request perspective (PVO)		
Hearer Oriented	14	7
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	0	-
Speaker Oriented	1	1
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	1	0
Impersonal	0	0
TOTALS PVO	16	8
Downgraders		
Syntactic Downgraders		
Embedded 'If' clause	1	0
Interrogative	12	7
Negation	1	0
Subjectivisers	0	0
Conditional mood	5	2
Past Tense	0	0
Other Downgraders		
Consultative Devices	0	2
Downtoner	1	1
Hedges	0	1
Understaters	4	6
Softeners	0	0
> <i>Please IM</i>	0	0
Upgraders		
Expletives	0	0
Intensifiers	0	1
TOTALS IM-PVO	24	20

Table 64_ Friends Low W IM: Italian Ss vs English Ss

External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	Italian Ss	English Ss
Alerters		
> Attention getters	3	0
> Address terms	6	3
> excuse me_sorry	1	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	1	0
Checking on Availability	0	0
Cost Minimizer	2	0
Disarmer	2	4
Establishing Relationship	0	0
Getting a precommitment	1	0
Grounders	13	12
Making restitutions-Offering awards	1	0
Please EM	3	3
Requestive Interjections	1	0
Sweetener	0	0
TOTALS	34	22

Table 65_Friends Low W EM: Italian Ss vs English Ss

Although both groups mainly employed Hearer-oriented interrogative forms and Grounders, some differences in use could also be detected. The Italian Ss used more Alerters than the British-English Ss (Italian Ss 11/12 vs British-English Ss 3/8), and particularly ATs (Italian Ss 7/12 vs British-English Ss 3/8), and slightly more Conditionals than them (Italian Ss 5/12 vs British-English Ss 2/8), whereas only the British-English Ss used CD twice, alongside more Understaters than the Italian Ss (British-English Ss 6/8 vs Italian Ss 4/12), though only when asking a flatmate to turn the volume down (RP10), plus more Disarmers (British-English Ss 4/8 vs Italian Ss 2/12).

Overall, the only striking cross-cultural difference lies in the higher use of Alerters made by the Italian Ss, and particularly of names/nicknames, against the mere use of generic ATs such as “dude” or “man” by the British-English Ss, which seems to indicate an Italian Ss’ preference for positive politeness moves that, by acknowledging familiarity (Enfield, 2008), aim to activate the H’s solidarity. Conversely, although the cross-cultural difference in IM usage is very small, the slightly higher use of IM by the British-English Ss, particularly when addressing the flatmate, could indicate that they were more hesitant and concerned for not sounding as imposing, i.e. a preference for negative politeness moves, at least when

addressing someone who was not necessarily perceived as a ‘proper’ friend, as emerged from the sociopragmatic analysis (section 6.2.2.2.2).

6.3.3.1.2 Medium Weight

In the case of requests made to friends (D) and rated by both groups as Medium W, although both groups included three scenarios in this category (i.e. 12 requests), in the Italian group only 11 requests were examined, as one request was not performed by one requester in one scenario (RP10).

In terms of HAs (Table 66), while the British-English Ss only employed RPC, the Italian Ss showed more variety of use, employing, alongside RPC (9), also SF (3), SH (2) and one LD.

	Italian Ss	English Ss
Request Strategy type		
1_Mood derivable	0	0
2_Explicit performative	0	0
3_Hedged performative	0	0
4_Locution derivable	1	0
5_Scope stating	0	0
6_Language specific suggestory formulae	3	0
7_Reference to preparatory conditions	9	13
8_Strong Hints	2	0
9_Mild Hints	0	0
TOTALS	15	13

Table 66_Friends Medium W HAs: Italian Ss vs English Ss

However, once more the Italian Ss used only RPC in Conditional (3), present indicative (4) and present modal (2) forms, while the British-English Ss used, alongside “can” (4) and Conditional (3), “do/would you mind” (4) and “I was wondering if you’d be able” (1) forms, which again, as observed in the previous section, mirrors Márquez Reiter’s (1997) findings on Spanish and English request realisation, i.e. on the Spanish use of mostly indicative and conditional against the English use of more elaborated forms.

In regard to IM (Table 67), despite the use was cross-culturally similar in terms of numbers (i.e. Italian Ss 43/11 (Request perspective 18) vs British-English Ss 42/12 (Request perspective 13)), the data shows different patterns, particularly in terms of Request perspective.

Internal Modification	Italian Ss	English Ss
Request perspective (PVO)		
Hearer Oriented	14	6
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	0	-
Speaker Oriented	0	6
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	4	0
Impersonal	14	1
TOTALS PVO	18	13
Downgraders		
Syntactic Downgraders		
Embedded 'If' clause	1	2
Interrogative	12	12
Negation	5	1
Subjectivisers	0	1
Conditional mood	4	7
Past Tense	0	0
Other Downgraders		
Consultative Devices	0	4
Downtoner	0	2
Hedges	0	0
Understaters	2	0
Softeners	0	0
> <i>Please IM</i>	0	0
Upgraders		
Expletives	1	0
Intensifiers	0	0
TOTALS IM-PVO	25	29

Table 67_Friends Medium W IM: Italian Ss vs English Ss

Though both groups once again made predominant use of interrogative forms, the Italian Ss used predominantly HO (14), while the British-English Ss used in the same proportion HO (6) and SO (6). This shows that half of the British-English Ss were very concerned about reducing the perception of the burden on the H by using SO, signalling an inclination for negative politeness moves that avoid sounding as if they were imposing on others, in comparison with their Italian counterparts, who never used SO, since, as observed in chapter 4, they always addressed the H with 'tu' (in combination with HO), showing a preference for positive politeness moves that, by doing relational work, invoke closeness. This cross-cultural difference is in line with what has been highlighted by Ogiermann (2009b) who, in studying request realisation strategies across different languages, such as English, Russian and Polish, observed two different patterns. That is, while cultures oriented toward independence and indirectness, such as the English culture, seem to prefer using SO to reduce the imposition by deemphasising the role of the hearer and

emphasising the involvement of the S in the act, cultures that value interdependence and directness, such as the Russian culture, regard using HO as more polite because it acknowledges the role of the addressee. In turn, this conclusion about the Russian culture is paralleled by Venuti (2020) for the Italian culture, who, as noted in section 4.1, observed that Hearer-oriented request forms are usually perceived as more polite because, by putting the recipients at the centre of the utterance, they give Hs a position of control that allows them to decide whether or not to comply with the request.

The two groups also showed different preferences in moves, yet to a lesser extent. The Italian requesters used more Negation (Italian Ss 5/11 vs British-English Ss 1/12) while the British-English requesters used slightly more Conditionals (British-English Ss 7/12 vs Italian Ss 4/11), which suggests that the Italian Ss preferred to soften their request by acknowledging the possibility of non-compliance, whereas the British-English Ss preferred to mitigate their requests by using distancing elements.

Finally, in terms of EM (Table 68), the Italian Ss employed much more of these moves than the British-English Ss (Italian Ss 37/11 v British-English Ss 27/12).

External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	Italian Ss	English Ss
Alerters		
> Attention getters	4	3
> Address terms	7	1
> excuse me_sorry	0	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0
Checking on Availability	1	4
Cost Minimizer	1	2
Disarmer	3	5
Establishing Relationship	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0
Grounders	18	11
Making restitutions-Offering awards	1	1
Please EM	2	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0
Sweetener	0	0
TOTALS	37	27

Table 68_Friends Medium W EM: Italian Ss vs English Ss

Though both groups used Grounders, the former made more use of them than the latter (Italian Ss 18/11 v British-English Ss 11/12), and they also employed consistently more Alerters than the British-English Ss did (Italian Ss 11/11 vs British-English Ss 4/12), and particularly, once again, of ATs (7). The Italian requesters' higher use of Grounders and nick/names suggests, as already observed in the previous section on Low W, a tendency toward moves that activate companionship. Indeed, not only does the use of nicknames (Enfield, 2008) invoke closeness, but also explaining the reasons for the requests is a way to open up "an empathetic attitude on the part of the interlocutor" (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2012, 192) and therefore to appeal to the H's cooperativeness. Conversely, only the British-English Ss used some CD (4), and they employed slightly more CA (British-English Ss 4/12 vs Italian Ss 1/11) and Disarmers (British-English Ss 5/12 vs Italian Ss 3/11) than the Italian Ss, showing they relied more on indirect moves that signal hesitation. Overall, these results suggest that the Italian Ss were more influenced by D, the close relationship, whereas the British-English Ss were more influenced by the possible inconvenience for the H, i.e. by W.

6.3.3.2 Acquaintances

Also in the case of requesting from Acquaintances there is some inconsistency across the two groups' categorisations (Table 69).

	Medium W	High W
Italian group	RP6 RP15	RP9
English group	RP15	RP6 RP9 RP11

Table 69_Acquaintances_Italian Ss vs English Ss' ratings of W

The two groups rated in the same way only the requests to the elderly neighbour to turn the volume down (RP15), rated as Medium W, and for a lift from a Professor (RP9), rated as High W, whereas they rated differently the request to borrow a book from a Professor (RP6), rated as Medium W by the Italian Ss and as High W by the British-English Ss. Furthermore, only the latter included in this group the request for help from the new neighbour (RP11), which was included in the Strangers High W group by the Italian Ss.

6.3.3.2.1 Medium Weight

Considering that the Italian Medium W group contains two scenarios (i.e. 8 requests) while the British-English group contains only one (i.e. 4 requests), it is notable that the Italian Ss employed much more EM than the British-English Ss (Italian Ss 43/8 vs British-English Ss 12/4), whereas they employed IM in similar proportion, (British-English Ss 25/4 (Request perspective 5) vs Italian Ss 53/8 (Request perspectives 24).

Also in terms of HAs we can notice different patterns (Table 70).

	Italian Ss	English Ss
Request Strategy type		
1_Mood derivable	1	0
2_Explicit performative	1	0
3_Hedged performative	1	0
4_Locution derivable	0	0
5_Scope stating	1	0
6_Language specific suggestory formulae	2	0
7_Reference to preparatory conditions	7	4
8_Strong Hints	1	1
9_Mild Hints	0	0
TOTALS	14	5

Table 70_Acquaintances Medium W HAs: Italian Ss vs English Ss

While the British-English Ss used only RPC, though once in association with an SH, the Italian Ss used a variety of strategies, such as RPC (7, but 6 of these were employed by the same requester within the same request scenario, RP15), SF (2) and one each of EP, HP, MD, SH and SS, showing they did not have strong preferences for a specific strategy.

In terms of IM (Table 71), the most significant cross-cultural difference regards Request perspective, since while the Italian requesters employed predominantly HO (12) and few SO (3), always in association with the CP (9) when addressing the Professor, the British-English requesters employed HO (3) and SO (2) similarly.

Internal Modification	Italian Ss	English Ss
Request perspective (PVO)		
Hearer Oriented	12	3
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	9	-
Speaker Oriented	3	0
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	1	0
Impersonal	1	2
TOTALS PVO	26	5
Downgraders		
Syntactic Downgraders		
Embedded 'If' clause	5	3
Interrogative	7	2
Negation	2	0
Subjectivisers	0	2
Conditional mood	8	3
Past Tense	0	1
Other Downgraders		
Consultative Devices	0	0
Downtoner	1	2
Hedges	0	1
Understaters	4	4
Softeners	1	0
> <i>Please IM</i>	0	0
Upgraders		
Expletives	0	0
Intensifiers	1	2

Table 71_Acquaintances Medium W IM: Italian Ss vs English Ss

This indicates that the Italian Ss relied heavily on HO, plus on the use of the CP to convey politeness to a person of authority such as the Professor. In turn this suggests, along the same lines as it was observed in the previous section, that using HO is perceived by the Italian speakers not only as polite, because it acknowledges the role of the H (Ogiermann, 2009b; Venuti, 2020), but also as appropriate since it allows participants to do relational work, by using it in combination with the CP, which as we have seen is a positive polite means employed to convey respectful distance (Félix-Brasdefer, 2004). Conversely, half of the British-English Ss preferred to use SO to reduce the burden on the H, which strategy is in line with a culture that emphasises independence and indirectness (Ogiermann, 2009b). Other than

this, both groups significantly employed Conditionals (Italian Ss 8/8 vs British-English Ss 3/4), “If” clauses (Italian Ss 5/8 vs British-English Ss 3/4) and Interrogatives (Italian Ss 7/8 vs British-English Ss 3/4). Yet, the British-English Ss employed twice as many Understaters as the Italian Ss did (British-English Ss 4/4 vs Italian Ss 4/8) and more modifiers, such as Subjectvisers (2), which explains the lesser use of interrogative forms (since the use of Subjectvisers + “If” clause is incompatible with a question format), Downtoners and Intensifiers (2 each), which overall suggests that they were more tentative than their Italian counterparts.

Finally, in terms of EM (Table 72), though both sets of requesters consistently used Grounders, the Italian Ss used many more of them than the British-English Ss (i.e. Italian Ss 20/8 vs British-English Ss 5/4), and particularly more Alerters (Italian Ss 7/8 vs British-English Ss 2/4).

External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	Italian Ss	English Ss
Alerters		
> Attention getters	0	0
> Address terms	3	2
> excuse me_sorry	3	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	1	0
Checking on Availability	0	0
Cost Minimizer	5	0
Disarmer	3	5
Establishing Relationship	2	0
Getting a precommitment	1	0
Grounder	20	5
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0
Please EM	4	0
Requestive Interjections	1	0
Sweetener	0	0
TOTALS	43	12

Table 72_Acquaintances Medium W EM: Italian Ss vs English Ss

They also often employed CMs (5) and Please (4), alongside two ER, while the British-English Ss employed more Disarmers than their Italian counterparts (British-English Ss 5/4 vs Italian Ss 3/8). Overall, this suggests once again an Italian Ss’ preference for moves, such as Alerters and particularly Grounders, that, by giving detailed reasons for the request, appeal to the H’s solidarity, i.e. for positive politeness moves, alongside a British-English Ss’ preference for moves, such as

Disarmers, that acknowledge the potential offence, or burden, on the H, i.e. for negative politeness moves.

6.3.3.2.2 High Weight

In this case, considering the British-English category includes three scenarios (i.e. 12 requests) and the Italian category only one scenario (i.e. 4 requests), the British-English Ss used slightly more Modification than the Italian Ss, and particularly more IM (IM: British-English Ss 57/12 (Request perspective 15) vs Italian Ss 18/4 (Request perspective 8); EM: British-English Ss 40/12 vs Italian Ss 12/4).

In terms of HAs (Table 73), the Italian Ss used various strategies, such as two RPC, one HP and one SF, whereas the British-English Ss employed, again, mainly RPC (10), alongside three SS, which shows the strong British-English Ss' preference for RPC.

	Italian Ss	English Ss
Request Strategy type		
1_Mood derivable	0	0
2_Explicit performative	0	0
3_Hedged performative	1	0
4_Locution derivable	0	0
5_Scope stating	0	3
6_Language specific suggestory formulae	1	0
7_Reference to preparatory conditions	2	10
8_Strong Hints	0	0
9_Mild Hints	0	0
TOTALS	4	13

Table 73_Acquaintances High W HAs: Italian Ss vs English Ss

In regard to IM, once more one of the most striking differences pertains to the Request perspective (Table 74).

Internal Modification	Italian Ss	English Ss
Request perspective (PVO)		
Hearer Oriented	3	8
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	4	-
Speaker Oriented	1	7
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0
Impersonal	0	0
TOTALS PVO	8	15
Downgraders		
Syntactic Downgraders		
Embedded 'If' clause	2	3
Interrogative	3	9
Negation	1	0
Subjectivisers	0	5
Conditional mood	1	8
Past Tense	0	2
Other Downgraders		
Consultative Devices	1	4
Downtoner	0	6
Hedges	0	0
Understaters	0	4
Softeners	1	0
> <i>Please IM</i>	1	0
Upgraders		
Expletives	0	0
Intensifiers	0	1
TOTALS IM-PVO	10	42

Table 74_Acquaintances High W IM: Italian Ss vs English Ss

The Italian Ss used three HO and only once SO, both combined with the CP, while the British-English Ss employed HO (8) and SO (7) similarly, which shows again, as in the previous section, two different ways of approaching the H in a polite way, i.e., the Italian requesters by using 'lei' in association with HO, and the British-English requesters by reducing the burden on the H, by means of SO. Moreover, while the Italian Ss, apart from the recurrent use of Interrogatives (3) and the use of "If" clauses (2) half the time, did not employ other moves in a significant way, the British-English Ss relied on many internal modifiers, such as Interrogatives (9), in combination with Conditionals (8), and half the time used Downtoners (6), the higher use of which signals more tentativeness and indirectness. Finally, in terms of EM, both groups followed similar patterns (Table 75).

External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	Italian Ss	English Ss
Alerters		
> Attention getters	0	1
> Address terms	0	4
> excuse me_sorry	1	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	1	1
Checking on Availability	2	0
Cost Minimizer	3	7
Disarmer	1	5
Establishing Relationship	0	3
Getting a precommitment	0	1
Grounder	4	17
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	1
Please EM	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0
Sweetener	0	0
TOTALS	12	40

Table 75_Acquaintances High W EM: Italian Ss vs British-English Ss

Both employed Grounders (Italian Ss 4/4 vs British-English Ss 17/12), though the British-English Ss in higher number, plus CMs (Italian Ss 3/4 vs British-English Ss 7/12) and Alerters (Italian Ss 2/4 vs British-English Ss 6/12). The only difference lies in the fact that, while the Italian Ss used CA (2) half of the time, the British-English Ss employed Disarmers five times, which indicates a British-English Ss' higher inclination for moves that acknowledge the burden on the H, which is not reciprocated by the Italian Ss, who rather employed moves (i.e. CA) to check if the pre-conditions for compliance were existent.

6.3.3.3 Strangers

This category is subdivided into two by the British-English requesters (i.e. Low and Medium W), and into three by the Italian Ss (i.e. Low, Medium and High W).

The Low and Medium W subcategories match perfectly for both groups (in terms of scenarios rated as such), while the Italian High W subcategory, characterised by one scenario only (RP11, favour from a new neighbour) does not have a correspondent in the British-English data, because, as mentioned in section 6.3.1, this request was classified by the British-English Ss as Acquaintance, in terms of D, High W, hence it will not be object of comparison.

6.3.3.3.1 Low Weight

Both groups included in this category the same request scenarios, i.e. for information from someone of same (RP2) or different age (RP5), for a total of 8

requests, though the Italian Ss once reiterated the request, hence employed a total of 9 HAs.

In terms of HAs (Table 76), both groups employed predominantly RPC (Italian Ss 8/9, British-English Ss 7/8).

	Italian Ss	English Ss
Request Strategy type		
1_Mood derivable	0	0
2_Explicit performative	0	0
3_Hedged performative	0	0
4_Locution derivable	1	0
5_Scope stating	0	0
6_Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0
7_Reference to preparatory conditions	8	7
8_Strong Hints	0	1
9_Mild Hints	0	0
TOTALS	9	8

Table 76_ Strangers Low W HAs: Italian Ss vs English Ss

In terms of Modification, the Italian Ss used slightly more devices than the British-English Ss (Italian Ss 36/9 (Request perspective 17) vs British-English Ss 20/8 (Request perspective 8) IM; Italian Ss 20/9 vs British-English Ss 15/8 EM).

Regarding IM (Table 77), for what concerns Request perspective, both groups employed mainly HO (Italian Ss 8/9, British-English Ss 7/8), though the Italian Ss always in association with the CP, signalling again that the use of the CP in association with HO is the main means for the Italian speakers to show respect to someone they do not know, as it allows them to do relational work, and therefore the use of HO is considered polite (Venuti, 2020; Ogiermann, 2009b).

Internal Modification	Italian Ss	English Ss
Request perspective (PVO)		
Hearer Oriented	8	7
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	8	-
Speaker Oriented	0	1
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0
Impersonal	1	0
TOTALS PVO	17	8
Downgraders		
Syntactic Downgraders		
Embedded 'If' clause	1	1
Interrogative	9	6
Negation	3	0
Subjectivisers	0	1
Conditional mood	3	1
Past Tense	0	1
Other Downgraders		
Consultative Devices	0	0
Downtoner	2	1
Hedges	0	0
Understaters	0	0
Softeners	0	0
> <i>Please IM</i>	1	1
Upgraders		
Expletives	0	0
Intensifiers	0	0
TOTALS IM-PVO	19	12

Table 77_ Strangers Low W IM: Italian Ss vs English Ss

They both significantly employed Interrogatives (Italian Ss 9/9, British-English Ss 6/8), yet the Italian Ss employed also other devices, such as Negation and Conditional (3 each).

In terms of EM (Table 78), both groups mostly used Grounders and Alerters, though the Italian Ss slightly more than their British-English counterparts (Grounders: Italian Ss 9/9 vs British-English Ss 6/8; Alerters: Italian Ss 9/9 vs British-English Ss 5/8) and the latter also used some Disarmers (4).

External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	Italian Ss	English Ss
Alerters		
> Attention getters	0	0
> Address terms	2	0
> excuse me_sorry	7	3
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	2
Checking on Availability	1	0
Cost Minimizer	1	0
Disarmer	0	4
Establishing Relationship	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0
Grounder	9	6
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0
Please EM	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0
Sweetener	0	0
TOTALS	20	15

Table 78_Strangers Low W EM: Italian Ss vs English Ss

Overall, this shows different cross-cultural preferences in dealing with strangers, i.e. the Italian Ss relied more on Negation and Conditional to show tentativeness, while the British-English Ss relied more on Disarmers to show hesitation, by acknowledging the potential offence, which seems to connect with a greater focus on the possible imposition on the H.

6.3.3.3.2 Medium Weight

Also in this case both sets of informants rated as Medium W the same request scenarios, i.e. for a cigarette (RP8) and for something to note a number down (RP13), for a total of 8 requests, though both sets often used more HAs within the same scenario, for a total of 11 HAs for the Italian Ss and 13 HAs for the British-English Ss.

In terms of HAs (Table 79), both Italian and British-English requesters made predominant use of RPC (the Italian Ss 10/11, the British-English Ss 12/13).

	Italian Ss	English Ss
Request Strategy type		
1_Mood derivable	0	0
2_Explicit performative	0	0
3_Hedged performative	1	0
4_Locution derivable	0	0
5_Scope stating	0	0
6_Language specific suggestory formulae	0	1
7_Reference to preparatory conditions	10	12
8_Strong Hints	0	0
9_Mild Hints	0	0
TOTALS	11	13

Table 79_Strangers Medium W HAs: Italian Ss vs English Ss

They also made similar use of Modification in number (Italian Ss 45IM (Request perspective 21)/25EM vs British-English Ss 41IM (Request perspective 14)/20EM), though the British-English Ss used slightly more Downgraders and the Italian Ss slightly more EM, yet they were different in type of devices employed.

In terms of IM (Table 80), for the Request perspective, both mainly used HO, i.e. the Italian requesters 12, in association with 8 CP, the British-English requesters 10, alongside also some SO (4), which shows again that the Italian Ss main means to achieve politeness was the use of (HO+) CP, whereas the British-English Ss tended to rely more on SO to reduce the burden on the H to be polite.

Internal Modification	Italian Ss	English Ss
Request perspective (PVO)		
Hearer Oriented	12	10
> <i>Courtesy Pronoun</i>	8	-
Speaker Oriented	1	4
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0
Impersonal	0	0
TOTALS PVO	21	21
Downgraders		
Syntactic Downgraders		
Embedded 'If' clause	0	3
Interrogative	11	11
Negation	7	0
Subjectivisers	0	2
Conditional mood	3	4
Past Tense	0	0
Other Downgraders		
Consultative Devices	0	0
Downtoner	3	4
Hedges	0	1
Understaters	0	2
Softeners	0	0
> <i>Please IM</i>	0	0
Upgraders		
Expletives	0	0
Intensifiers	0	0
TOTALS IM-PVO	24	27

Table 80_ Strangers Medium W IM: Italian Ss vs English Ss

Both Italian and British-English requesters mainly used Interrogatives (both 11) and some Conditionals and Downtoners (Italian Ss 3 each vs British-English Ss 4 each). The Italian Ss also employed much Negation (7), whereas the British-English Ss used a few "If" clauses (3).

In regard to EM (Table 81), though both groups employed mainly Grounders (Italian Ss 10/11, the British-English Ss 8/13), the British-English Ss also used many Disarmers (7), whereas the Italian Ss used twice as many Alerters as their British-English counterparts (Italian Ss 8/11 vs British-English Ss 4/13).

External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	Italian Ss	English Ss
Alerters		
> Attention getters	0	1
> Address terms	0	0
> excuse me_sorry	6	3
> excuse me_sorry+AT	2	0
Checking on Availability	1	1
Cost Minimizer	0	0
Disarmer	1	7
Establishing Relationship	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0
Grounder	10	8
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0
Please EM	3	0
Requestive Interjections	2	0
Sweetener	0	0
TOTALS	25	20

Table 81_Strangers Medium W EM: Italian Ss vs English Ss

Overall, this indicates different cross-cultural preferences in dealing with the strangers, as already observed before. The British-English requesters relied more on devices, such as Disarmers, that acknowledge the possible offence, showing a link with the idea of non-imposition, which is not paralleled by the Italian requesters, who preferred to downgrade the request's W by using devices, such as Negation, that signal awareness of the possibility of non-compliance, and by means of Excuses.

6.3.4 Concluding remarks

In this section we have analysed and cross-culturally compared how the two sets of requesters dealt with the various requests, when they rated D and W in the same way, to tease out similarities, but mostly differences in linguistic choices. The comparison was made across the groups of Friends, Acquaintances and Strangers and the sub-groups of Low, Medium and/or High W, taking into account the fact that these categorisations were cross-culturally inconsistent, because the two sets of informants rated some requests differently in terms of D, but mostly of W.

Overall, from this comparison we can draw some conclusions.

Firstly, in terms of HAs, the Italian Ss used slightly more variety of strategies than the British-English Ss, who relied heavily on RPC. This seems to confirm Fukushima's (2000) findings, who observed how British-English speakers tend to use a narrow

set of strategies when requesting, regardless of higher or lower D and W, as already noted in chapter 5.

In regard to IM, for the Request perspective, though both sets of requesters used predominantly HO, the British-English Ss, whenever perceived D and/or W as higher, were more inclined to also employ devices, such as SO, that reduce the perceived burden on the H, while the Italian Ss did not feel such a need and heavily relied on HO. As we have seen, these different usages not only reflect different means to show respect and politeness, but also different functions associated with HO. As highlighted in chapter 4, in the Italian grammar HO allows for relational work to be done by marking the status of the relationship through pronouns. For this reason, using HO does not appear to be perceived as imposing on the H, which in turn explains why the Italian participants overwhelmingly employed HO, even when they rated W or D as higher. Indeed, this study has shown that, although the use of HO highlights the H's role as the main performer of the request act, putting recipients at the centre of utterances may also give them a position of control, allowing them to decide whether or not to comply with the request (Venuti 2020). In addition, the fact that HO allows the speakers to invoke their relationship with the Hs in languages such as Italian that have social deixis seems to outweigh the idea of, or concern for, the possible imposition on the H. Conversely, in the English grammar HO cannot be employed to do relational work, hence may only be perceived as emphasising the burden on the H, which would explain why the British-English Ss tended to adopt other perspectives, mostly SO, to soften the imposition on the H. Hence, this study has shown that, as already argued in sections 4.3 and 5.3, due to cultural differences in politeness related communicative preferences or even norms, HO can be associated with different functions, depending on the language system of the lingua-cultures that are investigated (House, 2006). It can be perceived as the polite way to address others, rather than as a direct means that can be deemed as impolite/non-respectful. Hence this study has also shown that the grammatical affordances available in each linguistic system are an important resource for constructing politeness (House, 2006), and that differences in grammatical resources can lead to differences in the construction of politeness forms.

In turn, these different patterns signal different stances. The Italian Ss' high reliance on the use of pronouns indexes a preference for positive politeness means that

invoke/build/acknowledge the relationship with the H and shows they were more influenced by D in constructing their requests. In contrast, the British-English Ss' inclination toward reducing the burden on the recipient (by means of SO) indicates that they were more influenced by W and concerned about using negative politeness moves that avoid/reduce imposition.

This conclusion seems corroborated by considering the slightly different use of Modification across the two groups. The British-English requesters generally used more IM to show tentativeness, and in terms of EM relied more on Disarmers, signalling they perceived the request as a potential offence for the H, hence to be more concerned about W. Conversely, the Italian requesters generally used more EM, and particularly Alerters, by using nicknames to address the friends and activate their cooperation, or ATs to address an acquaintance or stranger, thus were more oriented to D, whereas, in terms of IM, were more inclined to downgrade their requests by means of Negation, to show they did not take compliance for granted, rather than by acknowledging offence.

Put differently, the data indicates that the British-English Ss general concern for imposition was not paralleled by the Italian Ss, who seemed to rely more on the H's cooperation. These results for the Italian Ss seem to align with those proposed by many researchers of the Spanish language, such as Bravo (2017) on Spanish speakers' inclination for creating affiliation, but also Hernandez-Flores (1999) and Fernández Amaya (2008). Hernandez-Flores (1999, 39) observed how "the desire to not be impeded is not a feature of Spanish conversation", and Fernández Amaya (2008, 17) pointed out how in Spanish, because it is a positive politeness language, "the general level of weightiness is low, that is to say, impositions are small [and] social distance is not an insuperable boundary to interaction".

To conclude, though once again the small sample does not allow for any generalisation, the outcomes of this study suggest that, despite some similarities in usage, the British-English and the Italian Ss showed they construct their requests according to different perceptions of D and W, due to an orientation to different values. That is, non-imposition, independence and autonomy for the British-English Ss, which meant adopting more negative politeness strategies to reduce the burden on the H, and interdependence and solidarity for the Italian Ss, which meant an inclination toward positive politeness strategies that allow for doing relational work and/or activating the H's camaraderie. This study has thus shown that it is essential

to understand how speakers understand the D and W of requests as part of a cross-cultural or intercultural study, rather than assuming that these are variables with uniform meaning, as they are constructed by researchers.

6.4 Final conclusions

Overall, the two datasets and cross-cultural analyses have shown similar patterns: the Italian Ss were shown to give more importance to D, regardless of W, whereas the British-English Ss were more influenced by W, regardless of D.

We have seen that the Italian Ss, particularly when addressing a friend, were more influenced by the familiarity factor (D), which led them to perceive the W as lower and in turn feel at ease in being direct, without worrying about face issues. This perception, we observed, appears linked with the idea of solidarity and interdependence, which implies expectation of compliance from someone close (Márquez Reiter et al., 2005) and consequently more confidence in asking, i.e. to have more right to ask, in accordance with their association rights (Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003), regardless of W. In turn, this orientation toward D was reflected in the Italian Ss' linguistic choices, since their main strategies in requesting from a friend were HO combined with 'tu' in interrogative forms, alongside a high use of EM, and specifically Grounders and Alerters, particularly in the form of ATs, such as nick/names, to invoke closeness (Enfield, 2008), regardless of the W. The only differences in usage between Low and Medium W requests lied in the fact that in the case of requests rated as Low W they mostly employed RPC that checked about the H's willingness to comply and some Conditionals, whereas in the case of requests rated as Medium W they employed a greater variety of speech acts, RPC to also check H's availability/possibility to comply, and some Negation. This seems to suggest two things. Firstly, that RPC moves seemed employed as default strategies, hence their use is not necessarily related to the intent of conveying greater or lesser politeness. As observed in chapter 4, this category includes different speech act forms, such as also those requests in present indicative, as in "me lo segni questo numero?" [lit. "do you note this number down for me?"] which, although they entail 'future act' conditions employed to check if the hearer is willing to comply (Venuti, 2020), and in fact are comparable with "will you x" forms (Le Pair, 1996), are quite direct, signal certainty (Scaglia, 2003; Márquez Reiter, 1997) and lack of mitigation. Secondly, the higher perception of W appears to have

influenced the Ss in also using other strategies to achieve indirectness and tentativeness (e.g. SF and SH), overall indicating that they did not take compliance for granted, as the use of bare requests in the case of Low W conveyed.

Conversely, in those same instances the British-English Ss were shown to be strongly influenced by W even if addressing a friend, and particularly whenever they perceived the W as higher (i.e. Medium or High). This higher concern for W, which even led them to view certain requests, such as the one to borrow the friend's note, as a threat to possessions, and to rate the W' requests to friends higher than the Italian Ss did, overall indicates a British-English Ss' greater orientation to not sounding as imposing on the H, regardless of the close relationship (D). In turn, this different approach toward the request was reflected in their linguistic choices, since for all those requests perceived as weightier (i.e. Medium and High W) they employed more elaborated HA (RPC) forms, particularly "do/would you mind" forms, often SO, to reduce the burden on the H, and many modifiers (e.g. Disarmers) that signal tentativeness and indirectness. This also suggests that they had a different perception of their right to ask (i.e. less right to ask, acknowledging the others' right to do how they wished), in accordance with the idea of equity rights and obligations (Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003), and therefore were more concerned about possible face-threats.

These results, in line, as observed, with those of Márquez Reiter (1997) on Spanish and English request realisation, also reflect Pozzuoli's (2015) findings who, investigating the same language-pair, observed how the Italian speakers, in contexts where dominance and social distance were not at play, tended to employ more direct requests forms than their British-English counterparts, who seemed more concerned about respecting others' freedom by avoiding explicitness.

The British-English Ss stronger orientation to W, regardless of D, was generalised, and it was detected also when requesting from Acquaintances or Strangers, whenever they perceived such requests along the same lines (i.e. of Medium/High W). In all these cases their main concern was about inconveniencing/interrupting the H, stressing the idea of asking for a personal thing or feeling bad they had to ask. This shows that the higher perception of W, alongside D, made them feel uncomfortable in asking, indicating in turn that they felt no right to ask, reflecting once again the underlying idea of equity rights, as they did not want to sound as

invading the others' space/time/freedom, which implicated that they felt the need to ask (more) politely. Again, these perceptions were reflected in their linguistic choices, marked by significant use of forms, such as SO or Impersonal, that reduced the burden on the H, or modifiers to signal tentativeness and indirectness, such as Subjectivisers, 'if' clauses, Disarmers and CMs, to soften the imposition of the request.

Conversely, even if addressing Acquaintances/Strangers, the Italian Ss were not shown to give the same importance to W, or at least to interpret W in the same way as the British-English Ss did. They never acknowledged W in terms of burden or inconvenience for the H, nor showed they consider requests to strangers as "weird". Rather, the Italian Ss viewed these requests as something that (just) required lots of politeness and respect (e.g. with the Professor), or as a normal thing to ask (e.g. the favour from a stranger), which even led them not to be polite, or even impolite (e.g. with the elderly neighbour), showing they were more comfortable with such requests, in accordance with their association rights based on interdependence (and expectation of compliance). Once again, this different approach was reflected in their linguistic choices, since they predominantly employed HO, mostly in combination with the CP, showing that their main concern was about paying polite respect to the unfamiliar person, i.e. orienting to D, rather than reducing the burden on the H (i.e. orienting to W). Even when addressing the elderly neighbour, the fact that half the requesters used more mitigation (e.g. Understaters and Please) shows that, though they were strongly oriented toward their (equity) right to ask, they softened their requests because of D, *considering the age gap* (LOR.B, RI, RP15).

Yet, a slightly different pattern was shown in the Italian data when the Ss had to address a new neighbour, whose relationship they evaluated as Strangers, differently from their British-English counterparts, who rated it as Acquaintances. In this case, where both D and W were rated as high, the Italian Ss were shown to be influenced by both sociopragmatic variables, mentioning the need to be extra polite and accommodating, and even the embarrassment in having to ask a stranger such a favour. In turn, this was reflected in their linguistic choices, since they employed more moves directed at softening the burden on the H (i.e. SO) and signalling uncertainty (e.g. Understaters and Disarmers), to reduce the imposition.

Nonetheless, the fact that they chose to address the unfamiliar neighbour with 'tu', rather than with the CP, is indicative of a still stronger orientation toward interdependence and solidarity, therefore toward positive politeness moves directed at closing the D gap with someone who can be considered a special stranger, as it is only temporarily so (in this sense, see Márquez Reiter et al., 2005), to activate the addressee's willingness to cooperate. Indeed, using 'tu' in this case has the function to create common ground by building an 'epistemological bridge' with the recipient (Venuti, 2020). This conclusion seems also in line with Hernández Flores's (1999, 41) work on Spanish, who observed how "the search for *confianza* is especially expected between interactants with a less than close relationship (distantly related family, friends or neighbours)", since the inclination for interdependence leads speakers to seek for creating affiliation even when there is not any as starting point.

Conversely, in this case the British-English Ss, though also mentioned the need to be very polite in asking such a big favour, and though none of them clearly acknowledged uneasiness in having to ask, seemed again to give more importance to W. One S commented that it was "a big thing to ask someone you don't know (..) cos they might feel they have to say "yes" even though it's not their responsibility" (AB, RI). Although this comment stands alone, this suggests -again- a concern for burdening/imposing on the unknown H's freedom, in accordance with the idea of equity rights/obligations, hence a higher emphasis on W.

However, the most interesting finding concerns the different functions attributed to HO across these two cultures, depending on the different linguistic resources available, which affected the two groups' different usage. Since in the Italian language HO is employed to do relational work, it was not perceived as imposing on the H, but rather it was predominantly employed, regardless of D and W, to mark un/familiarity, by either using 'lei' or 'tu'. In contrast, in the English language this perspective is only associated with the idea of burden on the H, since its use does not allow any other functions, which explains why HO tended to be avoided, and replaced by other perspectives that reduce the burden on the H (e.g. SO), whenever D and/or W were perceived as higher. This finding shows two things. First, this study has revealed that the differences in the grammatical affordances of English and Italian have implications for how speakers design requests, for polite purposes, and

especially in how HO functions in the two languages. Hence it has highlighted the importance of looking at HO in a more nuanced way. This study therefore, as previously mentioned (sections 4.3, 5.3, 6.3.4), shows the importance of considering interactions of pragmatics and grammar, as suggested by House (2006). Second, this study has shown that how speakers understand and evaluate D and W and the interactions between them is important in showing how speakers design requests.

These results have also the importance of showing, in support to Holtgraves and Yang's (1992) findings, that perceptions, understandings and consequent linguistic behaviours of speakers from lingua-cultures that rely on interdependence are more sensitive to the situation and contextual variables, such as D and W, than those of people from lingua-cultures that focus on independence, and in turn that such cross-cultural differences reflect on the different levels of politeness adopted accordingly.

Although the small sample cannot allow for any generalisation, this finding clearly highlights the need to look at the use of request perspectives, and particularly HO in request realisation, afresh, by taking into consideration their possible multiple functions in different lingua-cultures, moving away from the idea that HO necessarily equals imposing on the H. Furthermore, this analysis has also shown two different cross-cultural patterns. The British-English requesters seemed more influenced by W and therefore more inclined toward negative politeness moves that value independence, autonomy and avoid imposition, while the Italian Ss appeared more influenced by D and thus more oriented toward positive politeness moves that value interdependence and activate the H's cooperativeness.

Chapter 7 Data analysis and discussion: The Intercultural

Dataset

7.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the Intercultural dataset, to examine and discuss the request realisation strategies employed by the Italian and the British-English speakers when interacting with each other in English. It investigates whether and how their strategy choice was influenced by their culturally-embedded perceptions and understandings of D and W and related rights and obligations and, most importantly, whether a difference in choices was detectable across the two sets of informants.

The pragmalinguistic analysis follows the same structure as the previous intracultural chapters (4-5), i.e. by giving the overall usage (general features) across all scenarios, followed by an in-depth analysis of the request strategies employed according to the (sub)groups of Friends, Acquaintances and Strangers and Low, Medium and/or High W, in terms of HAs, IM and EM. To tease out any intercultural differences, each analysis also distinguishes between the Italian and the British-English speakers' performances.

This analysis is based on the roleplay data (RP) and is supported by the sociopragmatic analysis of the retrospective interviews (RI) conducted with those same participants straight after the roleplays and by the analysis of the evaluative surveys (ES) conducted with two other sets of British-English and Italian participants on selected extracts of six roleplays that offered examples of intercultural divergences.

7.2 General features: Head Acts and Modification

This section focuses on the overall use of speech acts and forms made by the two sets of informants.

In terms of HAs (Table 82Table 83), both groups mostly used RPC. The British-English requesters employed 72 RPC out of 84 requests, as in "**would it be possible for me to borrow your book and, return it?**" (E11, RP6), and so did the Italian requesters (i.e. RPC 77 out of 85), as in "**would you mind ehm giving me some of**

your notes” (E14, RP4). Conversely, they both barely used other strategies, such as SF (British-English Ss 4, Italian Ss 2), SS (British-English Ss 3, Italian Ss 2), and HP (both 2), or SH, used only by the British-English Ss (3), MD and EP, employed only once by the Italian Ss.

Request Strategy type	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO.T - E+9	CLA.J - E+10	Total
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	4
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	6	9	7	7	7	7	6	5	11	7	72
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
											84

Table 82_ English speakers_Tot HAS

Request Strategy type	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STEF.P - E+3	SOF.R - E+4	AMBM - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALEG - E+7	STEF.C - E+8	ANN.G - E+9	MAR.C - E+10	Total
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	9	6	7	7	7	8	9	6	9	9	77
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
											85

Table 83_ Italian speakers_Tot HAS

In terms of IM (Table 84), for what concerns Request perspective, the British-English requesters employed mainly HO (55 out of 86), as in “do **you** have any pen?” (E17, RP7), followed by a significant use of SO (30), as in “Could **I** just borrow that?” (E110, RP13). They also made use of 224 modifiers, and particularly of Syntactic Downgraders, such as Interrogatives (58), half the time combined with Conditionals (31), as in “**would you mind give me a lift?**” (E14, RP9). There was also some use of “If” clauses (24), often combined with Subjectivisers (14), further downgraded by means of Conditional or PT (9), as in “**I was wondering if you could** help me move from my old flat into my new one” (E12, RP11). Conversely, they made little use of Negation (5). In terms of Other Downgraders, they significantly employed Understaters (27), as in “can **I just** borrow yours” (E13, RP4), and some CD (18), such as “do you mind”, Downtoners (21), such as “any chance” and little use of Hedges (11), such as “like”, whereas they made no use of Please and employed only 5 Upgraders (i.e. 1 Expletive and 4 Intensifiers).

	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	EUP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO.T - E+9	CLAJ - E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	4	10	4	5	3	8	4	6	7	4	55	
Speaker Oriented	3	1	4	2	4	3	4	1	4	4	30	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PVO
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	86
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	0	5	2	2	0	5	1	3	3	3	24	
Interrogative	6	6	7	5	7	6	5	5	8	3	53	
Negation	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	5	
Subjectivisers	0	3	0	2	2	1	1	0	3	2	14	
Conditional mood	4	0	2	5	4	5	2	2	4	3	31	
Past Tense	0	3	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	3	9	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	1	4	2	3	1	0	0	2	1	4	18	
Downtoners	0	2	4	0	1	4	3	2	3	2	21	
Hedges	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	6	11	
Understaters	1	5	5	1	2	4	2	3	1	3	27	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
>Please IM	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	IM-PVO
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	4	224

Table 84_English speakers_Tot IM

Similarly, the Italian speakers made overwhelming use of HO (60 out of 85), followed by SO (23), though in slightly different proportions (i.e. more HO and less SO) than their British-English counterparts and, in terms of other modifiers, they made less (i.e. 185) and different use of them (Table 85).

	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STEF P - E+3	SOF R - E+4	AMB M - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALEG - E+7	STEF C - E+8	ANN G - E+9	MAR C - E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	6	6	6	4	7	8	5	3	8	7	60	
Speaker Oriented	2	2	1	3	0	0	5	6	2	2	23	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	PVO
Impersonal	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	85
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	3	2	1	1	0	1	4	2	0	5	19	
Interrogative	7	6	7	7	7	7	9	7	10	4	71	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Subjectivisers	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	9	
Conditional mood	4	3	1	3	7	1	1	1	0	0	21	
Past Tense	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	1	2	2	0	0	0	4	3	5	2	19	
Downtoners	5	0	0	3	1	0	1	1	0	1	12	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Understaters	2	0	1	2	1	2	0	2	1	1	12	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
>Please IM	0	2	2	1	6	2	0	1	1	0	15	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM-PVO
Intensifiers	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	185

Table 85_Italian speakers_Tot IM

They employed more Interrogatives (71), yet only one third of the times in combination with Conditionals (21), as in “**could you please give a lift, maybe?**” (EI5, RP9), and slightly fewer “If” clauses (19), often in combination with Subjectivisers (9), as in “**I wonder whether** you can help” (EI10, RP5) or Other Downgraders, such as CD (19), as in “**do you mind if** I borrow your notes for the past few days of class?” (EI7, RP4). They used little PT (3) and, in regard to Other Downgraders, some Please (15), Understaters (12) and Downtoners (12), while used Hedges only once. Finally, they only employed Intensifiers twice.

In terms of EM (Table 86), the British-English speakers made overwhelming use of Grounders (76 out of 179), as in “**I had a really long day and I’m shattered**” (EI1, RP10), and significantly used Disarmers (37), such as “**sorry to bother you**” (EI3,

RP2) and Alerters (38), particularly ATs (12), such as “**Professor**” (E110, RP6) and Excuses (14). Conversely, they made little use of other strategies, such as CMs (10), as in “**if you are not too busy that is**” (E19, RP11), and MR (8), as in “**I’ll pay you back, later?**” (E12, RP3), and used other devices only a few times, such as CA (4), ER (3) and Please (2), and never employed GP and Interjections.

	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO.T - E+9	CLAJ - E+10	Total
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act											
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	8
> Address terms	0	0	4	0	0	1	1	1	1	4	12
> excuse me_sorry	2	1	0	0	3	4	0	2	1	1	14
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	4
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	4
Cost Minimizers	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	3	2	10	10
Disarmers	5	3	4	3	1	1	7	3	1	9	37
Establishing relationship	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounders	7	9	9	5	5	10	6	9	6	10	76
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	4	1	0	8
Please EM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweeteners	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

Table 86_English speakers_Tot EM

Similarly, also the Italian speakers largely employed Grounders (73 out of 206), as in “**I’m trying to sleep, I’m really tired tonight, but I can’t, because, your volume is really high**” (E19, RP10), and many Disarmers (37), such as “**I’m sorry**” (E11, RP3) and Alerters (38), mainly ATs, such as “**Sir**” (13) (E13, RP5) and AGs (10), such as “**hey**” (E17, RP8) (Table 87). However, they employed more EM in comparison to the British-English speakers, such as Please (16), as in “could I borrow your notes cos I’ve been ill and I missed so many lectures, **please?**” (IE2, RP4), ER (10), such as “**I’m the new neighbour and I live just next door**” (E11, RP11), CA (9), such as “**so you’re leaving now?**” (E14, RP12), CMs (8), as in “**if it’s not, a problem for you?**” (E110, RP9) and GP (6), as in “**could I ask you something?**” (E15, RP3).

	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STEF P - E+3	SOF R - E+4	AMB M - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALE.G - E+7	STEF C - E+8	ANN G - E+9	MAR.C - E+10	Total
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act											
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	4	0	1	3	1	0	1	10
> Address terms	0	0	5	0	0	3	0	2	0	3	13
> excuse me_sorry	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	2	1	9
> excuse me_sorry+AT	1	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	6
Checking on Availability	0	1	1	3	0	0	1	0	3	0	9
Cost Minimizers	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	8
Disarmers	6	5	5	5	2	0	3	5	0	6	37
Establishing relationship	1	1	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	10
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	2	0	6
Grounders	8	7	7	9	6	7	3	8	8	10	73
Making restitutions-Offering awards	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6
Please EM	1	4	1	0	1	1	1	0	5	2	16
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweeteners	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3

Table 87_Italian speakers_Tot EM

Overall, this contrastive analysis showed that there were not many striking differences in pragmalinguistic choices between the British-English and the Italian requesters, as both sets made ample use of RPC, and mainly differed in terms of choice of modification. The British-English Ss used more IM (i.e. more Subjectivisers, Conditional, Hedges, Understaters and Negation, the latter never

employed by the Italian Ss), whereas the Italian Ss employed more EM (i.e. more CA, ER, Please and GP, the latter never employed by the British-English counterparts). This indicates that, while the British-English Ss preferred more IM that conveyed uncertainty (e.g. Subjectivisers and Conditional) and concern for reducing the imposition of the request (e.g. Understaters), the Italian Ss favoured more EM that aimed at softening the request (e.g. Please/also equally employed as IM), ascertaining the possibility of the act being performed (CA) or activating H's cooperativeness (e.g. ER, GP). The fact that the Italian requesters used more Please, both as IM and EM, than the British-English Ss, suggests that the Italian speakers considered the use of "please" as the main means to be polite with British-English people. This seems confirmed by the comment of one Italian participant, who mentioned that she used many "please", *otherwise they [the English] get offended* (MAR.C, RI, RP7: "ho detto "please" (..) sennò si offendono") which is also supported by one British-English participant's comment on the use of "please" and "thank you" as the "traditional way of being polite" (ALA.M, RI, RP10). This could explain why, overall, the Italian Ss used less IM and more EM than their British-English counterparts, i.e. because they relied more on the use of "please" and other EM that invoke H's cooperation, as a way to mitigate their requests, rather than on downgraders to show tentativeness and reduce the possible imposition of the request. This conclusion is in line with Venuti's (2020) work, who observed, in her investigation on Italian (and German) requests, the same pattern, i.e. that the Italian Ss were shown to compensate for the lesser use of IM by a higher use of EM, and reflects what has already been noted in the cross-cultural analysis (section 6.3.2).

However, once again, to have a real grasp of the data and tease out whether there were differences in linguistic choices between the two sets of requesters and of what form, and whether and how they were influenced by their perceptions or importance attached to D and W, the analysis will unfold by groups of Friends, Acquaintances and Strangers (D) and sub-groups of Low (ratings between 1-2.5), Medium (ratings between 2.5-3.5) and/or High (ratings between 3.5-5) W, as rated by them, which is object of the next section.

7.3 The analysis by groups: Friends, Acquaintances and Strangers

The analysis follows the order of HAs, IM and EM, and it is presented according to the following groups and sub-groups:

- Friends, which will examine scenarios rated as Low, Medium and High W by participants;
- Acquaintances, which will examine scenarios rated as Medium and High W by participants;
- Strangers, which will examine scenarios rates as Low, Medium and High W by participants.

As previously, the analysis differentiates, within each category of HAs, IM and EM, between the responses given by the Italian and the British-English requesters, to allow comparability.

Table 88 illustrates what scenarios are included in each group and sub-group, according to both sets of requesters' (average) ratings of D and W. Because the ratings were inconsistent across the two groups, particularly in terms of W, each (sub)group's specification indicates the average ratings provided by the British-English (EnR) and the Italian (ItR) requesters separately, to highlight where differences in evaluations occurred. The rating of W (e.g. 1.4) is included next to the roleplay (e.g. RP7). The aim is to tease out whether cross-cultural differences in perceptions led to different linguistic choices. On one occasion, signalled in bold (i.e. the request to a stranger for something to note an ad down, RP13), the discrepancy between the Italian and British-English requesters' ratings of W means that, according to the Italian Ss, that request should have been categorised differently, i.e. as Low W, rather than as Medium W. However, it was classified as such according to the total average ratings, considering both sets of requesters' evaluations (i.e. 2.6).

	Low	Medium	High
Friends	RP7, 1.4 (ItR-EnR) RP12, 2.35 (ItR) 2.4 (EnR) RP14, 2.4 (ItR) 2 (EnR)	RP4, 3.2 (ItR) 2.7 (EnR) RP10, 3.2 (ItR) 3(EnR)	RP3, 3.8 (ItR) 3.55 (EnR)
Acquaintances	-	RP15, 3.4 (ItR) 3.1 (EnR)	RP6, 3.9 (ItR) 3.6 (EnR) RP9, 4.6 (ItR) 4 (EnR)
Strangers	RP2, 1.6 (ItR) 2.2 (EnR) RP5, 1.6 (ItR) 2 (EnR)	RP13, 2.2 (ItR) 3.2(EnR)	RP8, 3.9 (ItR) 3.8 (EnR) RP11, 4.3 (ItR) 4.2 (EnR)

Table 88_Table of scenarios grouped by D&W

7.3.1 Friends

This group includes three sub-groups, Low W, average ratings between 1-2.5 (ratings range 1-4), Medium W, average ratings between 2.5-3.5 (ratings range 2-5) and High W average ratings between 3.5-5 (ratings range 2-4). The evaluations for Low and Medium W showed a wide divergence across participants, indicating highly variable interpretations of the scenarios falling within these sub-groups, while the divergence across participants about the Medium W was less marked.

7.3.1.1 Friends Low W

The Friends Low W group includes requests for something to note a number down (RP7), rating ranging between 1-2, for a lift (RP12), rating ranging between 2-4, and for a cigarette (RP14) rating ranging between 1-4.

7.3.1.1.1 Head Acts

Both British-English and Italian Ss mostly made use of RPC (British-English Ss 19 out of 21; Italian Ss 16 out of 18), with constructions mainly with the modal “can”, as in “**can I possibly scab a cigarette?**” (E15, RP14) (Tables 89-90), which indicates that they preferred moves that check on the availability/possibility of the act being performed, not taking it for granted.

Request Strategy type	RS · E+1	ALAM · E+12	BRAW · E+3	OLLB · E+4	ELLB · E+5	RACB · E+6	ELIP · E+7	RMR · E+8	GEO.T · E+9	CLAJ · E+10	Total
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	5	1	19
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 89_English speakers_Friends Low W HAs

	LB·E+1	GINP·E+2	STFPP·E+3	SOFR·E+4	AMBM·E+5	VALP·E+6	ALEG·E+7	STFPC·E+8	ANN G·E+9	MARC·E+10	Total	
Request Strategy type												
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	0	1	3	16	
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	18
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Table 90_Italian speakers_Friends Low W HAS

7.3.1.1.2 Internal Modification

Both sets of requesters made similar use also of IM, particularly in terms of Request perspective and Syntactic Downgrading (Tables 91-92).

	RS·E+1	ALAM·E+12	BRAW·E+3	OLLB·E+4	ELLB·E+5	RACB·E+6	ELIP·E+7	RMR·E+8	GEO T·E+9	CLAJ·E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	2	2	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	3	0	12
Speaker Oriented	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	1	2	1	0	9
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	
Interrogative	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	5	0	18	
Negation	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	
Subjectivisers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Conditional mood	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	6	
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	5	
Downtoners	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	4	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	
Understaters	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
>Please IM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM-PVO
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	44

Table 91_English speakers_Friends Low W IM

	LB·E+1	GINP·E+2	STFPP·E+3	SOFR·E+4	AMBM·E+5	VALP·E+6	ALEG·E+7	STFPC·E+8	ANN G·E+9	MARC·E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	1	2	2	1	2	2	0	0	1	1	12	
Speaker Oriented	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	5	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	PVO
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	
Interrogative	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	3	17	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Subjectivisers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Conditional mood	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	
Downtoners	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Understaters	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
>Please IM	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM-PVO
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31

Table 92_Italian speakers_Friends Low W IM

They both used mostly HO (both 12), as in “can **you** give me a lift tonight?” (E16, RP12), followed by SO (slightly more the British-English Ss, with 9/21, vs the Italian Ss 5/18), such as “can **I** borrow some?” (E11, RP7). For what concerns Syntactic Downgraders, they both employed mainly Interrogatives (British-English Ss 18, Italian Ss 17) often mitigated by use of Conditionals (British-English Ss 6, Italian Ss 5), as in “**would you mind.. me borrowing ..?**” (E14, RP14). The only slight difference

regards the use of Other Downgraders, as the British-English requesters employed more of these modifiers than their Italian counterparts, i.e. 5 CD (vs Italian Ss 3), such as “do you mind” or “is that okay?”, 4 Downtoners, such as “any chance” (vs Italian Ss 1), 3 Understaters, such as “just” (vs Italian Ss 1), which explains why, overall, the British-English Ss made more use of IM (-PVO: 44) than the Italian Ss (-PVO 31). In turn, this suggests that the British-English requesters were more tentative in approaching Friends for a Low W request than their Italian counterparts.

7.3.1.1.3 External Modification

The Italian requesters employed more EM than their British-English counterparts, i.e. Italian Ss 39 vs British-English Ss 23 (Tables 93-94).

	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELLP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO.T - E+9	CLA.J - E+10	Total
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act											
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
> Address terms	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
Cost Minimizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Disarmers	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Establishing relationship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounders	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	0	8
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Please EM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweeteners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

23

Table 93_English speakers_Friends Low W EM

	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STFP - E+3	SOF.R - E+4	AMB.M - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALE.G - E+7	STEF.C - E+8	ANN.G - E+9	MAR.C - E+10	Total
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act											
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
> Address terms	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	6
Cost Minimizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Disarmers	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	6
Establishing relationship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounders	1	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	11
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
Please EM	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	4
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

39

Table 94_Italian speakers_Friends Low W EM

Though both sets of informants used mainly Alerters (both 7) and Grounders (British-English Ss 8/23, Italian Ss 11/39), the Italian Ss employed more CA (Italian Ss 6 vs British-English Ss 3), such as “are you just leaving now?” (EI9, RP12), Disarmers (Italian Ss 6 vs British-English Ss 2), such as “I’m sorry” (EI3, RP14), MR (Italian Ss 3 vs British-English Ss 1), such as “And then I’m gonna give you one to you later..” (EI2, RP14) and Please (Italian Ss 4 vs British-English Ss 0), as in “can you, write this number for me please?” (EI6, RP7). Therefore, the Italian Ss’s lesser use of IM was counterbalanced by a higher use of EM devices, which shows a preference for moves that, rather than focusing on attenuating the imposition, seek

H's cooperation and understanding. These results are in line with those of the cross-cultural analysis (section 6.3.2) and with Venuti's (2020), which both highlighted this same pattern on Italian request realisation.

Overall, all this indicates that in addressing a friend for a Low W request the two sets of requesters showed different preferences in linguistic choices only for what concerns the use of modifiers. Though both preferred hearer-oriented (and sometimes speaker-oriented) RPC, mitigated by interrogative forms, often further downgraded by means of Conditional, the British-English requesters were more inclined to soften their requests by means of Other Downgraders, whereas the Italian requesters by means of External modifiers. In turn, this suggests a different orientation/focus in downgrading the requests. The British-English Ss' higher use of devices such as CD and Downtoners reflects more concern for attenuating the possible imposition on the H, while the Italian Ss' higher use of devices such as CA, Disarmers such as "sorry" and MR reflects more focus on ascertaining the possibility of the act being performed in itself, but also a preference for moves that, by apologising in advance and offering restitutions, win the Hs over and obtain their cooperation.

This different orientation seems echoed by the different evaluations of such requests, particularly for the request for a lift (RP12). The British-English Ss were more concerned about the possible imposition (W) on the H, *making sure to be in their way* (BRA.W, RI) or to *not come across as expecting*, and feeling *uncomfortable in case the H had other plans* (RAC.B, RI). Conversely, the Italian Ss did not mention such worries, but rather commented about being *straightforward* (SOF.R, RI) and *not paying much attention to their language* (ALE.G, RI), as they did not perceive this request as a *big deal* (STEF.C, RI), because of D.

However, a different attitude was detectable also in the comments on the request to note a number down (RP7). The Italian Ss seemed not to be overly concerned about their linguistic choices, mentioning being *straightforward* (MAR.C, RI), *expecting compliance* ("I expect the answer to be "yes"", LB, RI) and that, being a friend, "any kind of linguistic choice, wouldn't..affect the, her reaction" (VAL.P, RI). Conversely, the British-English Ss acknowledged that "I didn't phrase it in a very very polite way" (ELI.P, RI), or that they were "very ...direct, with it and kind of like "can you just do this for me?"" (RMR, RI), and even rated themselves as impolite,

because they were “just like, “can you just quickly, get this”” (ALA.M, RI). Yet, it is interesting how, in actual fact, the latter requester employed very indirect structures, characterised by the use of modifiers, such as the CD “do you mind” and “if” clauses, as in “do you mind just taking down this number if I just ehm, read it out to you, can you write it down for me?” (ALA.M, EI2), which were evaluated by the Italian H as polite. This shows a mismatch between how the S perceived herself, on the one hand, and her actual behaviour and the H’s evaluation of that behaviour, on the other, which, as already observed in section 6.2.2.2.2, shows how evaluations of the same linguistic behaviour can be highly subjectively-dependent (Haugh, 2014). To attempt to clarify the reason for this divergence, this request scenario was made the object of the ES, to understand how outsiders perceived this performance and whether there was a difference in perceptions between the British-English and the Italian participants. Although both sets rated the S’s linguistic choice as mostly polite (both 63.64%), the British-English participants often observed that, despite the S using consultative devices (6), she made no use of “please” (8), as in “[she] asked if she minded but didn’t say please” (ES, ENG3, Q23B), and two even rated the S “blunt” (ES, ENG23, Q23B) or highlighted the “lack of manners” (ES, ENG24, Q23B), whereas the Italian participants did not make any negative comment about the S’s behaviour. The only Italian participant who mentioned the lack of use of “please” also noted that “maybe you don’t need to say it” (ES, ITA12, Q23B) because of the relationship. This different importance given by the British-English observers to the linguistic choices made (or not made) by the S (and particularly in terms of lack of use of “please”) seems to indicate a higher (and culturally-driven) concern for not sounding too direct and/or imposing, which could explain why the British-English S rated herself as impolite, whereas the Italian H rated her as polite. That is, we could argue that the British-English S considered herself impolite because did not use polite devices, such as “please”, whereas the Italian H rated her as polite because did not consider the use of “please” as necessary between friends.

Nonetheless, it is remarkable that only the Italian Ss used “please”. This, as already observed in section 7.2, seems to reflect the stereotype about using “please” (and “thank you”) to be polite in English, which appears corroborated not only by the British-English participants in the ES, but also by some of the Italian Ss, who

remarked on how speaking in English with a British-English person affected their linguistic choices, in comparison to how they would have addressed a friend if they were talking in Italian, as shown in the following extract (7):

(7) [MAR.C, RI, RP7]

“si, perchè comunque **ho detto “please” (..) sennò si offendono (..)** .. il fatto che io mi stessi avvicinando, a una persona Inglese, questo ha cambiato comunque il mio modo di rapportarmi, e la mia scelta linguistica.. perchè magari **in Italiano direi meno “per favore”.. specialmente con gli amici, (..)** quando sei più stretta, magari non dici “please”, **puoi essere diretta, però poi dopo ci sono altri modi per dimostrare che sono polite..** il fatto che stessi parlando comunque con un Inglese mi ha spinto .. a sempre usare i “please” e, altre forme”.

[yes, because however **I said “please (..) otherwise they get offended (..)** the fact that I was approaching an English person, this changed anyway my way of approaching her, and my linguistic choice.. because maybe **in Italian I would say less “please”.. especially with friends, (..)** when you are closer, maybe you don’t say “please”, **you can be direct, but then there are other ways to demonstrate that I am polite..** however the fact that I was talking with an English person pushed me.. to always use “please” and other forms (my emphasis)].

In this extract the Italian S acknowledged how, even though if she were speaking in her L1 she would have used more direct strategies with close friends, as there are other ways to show politeness in Italian, the fact of interacting in her L2 with an English speaker made her conform to what were the -perceived- polite ways to address a British-English recipient, in order to make her request sound appropriate to the H. In other words, the S performed an action of “intercultural mediation” (Liddicoat, 2014; McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016). By critically acknowledging and interpreting the cultural phenomenon represented by cultural differences in meaning making, linguistic means for politeness and understandings of social relationships between the British-English and the Italian culture, and by adopting the other (the British-English) perspective, she negotiated a linguistic behaviour that she considered appropriate for the British-English culture and H.

This concern about using the appropriate polite language in addressing the British-English Ss was found also in the following extract (8):

(8) [MAR.C, RI, RP14]

“non glielo avrei chiesto come lo avrei chiesto in Italiano...tipo **avrei detto “dai mi passi una sigaretta? Poi te la ridò” (..) quindi una comunicazione diversa da quella che ho usato comunque con lei..e pur siamo amici..”**.

[I would have never asked her as I would have asked her in Italian..like **I would have said “come on pass me a cigarette? I’ll give it back to you later” (..)**

therefore a communication which is different from the one I used with her..even though we are friends.. (my emphasis)].

Also in this case MAR.C, though did not use “please” in her request (i.e., she said “can I ask you one, can I borrow one, last time, I promise?”), she thanked the H, and underlined how she would have used more direct forms in addressing an Italian friend (i.e. by means of a mood derivable in the form of the imperative “pass me”, associated with the interjection ‘*dai*’), showing she did not consider the Italian way to ask acceptable in addressing the British-English friend, as it is too direct. Again, also this extract is an example of intercultural mediation, where the S, after acknowledging and comparing the differences between the two lingua-culture systems, made the conscious decision to adopt the British-English’s perspective and chose a linguistic behaviour which she considered appropriate in the L2 English. Finally, along these same lines, another Italian S mentioned that she behaved differently, because of interacting in her L2 with a British-English speaker, which led her to use *more polite forms*, as extract (9) shows:

(9) [LB, RI, RP7]

“maybe I was more polite, than I would, normally be in Italian because English is not my native language, so maybe.. I, I I don’t know if that, why it is but I think that since, in Italian I have more confidence of the language, I can rely more on tones and on, you know, general understanding, so I would have just said something like.. I don’t know, “can I borrow some pen and paper”, or something like that, **whereas speaking in English maybe I added some politeness signs**” (my emphasis).

Overall, these examples show how some Italian Ss made conscious linguistic choices in addressing the British-English Hs, even for a Low W request, which were driven by their (stereotyped) beliefs about what is considered polite language in English.

Furthermore, this stereotype about the necessity of using such politeness formulae to be polite in English was often employed by the British-English participants in the ES, who highlighted the fact that the Ss did not use “please” (8/33) (e.g. “Only addition would be a “please””, ES, ENG7, Q23B), but used “thanks” (5/33) (e.g. “She said thank you, please would have made it more polite in the beginning”, ES, ENG33, Q23B), showing they consider these devices as the main means to achieve politeness. Conversely, only one Italian participant overtly acknowledged that the S “didn’t say “please”” (“but between young people maybe you don’t need to say

it", ES, ITA12, Q23B), yet a few (2/32) commented on the use of "thank you" (e.g. "She said thank you", ES, ITA24, Q23B) and many (7/32) observed that the request had been delivered nicely or in a good way (e.g. "She framed it in a nice way", ES, ITA16, Q23B).

However, it is noteworthy how, despite both the Italian, and more markedly the British-English participants in the ES agreed on what, in their view, are the rules of politeness, the British-English requesters in the roleplays did not actually employ such devices, and the Italian Ss only to a certain extent. Put differently, though both sets agreed on the stereotype about what counts as polite language use in English, those enacting the request scenarios did not use such devices consistently. This shows a contradiction between stereotypes of polite behaviour and actual behaviour, i.e., what is in theory evaluated as polite is not necessarily employed in real life or, as observed by Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2005, 29), there is a gap "between what people *think they say* and what they *actually say*". It also shows that politeness is not a static concept, because it can be achieved in different ways, according to the context.

Nevertheless, we can still conclude that this commonplace about the need to use "please" and "thank you" to request politely (in English), as highlighted in section 7.2, may have been the cause of the Italian Ss using overall less IM and instead using Please. That is, because they considered the use of "please" and "thank you" as sufficient to achieve politeness for such a small request to a close person, in contrast to the British-English Ss, who tended to use more various downgraders that reduce the sense of imposition.

7.3.1.2 Friends Medium W

This group includes requests to borrow some notes (RP4), rating ranging between 2-5, and to a flatmate to turn the volume down (RP10), rating ranging between 2-4.

7.3.1.2.1 Head Acts

Once more the most preferred strategy for both sets of requesters was RPC (British-English requesters 10/14, Italian requesters 11/16), mostly by means of the modal "can", as in "can I just borrow yours?" (EI3, RP4) (Tables 95-96), which again shows both sets' preference for moves that check for the possibility of the act to be performed.

	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO.T - E+9	CLA.J - E+10	Total	
Request Strategy type												
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3 Hedged performative	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
5 Scope stating	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	1	0	2	0	2	3	0	0	0	2	10	
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14

Table 95_English speakers_Friends Medium W_HAs

	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STEF P - E+3	SOF R - E+4	AMB M - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALE.G - E+7	STEF C - E+8	ANN G - E+9	MAR C - E+10	Total	
Request Strategy type												
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	0	3	0	2	0	0	3	1	2	0	11	
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16

Table 96_Italian speakers_Friends Medium W_HAs

7.3.1.2.2 Internal Modification

As Tables 97-98 show, with regard to Request perspective, both sets mainly used HO (the British-English requesters 10/14, the Italian requesters 9/16), as in “can you turn your music down?” (E16, RP10) followed by some use of SO (the British-English requesters 4/14, slightly more for the Italian requesters, i.e. 7/16) as in “can I just borrow yours?” (E13, RP4).

	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO.T - E+9	CLA.J - E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	1	0	1	0	1	5	0	0	0	2	10	
Speaker Oriented	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PVO
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	4	
Interrogative	1	0	3	0	2	3	0	0	0	1	10	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Subjectivisers	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Conditional mood	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	5	
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	
Downtoners	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Understaters	1	0	4	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	9	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
>Please IM	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	IM (-PVO)
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	38

Table 97_English speakers_Friends Medium W_IM

	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STEF P - E+3	SOF R - E+4	AMB M - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALE G - E+7	STEF C - E+8	ANN G - E+9	MAR C - E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	0	1	0	2	0	0	3	0	3	0	9	
Speaker Oriented	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	7	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PVO
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	
Interrogative	0	3	0	2	0	0	3	2	3	0	13	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Subjectivisers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Conditional mood	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	4	
Downtoners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Understaters	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	4	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
>Please IM	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM (-PVO)
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	31

Table 98_Italian speakers_Friends Medium W_IM

This suggests that the higher perception of W might have led both sets of Ss, and particularly the Italian Ss, to use more mitigating devices, such as SO, to reduce the perception of the burden on the H. For the other modifiers, though both groups used the same devices, the British-English Ss employed slightly more (38) of them than the Italian Ss (31). Both once again mainly used Interrogatives (the British-English requesters 10, the Italian requesters 13), often downgraded by means of Conditional by the British-English requesters (5), as in “**would you be able to turn your music down a little bit?**” (EI1, RP10), and only three times by the Italian requesters. The British-English requesters made some use of “If” clauses (4), used only twice by the Italian requesters, as in “do you mind **if** I borrow your notes for the past few days of class?” (EI7, RP4). In terms of Other Downgraders, both made some use of CD (the British-English requesters 3, such as “do you reckon”, “is that possible”, while the Italian requesters 4 and mostly “do you mind”), plus the British-English requesters consistently used Understaters (9), such as “just” and “a little bit”, used half of the time by the Italian requesters (4), whereas the Italian requesters used more Please (3) than the British-English (1), as in “could I **please** borrow your notes” (EI2, RP4). Overall, both sets of requesters used more downgraders than in the previous scenarios, suggesting that the higher perception of W might have led them to use more mitigation to soften the impact of the request. Nevertheless, the fact that the British-English Ss used slightly more modifiers, and particularly Understaters to minimise the required action, indicates more concern for the possible imposition/invasion. This seems confirmed by some of their comments, about not wanting to “disrupt someone’s day by taking their notes” (RS, RI, RP4) or by being “extra extra apologetic” because they were asking for “a personal thing to give away” (CLA.J, RI, RP4). They also mentioned they did

not want to “come across as.. rude or aggressive” (RS, RI, RP10), or that they felt “quite nervous to ask that (..) as much as I know I’ve got the right to get to sleep” (CLA.J, RI, RP10). Conversely, the Italian Ss did not mention any of these concerns, but rather showed they were overall more at ease in asking the friend, by being “much more direct ehm, cos she was my flatmate” (GIN.P, RI, RP10) or possibly impolite (“my tone of voice might have sounded impolite, while what I said was.. average”, ALE.G, RI, RP10) or by *not meaning to be polite* in asking (“maybe, the question I was asking, sounded more polite than I wanted”, ALE.G, RI, RP4). Additionally, one Italian S even observed that “I don’t think it was an imposition though, cos I ehm, cos I asked her if it was not a problem (..) if for her it was okay to do that” (STEF.C, RI, RP4), showing she was not concerned about the idea of W. These results mirror those of the cross-cultural analysis (chapter 6), where the British-English Ss were shown to be more concerned about W, in terms of imposition (e.g. with the flatmate) or even of threat to property (e.g. with the notes), signalling they did not feel to have a right to ask (particularly with the flatmate), whereas the Italian Ss were found to be more at ease with such requests, never perceived as an imposition on the H or as a threat, or showed they felt they had the right to ask.

7.3.1.2.3 External Modification

Similar usage of EM in numbers was detected across the two groups (British-English Ss 31, Italian Ss 30) (Tables 99-100).

External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+12	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO T - E+9	CLAJ - E+10	Total
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
> Address terms	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost Minimizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Disarmers	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
Establishing relationship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounders	2	0	5	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	17
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Please EM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweeteners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 99_English speakers_Friends Medium W_EM

External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	LB · E+1	GINP · E+2	STEF P · E+3	SOF R · E+4	AMB M · E+5	VALP · E+6	ALE G · E+7	STEF C · E+8	ANN G · E+9	MARC · E+10	Total
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
> Address terms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Cost Minimizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disarmers	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	6
Establishing relationship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounders	0	2	0	4	0	0	2	3	2	0	13
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Please EM	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	5
Requestive interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweeteners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

30

Table 100_Italian speakers_Friends Medium W_EM

Both mainly used Grounders (the British-English requesters 17, the Italian requesters 13), such as “I’m really trying to sleep” (EI2, RP10), Disarmers (British-English Ss 7, Italian Ss 6), such as “I’m really sorry” (EI1, RP10) and Alerters (the British-English requesters 6, the Italian requesters 5), such as “hey”. The only difference in usage regards the fact that once again only the Italian Ss used some Please (5), and linked this usage to being polite, as in “saying like “please can you”, so like try to be polite as much as possible” (STEF.C, RI, RP10) or in “gli ho detto per fav.. “possiamo parlare un attimo, e per favore puoi abbassare la..”, quindi dai si, c’è stata (..) politeness” (I said please “can we talk one moment, and please can you turn it down”, so yeah, there was (..) politeness], ANN.G, RI, RP10). It is also noteworthy that two Italian Ss acknowledged how “usually to be polite in English I put a lot of “sorry” in the end” (SOF.R, RI, RP4), because she feels more the need to use them when speaking in English (“uso più espressioni come “I am sorry” quando parlo in Inglese mentre in Italiano non ne sento il bisogno”, SOF.R, RI, RP4), or that she perceived herself as “very polite, because I said sorry a bunch of times” (LB, RI, RP10). These comments seem to echo the underpinning idea about having to use certain stereotypical devices, such as “thank you” and “please” sorry?, to be polite in English, as observed in the previous section. Actually, the Italian Ss’ higher use of such conventional politeness expressions seems to reflect the application of a static knowledge of certain pragmatic ‘rules of thumb’ (Liddicoat & McConachy, 2019; van Compernelle, 2014) regarding how to achieve politeness in English, as acquired when learning English as L2. And this, again, could explain why the Italian Ss made less use of IM than their British-English counterparts, i.e. because they relied more on such devices, which can -by default- convey politeness, rather than venturing in finding other more elaborated -and possibly more ambiguous- ways to do so in a language that is not their L1.

However, it is also notable that on two occasions the British-English and the Italian participants held different and opposite perceptions of their behaviours, which recalls again Haugh's (2014) idea of subjectivity. While one Italian S rated herself impolite because she was "much more direct ehm, cos she was my flatmate" (GIN.P, RI, RP10), despite the use of polite language in asking, her British-English counterpart rated her as "very polite because she was saying "I'm just trying to sleep", "I'm doing this, I'm doing that" like, "could you turn it down please" and, you know, use "please" and "thank you" you know, traditional way of being polite" (ALA.M, RI, RP10). Because of this discrepancy in rating, also this request scenario was made the object of ES in an attempt to understand the reason for this divergence and examine how the two sets of participants rated the S.

Both sets rated the S mostly very polite, though the British-English in much higher percentage (British-English participants 73.53%; Italian participants 46.88%), and mainly because she was apologising (British-English participants 19/33, e.g. ES, ENG5/ENG25, Q28B; Italian participants 10/32, e.g. ES, ITA3, Q28B) and said "please" a few times (British-English participants 12/33, e.g. ES, ENG2/ENG3, Q28B; Italian participants 4/32, e.g. ES, ITA8, Q28B). Nevertheless, three British-English participants observed how the S sounded "a little irritated in her tone" (ES, ENG13, Q28B), "talked over her housemate who was trying to respond" (ES, ENG4, Q28B), and was "perhaps slightly passive aggressive with 'really' trying to sleep and the sheer number of pleases" (ES, ENG31, Q28B), which could explain why the Italian S perceived herself as impolite, though she did not define herself as such, but just as "more direct".

Similarly, while another Italian S rated herself between neither polite nor impolite and impolite, because probably her "tone of voice betrayed [her] anger" (ALE.G, RI, RP10), and rated the H as "very polite in return", her British-English counterpart rated herself as initially impolite, because "what I was doing was imposing on her and disturbing her and yeah she politely asked me to stop" (ELI.P, RI, RP10), and the S as polite. Notably, this example shows that the Italian S and the British-English H had opposite perspectives not only of own/other's level of politeness, but also on what counted as imposition. Indeed, in this case, though the W was on the H, the latter perceived her behaviour as (also) imposing on the S.

Overall, in the case of Medium W requests to Friends, the data suggests slightly different preferences across the two groups only in the choice of mitigating devices. Though both still preferred RPC in terms of HAs, HO in terms of Request perspective and heavily relied on Interrogatives and Grounders in terms of modifiers, the Italian Ss relied slightly more on SO to reduce the burden on the H, alongside the polite “please” to soften the requests (either used as IM or EM), in this case even used more often than in the previous Low W case (probably as a consequence of the higher W). Conversely, the British-English Ss used more Downgraders, such as Conditional, “If” clauses and Understaters to mitigate the impact of their requests. This shows, as mentioned earlier, that, all other things being equal, in regard to differences, the Italian Ss relied more on “please” devices to achieve politeness, whereas the British-English Ss employed more devices that reduced the imposition on the H.

7.3.1.3 Friends High W

This sub-group includes only one scenario (RP3), borrowing money from a friend, rating ranging between 2-4.

7.3.1.3.1 Head Acts

Both groups made again consistent use of RPC (the British-English requesters 4, the Italian requesters 5) (Tables 101-102), such as “do you have any cash, that I can borrow?” (E18), showing once more to prefer moves that check for the possibility of the act to be performed.

Request Strategy type	RS-E+1	ALAM-E+2	BRAW-E+3	QLB-E+4	ELLB-E+5	RACB-E+6	ELLP-E+7	RMR-E+8	GEO.T-E+9	CLAJ-E+10	Total
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	4
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 101_English speakers_Friends High W_HAs

Request Strategy type	LB-E+1	GINP-E+2	STFP-E+3	SOFR-E+4	AMB.M-E+5	VALP-E+6	ALEG-E+7	STFC-E+8	ANN.G-E+9	MARC-E+10	Total
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	5
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 102_Italian speakers_Friends High W_HAs

7.3.1.3.2 Internal Modification

Both groups also made similar use of IM in forms and numbers (British-English Ss 8, Italian Ss 11). Both mainly used HO Request perspective (4) and Interrogatives (the British-English requesters 4, the Italian requesters 5) as Syntactic Downgraders, as in the previous case (Tables 103-104).

	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO.T - E+9	CLA.J - E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	
Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PVO
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Interrogative	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Subjectivisers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Conditional mood	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	
Downtoners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Understaters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
>Please IM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM(-PVO)
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8

Table 103_English speakers_Friends High W_IM

	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STFP - E+3	SOF R - E+4	AMB M - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALE G - E+7	STEF C - E+8	ANN G - E+9	MAR C - E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	4	
Speaker Oriented	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PVO
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Interrogative	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	5	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Subjectivisers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Conditional mood	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	
Downtoners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Understaters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
>Please IM	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM(-PVO)
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11

Table 104_Italian speakers_Friends High W_IM

In terms of Other Downgraders, they also employed some CD (the British-English requesters 2, the Italian requesters 3), such as “**is that possible?**” (E13), to soften the impact of the request by seeking to involve the H to obtain his/her cooperation.

7.3.1.3.3 External Modification

As Tables 105-106 show, despite the similar usage across the two sets, the Italian Ss used more EM devices (16) than their British-English counterparts (10).

	RS · E+1	ALAM · E+12	BRAW · E+13	OLLB · E+4	ELLB · E+5	RACB · E+6	ELIP · E+7	RMR · E+8	GEO.T · E+9	CLAJ · E+10	Total
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act											
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
> Address terms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost Minimizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Disarmers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Establishing relationship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounders	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	4
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Please EM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 105_English speakers_Friends High W_EM

	LB · E+1	GINP · E+2	STFP · E+3	SOF R · E+4	AMBM · E+5	VALP · E+6	ALEG · E+7	STFC · E+8	ANN G · E+9	MAR C · E+10	Total
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act											
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
> Address terms	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost Minimizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disarmers	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Establishing relationship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grounders	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	6
Making restitutions-Offering awards	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Please EM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweeteners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 106_Italian speakers_Friends High W_EM

They employed slightly more Grounders (the Italian requesters 6, the British-English requesters 4), such as **“I think I don’t have any cash”** (EI1) and Alerters (Italian Ss 4, British-English S2), such as **“Oh my God”** (EI6; EI10), plus GP (1) and Please (1), never used by the British-English Ss, which suggests an Italian Ss’ more marked preference for positive politeness moves that aim to alert and activate the H’s understanding and solidarity. Though both sets employed MR twice, as in **“I’ll pay you back?”** (EI8), the British-English Ss used two CMs, such as **“just for tonight?”** (EI8), to minimise the cost to the H, hence the W, while the Italian Ss used two Disarmers, such as **“I’m sorry”** (EI1; EI10), in an attempt to avoid a possible refusal.

The fact that the British-English Ss seemed more concerned about W whereas the Italian Ss appeared more influenced by D seems confirmed by the RI. Two British-English Ss emphasised the importance of promising to pay back, and mentioned that they were “trying to be a bit tentative, like not assuming that she would just give me the money ehm, but kind of saying “would you mind” and promising her like, I promised to pay you back” (ALA.M, RI), or even “apologised (..) for ever asking” (ELI.P, RI). Conversely, the Italian Ss seemed not to have such worries, and one S even mentioned that, “because if we are friends, we know each other, so basically doesn’t matter, I think, the way I asked her ehm, for some cash so, I don’t need to use all “please can you?” or these details, actually, I mean, at least this is my personal way to, to behave with a friend so.. otherwise it’s acquaintance..”

(VAL.P, RI). However, in this latter example a mismatch of perspectives occurred between the Italian and the British-English participants, since the British-English counterpart found VAL.P *demanding and not apologetic* (RAC.B, RI), as extract (10) illustrates:

(10)[RAC.B, RI, RP3]

“I did think it was a little bit demanding, she didn’t seem very apologetic, maybe? She could have been a bit more like “Oh I’m so so sorry, I’ve come out without my money, I’m really sorry, I’ll pay you back straight away” but, ehm, “can, can you just shout me dinner this time? And, you know, I’ll get you, I’ll get you dinner next time?”, just something, a bit more acknowledgement, it just felt a bit more like “can I have your money?” (laugh), it sort of felt, the way it came across is “can I have your money? Can you buy me dinner tonight?”, so it just seemed a bit demanding”.

This shows an intercultural clash, based on different perceptions of what being friends entails, particularly in terms of expectations, rights and obligations (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021): while the Italian Ss felt it did not matter how she asked because of D, the British-English H showed that she still expected apologies and more indirectness in the request. Considering this divergence, also this request scenario was object of the ES, to tease out how the two sets of participants rated such request.

Interestingly, these different perspectives seemed mirrored by the comments of the two sets of participants in the ES. The British-English participants rated the S between polite and impolite (polite 35.29%; impolite 32.35%; neither impolite nor impolite 29.41%) and mentioned many times that the requester did not use “please” (7/33), nor sounded apologetic (3), as in “She had a nice tone, but she wasn't very apologetic and didn't say please” (ES, ENG7, Q8B), or that she could have been more thankful, gentle or polite (4), as in the following comment: “she firstly said “do you have money” is a bit impolite. If she had perhaps said “can you lend me...” it would sound better” (ES, ENG33, Q8B). They also observed that, “to a native English speaker, I think that Valeria is too direct” (ES, ENG15, Q8B), as it seemed as if she “felt that she had a right to ask” (ES, ENG13, Q8B), “presumes that Elizabeth can just hand her over £30” (ES, ENG12, Q8B), did not give any “option to refuse” (ES, ENG32, Q8B) and there was no “obvious promise of paying her back” (ES, ENG31, Q8B), mirroring the recipient’s negative evaluation. Conversely, the Italian participants mostly rated the S neither polite nor impolite (48,39%), followed by some rating her as polite (29.03%), while only 12.90% rated her as impolite.

Though they also observed how the S did not use “please” (4/32), as in “not once she says please during the request” (ES, ITA11, Q8B), was “too direct” (ES, ITA8, Q8B) or “little blunt” (ES, ITA14, Q8B), gave “for granted that she would get the money” (ES, ITA26, Q8B), not “even mentioning a give back” (ES, ITA28, Q8B), they also commented about her “not pretending” (ES, ITA12/ITA13, Q8B), or “imposing” (ES, ITA6, Q8B) or “expecting” (ES, ITA30, Q8B). Furthermore, a few (5) highlighted that being friends meant that “it’s fine to be direct” (ES, ITA3, Q8B), as “one should be free to share struggles” (ES, ITA21, Q8B), and also observed that “She’s not using typical expressions like: “could you please, or would you mind”, but given their kind of relationship it doesn’t seem necessary” (ES, ITA17, Q8B), or that *she didn’t say please probably due to the friendship* (ES, ITA27, Q8B). Overall, these comments seem to echo the Italian S’s perspective on the importance that closeness had on her linguistic behaviour, i.e. that it did not require her to “use all “please can you?”” forms (VAL.P, RI). To conclude, we can observe how the different interpretative frameworks adopted by the Italian S and the British-English H, and confirmed by the two sets of participants in the ES, could be associated with differences in languages and cultures, signalling different cultural patterns. That is, a British-English speakers’ preference for indirect and apologetic moves, because of W, regardless of D, and an Italian speakers’ inclination for directness, because of D, regardless of W. In turn, these different attitudes toward the request are indicative of different emphases given to the idea of equity (the British-English H/participants) or sociality (the Italian S/participants) rights/obligations and related (non) expectations of compliance, which echo the results of the cross-cultural analysis (section 6.2.2.3.2). Indeed, the Italian Ss/Hs were shown to be more at ease with this request, whereas their British-English counterparts appeared more concerned about W and the idea of redress.

To sum up, in the case of a High W request to Friends, both sets of Ss made similar use of strategies in terms of HAs and modification, by addressing the friend with HO interrogative RPC forms and by means of Downgraders, such as CD, that bid for their cooperation, which is in line with the type of request. However, this quest for cooperation appeared more marked in the Italian Ss, who employed more modification directed at activating the H’s understanding and solidarity, and particularly more Grounders and Alerters, in comparison to the British-English Ss.

Furthermore, the fact that the British-English Ss used CMs twice could indicate more concern for the cost to the H. This suggests that, despite the higher W, the Italian Ss were more influenced by closeness (D) and employed more positive politeness moves accordingly to activate the friend's willingness to cooperate, whereas the British-English Ss were more influenced by W, regardless of D, hence more inclined to reduce the imposition.

7.3.2 Acquaintances

This group includes request scenarios rated as Medium W, average ratings between 2.5-3.5 (ratings range 2-5) and High W, average ratings between 3.5-5 (ratings range 2-5). This shows that the evaluations for both Low and Medium W carried a wide divergence across participants, signalling highly variable interpretations of the scenarios within each sub-group.

To note, for all these requests also the rating of D was inconsistent (i.e. some requesters from both groups rated it as Strangers), yet this did not affect Ss' linguistic choices.

7.3.2.1 Acquaintances Medium W

This sub-group includes only one scenario, asking the elderly neighbour to turn the volume of a TV down (RP15), rating ranging between 2-5.

7.3.2.1.1 Head Acts

Even in this case, both groups used mostly RPC (British-English Ss 5/6, Italian Ss 8/8), such as **“I was wondering if you could possibly turn the TV down a little bit”** (EI7) (Tables 107-108), showing again to prefer moves that checked the H's possibility/willingness to do the act.

	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO.T - E+9	CLA.J - E+10	Total
Request Strategy type											
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	5
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
											6

Table 107_English speakers_Acquaintances Medium W_HAs

	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STFP - E+3	SOF.R - E+4	AMB.M - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALEG - E+7	STEF.C - E+8	ANN.G - E+9	MAR.C - E+10	Total
Request Strategy type											
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	2	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	8
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
											8

Table 108_Italian speakers_Acquaintances Medium W_HAs

7.3.2.1.2 Internal Modification

Both sets also used mostly same IM structures (British-English Ss 27, Italian Ss 28), made up by same combination of moves (Tables 109-110), such as the one showed in the previous example. That is, HO Request perspective (British-English Ss 6, Italian Ss 8), alongside Syntactic Downgrading, mainly by means of “If” clauses (British-English Ss 6, Italian Ss 5), in combination with Subjectivisers (both 4), further downgraded by either Conditional (both 2) or PT (both 2 British-English Ss 2, Italian Ss 2), as in “I wondered if” or “I was wondering if”, all employed to convey a high level of tentativeness.

	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO T - E+9	CLA J - E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	6	
Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PVO
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	6	
Interrogative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Negation	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Subjectivisers	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	4	
Conditional mood	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	
Past Tense	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Downtoners	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	
Hedges	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Understaters	0	4	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	8	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
>Please IM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM(-PVO)
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27

Table 109_English speakers_Acquaintances Medium W_IM

	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STFP - E+3	SOF R - E+4	AMB M - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALE G - E+7	STEF C - E+8	ANN G - E+9	MAR C - E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	2	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	6	
Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PVO
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Interrogative	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Subjectivisers	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	
Conditional mood	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Past Tense	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Downtoners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Understaters	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	5	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
>Please IM	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM(-PVO)
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28

Table 110_Italian speakers_Acquaintances Medium W_IM

However, only the Italian Ss used Interrogatives (4), as in “**can you please just turn it down a little bit?**” (E16), because the British-English Ss consistently employed “wondered/ing if” forms as statement structures/indirect requests, while the Italian Ss used them to preface the actual questions. In terms of Other Downgraders, both used many Understaters (British-English Ss 8, Italian Ss 6), such

as “a little bit”, yet the British-English Ss used 3 Downtoners, such as “possibly”, whereas the Italian used 3 Please.

This suggests that overall, to address an Acquaintance for a Medium W request both sets of requesters used the same moves to convey tact and tentativeness in approaching the elderly neighbour, though some Italian Ss were still more inclined to also soften the request with “please”, as in the previous cases, whereas some British-English Ss relied more on Downtoners, to convey even more uncertainty, as a way to be polite. This could indicate that the British-English Ss perceived using tentativeness as a better means to convey politeness, considering the context, rather than simply using softening moves (such as “please”), against the Italian Ss’ more stereotyped use of “please” as a politeness move. This seems to confirm the previous conclusions (section 7.3.1.1.3) on the fact that the choice of politeness means is not fixed but context-dependent.

7.3.2.1.3 External Modification

The Italian Ss used almost double the EM (18) compared to their British-English counterparts (11) (Tables 111-112).

	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO.T - E+9	CLA.J - E+10	Total
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act											
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> Address terms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost Minimizers	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Disarmers	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3
Establishing relationship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounders	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	6
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Please EM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweeteners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

11

Table 111_English speakers_Acquaintances Medium W_EM

	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STFFP - E+3	SOF.R - E+4	AMB.M - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALEG - E+7	STFFC - E+8	ANNNG - E+9	MARC - E+10	Total
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act											
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> Address terms	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
> excuse me_sorry	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost Minimizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Disarmers	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4
Establishing relationship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounders	2	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	7
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Please EM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

18

Table 112_Italian speakers_Acquaintances Medium W_EM

Though both consistently used Grounders (British-English Ss 6, Italian Ss 7), as in “I’m trying to concentrate, I’ve got a big project due tomorrow” (E19), followed by some use of Disarmers (British-English Ss 3, Italian Ss 4), such as “I’m sorry to bother you” (E13), only the Italian Ss often used Alerters (4), such as “Sir” or first

names, which indicates their inclination for moves that pay respect and/or aim to activate H's solidarity, probably as a consequence of the H's age.

This conclusion seems confirmed by the Italian Ss, who mentioned that because of that they "tried to be as respectful as possible" (LB, RI), by using "a certain type of language", such as "Sir" (AMB.M, RI) or "a gentle way to ask" (VAL.P, RI). Conversely, only one British-English S explicitly mentioned the age factor, but with reference to the fact that it was *not fair to limit the H's freedom to hear the TV, assuming that her hearing was not good* (GEO.T, RI), therefore stressing more the idea of non-imposition. The fact that the British-English Ss appeared more preoccupied about W seems also confirmed by the British-English Hs' responses. Four out of five Hs commented about not wanting to "disturb someone else" (RS, RI), or "inconveniencing" them (BRA.W, RI) and about feeling "guilty" (CLA.J, RI) or "bad cos you're putting somebody out" (RAC.B, RI), considering "the other person has the right, to have a peaceful evening" (CLA.J, RI), and deemed an apology necessary. Conversely, the Italian Hs did not show such a concern for the Ss, but rather emphasised, as the Ss did, the importance of the age factor. One H mentioned that, although she felt guilty, "I'm elderly (..) you don't come to my house to say "oh you should turn it down".. I mean, I get it, maybe I do that, but still, you know, it just feels quite wrong" (GIN.P, RI), signalling that the difference in age influenced her perception of the S's behaviour, rated as impolite simply because of asking an elderly person. Similarly, another Italian H, even though considered the S polite, observed that "the request was a bit impolite", considering that "for the old woman it was a big thing" (STEF.C, RI), again emphasising the importance of the age factor in influencing her evaluation of the S's behaviour.

Overall, we can conclude that the Italian Ss' linguistic choices, particularly in terms of ATs, seemed more influenced by the age factor (D) and by the idea of respect connected to it (R), whereas the British-English Ss were more influenced by D in terms of unfamiliarity, yet much more by the concern for the imposition on the other's freewill (W).

7.3.2.2 Acquaintances High W

This sub-group includes two request scenarios involving a Professor, to borrow a book (RP6), rating ranging between 2-5, and for a lift (RP9), rating ranging between 3-5. Though again some inconsistencies in rating D (sometimes rated as Strangers), this did not seem to affect the requesters' linguistic choices.

7.3.2.2.1 Head Acts

Once more both sets mostly employed RPC (both 10 out of 11), though the Italian Ss often employed “can” forms, as in “**can I beg you a lift?**” (E13, RP9) (Tables 113-114), whereas the British-English Ss mostly used “would” forms, as in “**would you mind give me a lift?**” (E14, RP9), and no “can”, which suggests that the latter were overall more tentative.

Request Strategy type	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO.T - E+9	CLA.J - E+10	Total
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	10
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
											11

Table 113_ English speakers_Acquaintances High W_HAs

Request Strategy type	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STEP - E+3	SOFR - E+4	AMB - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALEG - E+7	STFC - E+8	ANNG - E+9	MARC - E+10	Total
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	10
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
											11

Table 114_ Italian speakers_Acquaintances High W_HAs

This outcome resembles Márquez Reiter’s (1997) findings for Spanish and English request realisation (see sections 6.3.3.1.1 and 6.3.3.1.2), where Spanish speakers were shown to prefer indicative forms that seek involvement, whereas English speakers were inclined to use more elaborated forms.

7.3.2.2.2 Internal Modification

Both sets mainly used HO and SO Request perspective, as in the previous examples, but in different proportions (Tables 115-116), i.e. the British-English Ss used more SO (8) and less HO (3), while the Italian Ss used them in the same proportion (5), which signals that the British-English Ss were more concerned about reducing the burden on the H, therefore about being more indirect.

	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO T - E+9	CLA J - E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	
Speaker Oriented	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	8	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PVO
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	11
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	4	
Interrogative	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	7	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Subjectivisers	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	
Conditional mood	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	6	
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	
Downtoners	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	4	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Understaters	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
>Please IM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM(-PVO)
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32

Table 115_English speakers_Acquaintances High W_IM

	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STEF P - E+3	SOF R - E+4	AMB M - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALEG - E+7	STEF C - E+8	ANN G - E+9	MAR C - E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	5	
Speaker Oriented	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	5	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PVO
Impersonal	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	5	
Interrogative	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	7	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Subjectivisers	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	
Conditional mood	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	4	
Downtoners	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Understaters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
>Please IM	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM(-PVO)
Intensifiers	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	26

Table 116_Italian speakers_Acquaintances High W_IM

For what concerns other modifiers, both groups had similar usage in terms of devices, yet the British-English Ss slightly more in numbers than their Italian counterparts (British-English Ss 32, Italian Ss 26). For Syntactic Downgraders, both consistently employed Interrogatives (7 each), which were often further mitigated by means of Conditional, as in “**would it be possible for me to borrow it?**” (E15, RP6), by the British-English Ss (6), and to a less extent by the Italian Ss (3). Both also used “If” clauses (British-English Ss 4, Italian Ss 5), a few times in combination with Subjectivisers (2 each), as in “**I was wondering if** you can give me a ride” (E16, RP9). For Other Downgraders, both used some CD (both 4), such as “do you mind”, and Downtoners (British-English Ss 4, Italian Ss 3), such as “by any chance”, while only the British-English Ss also used some Understaters (3), such as “just”. Overall, this indicates that, probably because of the higher perception of D and W, both sets of requesters employed many devices to convey tentativeness, although the fact that the British-English Ss used slightly more of them could indicate a higher concern for not sounding as if they were imposing on the H.

7.3.2.2.3 External Modification

Both sets of requesters also made similar use of EM in terms of devices and of numbers (both 32) (Tables 117-118).

External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	RS · E+1	ALAM · E+12	BRAW · E+3	OLLB · E+4	ELLB · E+5	RACB · E+6	ELIP · E+7	RMR · E+8	GEO.T · E+9	CLAJ · E+10	Total
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> Address terms	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Cost Minimizers	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
Disarmers	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	8
Establishing relationship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounders	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	14
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Please EM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweeteners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 117_English speakers_Acquaintances High W_EM

External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act	LB · E+1	GINP · E+2	STFP · E+3	SOF.R · E+4	AMBM · E+5	VALP · E+6	ALEG · E+7	STEF.C · E+8	ANN.G · E+9	MAR.C · E+10	Total
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> Address terms	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Checking on Availability	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cost Minimizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
Disarmers	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	8
Establishing relationship	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Grounders	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	12
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Please EM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweeteners	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Table 118_Italian speakers_Acquaintances High W_EM

Both groups consistently used Grounders (British-English Ss 14, Italian Ss 12), such as “I’ve just missed the last bus” (EI3, RP6), many Disarmers (both 8), such as “sorry to bother you” and some Alerters (British-English Ss 5, Italian Ss 4) and mainly ATs, such as “Professor”. However, the British-English Ss who rated the relationship as in-between Acquaintances and Strangers or even Strangers used Excuses, which seems to suggest a link between the higher perception of D and the use of such more tentative Alerters. They made little use of CMs (both 3), as in “I could get it back to you in about a week?” (EI6, RP6), plus the Italian Ss also used 3 ER, as in “I don’t know if you remember me from your lesson” (EI5, RP6), in an attempt to close the D gap.

Overall, this indicates that, in addressing an Acquaintance, such as a Professor, for a High W request, both sets of Ss mainly relied on devices that support the reasons for the requests and attempt to anticipate a possible refusal, considering the potential offence. However, the fact that only the Italian Ss used some ER could signify an inclination for positive politeness moves that activate H’s cooperativeness, and in turn that the Italian requesters felt less uncomfortable in making such requests. This seems confirmed by the RI, where only the British-

English Ss considered the request “weird” (ELI.P, RI, RP9), “unusual” (e.g. BRA.W, RI, RP6; ALA.M, RI, RP9) and even “daunting” (ELL.B, RI, RP6), or even mentioned that they “didn’t know if it was something [they] could ask” (BRA.W, RI, RP6). Conversely, the Italian Ss remarked more about the importance of *keeping the distance* (AMB.M, RI, RP9), and being “formal” (VAL.P, RI, RP9), though two also commented about feeling “embarrassed” (ANN.G, RI, RP6) or “uncomfortable” (MAR.C, RI, RP9) in having to ask.

Particularly, one British-English S even observed how, though she was polite in asking, considered the request for the book *inherently cheeky/impolite* (CLA.J, RI, RP6) and thus thought she had been perceived by the H between neutral and impolite, whereas the H rated her as very polite. Considering this divergence in evaluations, also this request scenario was object of the ES, to understand how the two sets of participants perceived it.

Both sets rated the W in between a small and big thing (British-English participants: small 38.24%, big 32.35%; Italian participants: big 40.63%, small 31.25%) and rated the S as (very) polite (52.94% of the British-English participants as polite; 59.38% of the Italian participants as very polite). Only one British-English participant mentioned the *unusualness* of the request (ES, ENG5, Q32B), whereas a high number of participants, from both sets, mentioned that the request was “legitimate” (ES, ITA19, Q32B), “standard” (ES, ITA31, Q32B), “simple” (ES, ITA16, Q32B), “appropriate” (ES, ENG33, Q32B), “normal” (ES, ENG20, Q32B) and “reasonable” (ES, ENG3/ENG7, Q32B), in line with their rating of W. Furthermore, both sets remarked that the Professor *should help out* (ES, ENG6/ENG10/ENG12/ENG13, Q32B; ES, ITA24/ITA26/ITA29, Q32B), which indicates awareness of the student’s right to ask. Yet, only the British-English participants (6) emphasised that the S had acknowledged that the request was cheeky (e.g. ES, ENG17/ENG19, Q33B) and even clearly said that “She was very courteous but it was a slightly cheeky request” (ES, ENG11, Q33B), therefore “the whole request is inherently impolite” (ES, ENG16, Q32B), in line with the British-English S’ own evaluation. This indicates that the British-English participants overall had a different perception of the rightness of the request, and as a consequence they were more influenced by the concern for W in comparison to their Italian counterparts, despite the fact that they predominantly rated the S’s linguistic choices as polite.

However, when making a request to the Professor, a different intercultural attitude toward W, in terms of different perceptions of own rights and obligations, and of what certain roles should entail, was detectable also in the Hs' responses, where the Italian Hs, particularly in the case of the request for a lift (RP9), were shown to be less bothered by this request than their British-English counterparts. Four out of five Italian Hs were fine with it, as they "would have offered him [the student] a lift anyway" (SOF.R, RI), as the H living close to the S wouldn't affect the latter much ("didn't like change a lot to me, was like living close to me, if I remember correctly so, wouldn't like change a lot, like it didn't affect me so much", STEF.C., RI). Conversely, three out of five British-English Hs perceived it as "quite a big deal" (BRA.W, RI) or as an "uncomfortable situation, because of the position" (CLA.J, RI; similarly RAC.B, RI), which explains why they refused the lift. This suggests that the Italian Hs were more inclined toward solidarity and helping the student, regardless of their role's obligations, than their British-English counterparts, who seemed more affected by the fact that such request was outside the scope of their relationship. It is worth recalling that this different attitude of the Hs toward this request, which reflects the results of the cross-cultural analysis (sections 6.2.2.2.1 and 6.2.2.3.1), could also be explicable in terms of dissimilar cross-cultural perceptions and understandings of the nature of the relationship and underpinning rights and obligations and related expectations, which means that such perceptions, though they can still be considered as socio-culturally influenced, do not necessarily mirror the interactants' personal perception of W.

To conclude, all this seems to suggest that the British-English speakers (both requesters and hearers) were slightly more conscious of W, probably because of their perceptions of the rights and obligations entailed within the student-Professor relationship, than their Italian counterparts, who appeared less troubled by these requests in terms of W, as more inclined toward solidarity (D), regardless of whether or not such requests fell within the rights and responsibilities connected to that relationship.

7.3.3 Strangers

This groups includes request scenarios rated as Low W average ratings between 1-2.5 (ratings range 1-3), Medium W, average ratings between 2.5-3.5 (ratings range 2-4) and High W average ratings between 3.5-5 (ratings range 3-5). The evaluations

provided for all three sub-groups reflected some divergence across participants, indicating some variability in the interpretations of the scenarios within each sub-group. Despite some inconsistency in rating W, and also D (particularly for the High W, where D was rated as Acquaintances by two British-English and two Italian Ss), this did not seem to affect Ss' linguistic choices much.

7.3.3.1 Strangers Low W

This sub-group includes requesting information from a stranger of same age (RP2) and an elderly person (RP5), rating ranging between 1-3.

7.3.3.1.1 Head Acts

Both sets of requesters used again almost only RPC (British-English Ss 9/10, Italian Ss 10/10) (Tables 119-120), mostly with “do you know” forms, which clearly indicates how they both preferred to use indirect strategies that check on the possibility of the act to be performed.

Request Strategy type	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO.T - E+9	CLA.J - E+10	Total
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
											10

Table 119_English speakers_Strangers Low W_HAs

Request Strategy type	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STEF.P - E+3	SOF.R - E+4	AMB.M - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALE.G - E+7	STEF.C - E+8	ANN.G - E+9	MAR.C - E+10	Total
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
											10

Table 120_Italian speakers_Strangers Low W_HAs

7.3.3.1.2 Internal Modification

Both sets of requesters made similar use of IM (British-English Ss 15 vs Italian Ss 18 IM), particularly by predominantly using HO Request perspective (both 9 out of 10), as in “do **you** know the way to the library?” (IE1, RP2), which is consistent with the format of the HAs used (Tables 121-122). This hints that the perception of the Low W made the two sets of requesters consider it not necessary to reduce the burden on the H with other request perspectives, regardless of the H's age.

	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO T - E+9	CLA J - E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	9	
Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PVO
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Interrogative	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	9	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Subjectivisers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Conditional mood	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Downtoners	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Understaters	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
>Please IM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM-PVO
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15

Table 121_English speakers_Strangers Low W_IM

	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STEF P - E+3	SOF R - E+4	AMBM - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALE G - E+7	STEF C - E+8	ANN G - E+9	MAR C - E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	
Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PVO
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	
Interrogative	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Subjectivisers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Conditional mood	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Downtoners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Understaters	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
>Please IM	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM-PVO
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18

Table 122_Italian speakers_Strangers Low W_IM

In regard to Syntactic Downgraders, both groups mainly used Interrogatives (both 9), as in the previous example, regardless of the age. Yet, they employed Conditionals twice when asking an elderly person, as in “**could** you possibly direct me?” (E17, RP5), which indicates a more indirect approach with them. In terms of Other Downgraders, the British-English Ss twice used Downtoners, such as “possibly”, whereas the Italian Ss used two “If” clauses, as in “I wonder **whether** you can help” (E10, RP5), and three instances of Please, as in “can you **please** explain me where exactly is?” (E19, RP2), two of which when addressing the elderly person, which suggests, again, more mitigation when addressing them.

To conclude, all this demonstrates that in addressing a Stranger for a Low W request both sets of requesters relied on HO interrogative moves that signalled some indirectness (by means of Conditional) and hesitation (by means of Downtoners and “If” clauses), regardless of the age factor, which influenced only to a certain extent, i.e. only some requesters were inclined to use more modifiers when

addressing the elderly. Other than this, the limited use of IM by both indicates that they did not consider this type of request as requiring too much mitigation.

7.3.3.1.3 External Modification

Both sets of requesters also employed same numbers of EM (both 22), and mostly Grounders (British-English Ss 6, Italian Ss 7), as in “I’m a bit lost” (EI2, RP5), and Alerters (British-English Ss 7, Italian Ss 6), mainly Excuses and/or ATs, particularly when addressing an elderly person, such as “excuse me Madame” (EI5, RP5; ELI.P, EI7, RP5) (Tables 123-124), which indicates that the age factor influenced the Ss linguistic choices of EM.

	RS · E+1	ALAM · E+2	BRAW · E+3	OLLB · E+4	ELLB · E+5	RACB · E+6	ELIP · E+7	RMR · E+8	GEO T · E+9	CLA J · E+10	Total
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act											
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> Address terms	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
> excuse me_sorry	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	4
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost Minimizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disarmers	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	8
Establishing relationship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounders	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	6
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Please EM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweeteners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
											22

Table 123_English speakers_Strangers Low W_EM

	LB · E+1	GINP · E+2	STEF P · E+3	SOF R · E+4	AMBM · E+5	VALP · E+6	ALE G · E+7	STEF C · E+8	ANN G · E+9	MAR C · E+10	Total
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act											
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> Address terms	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	4
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost Minimizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disarmers	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Establishing relationship	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Grounders	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	7
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Please EM	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweeteners	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
											22

Table 124_Italian speakers_Strangers Low W_EM

The British-English Ss used many Disarmers (8), such as “sorry to bother you”, whereas the Italian Ss used them only twice, and rather used more Please (3, against British-English one use), primarily when addressing an elderly stranger, and GP (3), such as “can I ask you your help please?” (EI9, RP2), when addressing a stranger of same age.

Overall, this suggests that when addressing a Stranger for a Low W request both sets of Ss relied on devices to catch the H’s attention (Excuses) and give reasons for the requests (Grounders). However, the fact that the British-English Ss employed many more Disarmers that acknowledge disturbance (e.g. “sorry to bother you/to interrupt”) than their Italian counterparts signals a higher concern for the potential offence, thus for the imposition, even though low, probably because of the higher

D. Conversely, the fact that the Italian Ss preferred instead to use GP and Please shows a higher inclination for activating the H's cooperation, alongside softening the request, i.e. to be more influenced by the idea of solidarity (D), also considering the Low W. This seems corroborated by the RI, where only the British-English requesters (6 out of 9) mentioned that, when addressing the stranger of same age (RP2), they "didn't know if it was going to be a big thing if he [the H] was in a hurry" (BRA.W, RI), so that "it might have been quite an imposition if they didn't want to say" (ELL.B, RI), that they did not "want them to either be scared off or.. feel intimidated" (RAC.B, RI), showing more awareness for the possible imposition and "for disturbing them" (CLA.J, RI). Even when addressing the elderly stranger (RP5), the focus was more on being "apologetic for imposing on [their] time" (ELI.P, RI), not wanting "to impose on her too much" (RMR, RI), hence on W, rather than on D. Conversely, the Italian Ss never acknowledged concern for the possible imposition, but rather asked a stranger of the same age (RP2) in a "straightforward" (SOF.R, RI) or "very direct" way (ANN.G., RI) and showed concern only in terms of paying respect to the elderly person (RP5). In this case they commented about being "very polite, because I knew that I was approaching an elderly person" (LB, RI), about the "need to use a formal language", because of the "need to pay attention to the language I use speaking, by saying "Madame" or so" (AMB.M, RI), as "you show respect to other seniors, more than to other strangers" (STEF.P, RI), mainly achieved by using ATs and Please.

Finally, it is noteworthy how this pattern of the Italian Ss relying often on the softener "please", either as IM or EM, as a means to be polite, keeps recurring. This seems to validate the conclusion about the Italian Ss drawing on stereotyped assumptions on what is polite in English or, in other words, relying more on (stereo)typical politeness forms, rather than using other ways to achieve politeness, as shown by the British-English requesters.

7.3.3.2 Strangers Medium W

This sub-group includes only one request scenario, asking a stranger for something to note some details down (RP13), rating ranging between 2-4, which, though included in the Medium W group because of the overall average requesters' rating of 2.7, was rated by the Italian requesters as Low W (i.e. average rating of 2.2). This difference in ratings did not lead to striking divergences in the two sets of

requesters' choices, yet it was only reflected in the different use of IM, where the British-English Ss employed many more devices than the Italian Ss.

7.3.3.2.1 Head Acts

Both sets of requesters only employed RPC (6 both), such as “do you have a pen?” (EI9) (Tables 125-126), showing once more they relied on devices that allowed them to check on H's possibility/willingness to comply.

Request Strategy type	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO T - E+9	CLAJ - E+10	Total
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	6
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 125_English speakers_Strangers Medium W_HAs

Request Strategy type	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STFP - E+3	SOF R - E+4	AMBM - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALEG - E+7	STFC - E+8	ANN G - E+9	MAR C - E+10	Total
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	6
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 126_Italian speakers_Strangers Medium W_HAs

7.3.3.2.2 Internal Modification

They both mainly employed HO Request perspective (both 4), as in the previous example, followed by some use of SO (British-English Ss 3, Italian Ss 2), as in “can I borrow your pencil?” (EI9) (Tables 127-128), which indicates that the higher perception of W sometimes led the requesters to downplay the imposition on the H by means of SO.

Internal Modification	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO T - E+9	CLAJ - E+10	Total
Request perspective (PVO)											
Hearer Oriented	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	4
Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	3
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Downgraders											
Syntactic Downgraders											
Embedded 'If' clause	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Interrogative	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	5
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subjectivisers	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Conditional mood	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	3
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other Downgraders											
Consultative Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Downtoners	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Hedges	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5
Understaters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>Please IM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Upgraders											
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 127_English speakers_Strangers Medium W_IM

	LB · E+1	GINP · E+2	STEF P · E+3	SOF R · E+4	AMB M · E+5	VAL P · E+6	ALE G · E+7	STEF C · E+8	ANN G · E+9	MARC · E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	4	
Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PVO
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Interrogative	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	6	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Subjectivisers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Conditional mood	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Downtoners	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	5	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Understaters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
>Please IM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM-PVO
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13

Table 128_Italian speakers_Strangers Medium W_IM

In regard to Syntactic Downgraders, both mainly used Interrogatives (British-English Ss 5, Italian Ss 6), mostly further downgraded by the British-English Ss with Conditionals (3), which was predominantly used in conjunction with SO, as in **“Could I just borrow that?”** (EI10, RP13), which suggests that the two devices were often combined together by the British-English Ss to emphasise the indirectness (by reducing the perceived burden plus using tentativeness). Half the times the British-English Ss employed **“If”** clauses and Subjectiviser (2 each), as in **“I was wondering if you had ehm like a pen”** (EI10), which also contains an example of the only PT used. For what concerns Other Downgraders, while the British-English Ss used many Hedges (5), such as **“like”**, though employed only by two requesters (3 by one, 2 by another one), to avoid specification, the Italian Ss mainly employed Downtoners (5), such as **“maybe”**, to signal possibility of non-compliance, employed only twice by their British-English counterparts.

Overall, this denotes that the British-English Ss in addressing the Stranger for a Medium W request were more ambiguous and tentative in their approach, which explains why they employed many more modifiers than their Italian counterparts (i.e. British-English Ss 22, Italian Ss 13). Furthermore, this difference in usage seems to reflect the cross-cultural difference in rating of W, i.e. the lesser use of modifiers by the Italian Ss is explicable considering that they rated such request’s W as Low, rather than Medium, which indicates that the lesser use of modifiers is proportionally related to the lower perception of W. In turn, this diverse perception of W clearly shows that the British-English Ss were more concerned about the possible imposition (i.e. W) on the H than their Italian counterparts, and this is confirmed by the RI. Only the British-English requesters acknowledged that the request **“could be an inconvenience”** (BRA.W, RI) for the H, as **“you’re stopping**

them” (RAC.B, RI) and had them “going out of [their] way” (ALA.M, RI), which led the requesters to be “apologetic” (BRA.W, RI) or even “incredibly apologetic” (CLA.J, RI). Conversely, the Italian Ss only mentioned that talking to a stranger (i.e. D) affected their linguistic behaviour, as they “tried to be very polite” (LB, RI; ALE.G, RI) and made sure they “explained the whole situation” (SOF.R, RI; similarly, STEF.C.), without any reference to the possible inconvenience.

7.3.3.2.3 External Modification

Both sets made same usage of EM (British-English Ss 13, Italian Ss 15). They mostly used Grounders (British-English Ss 6, Italian Ss 4), as in “**I wanted to, write down the .. the details of the apartment, letting**” (E11), and Alerters (both 5), and mostly “Excuses”, alongside some Disarmers (British-English Ss 2, Italian Ss 3), such as “**sorry to stop you like this**” (E13) (Tables 129-130).

	RS · E+1	ALAM · E+12	BRAW · E+3	OLLB · E+4	ELLB · E+5	RACB · E+6	ELIP · E+7	RMR · E+8	GEO T · E+9	CLAJ · E+10	Total
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act											
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> Address terms	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
> excuse me_sorry	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	4
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost Minimizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disarmers	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Establishing relationship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounders	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	6
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Please EM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweeteners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

13

Table 129_English speakers_Strangers Medium W_EM

	LB · E+1	GINP · E+2	STEF P · E+3	SOF R · E+4	AMB M · E+5	VALP · E+6	ALE G · E+7	STEF C · E+8	ANN G · E+9	MAR C · E+10	Total
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act											
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
> Address terms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
> excuse me_sorry+AT	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost Minimizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disarmers	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3
Establishing relationship	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Grounders	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Please EM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweeteners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

15

Table 130_Italian speakers_Strangers Medium W_EM

Overall, this shows that to address a Stranger for a Medium W request both sets of requesters mainly relied on devices that allowed them to catch the H’s attention and give reasons for their requests, in line with the type of request, and only sometimes considered it necessary to also use Disarmers to avoid a possible refusal to cooperate from the H.

7.3.3.3 Strangers High W

This sub-group includes two request scenarios, for a cigarette (RP8), rating ranging between 3-4, and for help from the new neighbour (RP11), rating ranging between 3-5.

7.3.3.3.1 Head Acts

Once more both sets mostly employed RPC (British-English Ss 9/11, Italian Ss 11/11), as in “do you by any chance have a spare cigarette?” (E15, RP8) (Tables 131-132), showing again they prefer devices that check on H’s availability/possibility to comply.

	RS · E+1	ALAM · E+1-2	BRAW · E+3	DLLB · E+4	ELLB · E+5	RACB · E+6	ELIP · E+7	RMR · E+8	GEO.T · E+9	CLA.J · E+10	Total
Request Strategy type											
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	9
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
											11

Table 131_English speakers_Strangers High W_HAs

	LB · E+1	GINP · E+2	STFP · E+3	SOF R · E+4	AMB M · E+5	VALP · E+6	ALE G · E+7	STEF C · E+8	ANN G · E+9	MAR C · E+10	Total
Request Strategy type											
1 Mood derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Explicit performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Locution derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Scope stating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Language specific suggestory formulae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	11
8 Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
											11

Table 132_Italian speakers_Strangers High W_HAs

7.3.3.3.2 Internal Modification

Both groups predominantly employed HO Request perspective (British-English Ss 7, Italian Ss 9), as in the previous example, followed by some use of SO, and especially by the British-English Ss (i.e. 4, vs Italian Ss 2), as in “if I could lend something off you” (E16, RP8) (Tables 133-134). This again, as observed for the Medium W requests, suggests that the higher perception of W led, particularly the British-English Ss, to rely more on perspectives that reduce the imposition on the H.

	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	EUP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO T - E+9	CLA J - E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	0	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	7	
Speaker Oriented	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	4	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PVO
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Embedded 'If' clause	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	6	
Interrogative	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	5	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Subjectivisers	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	
Conditional mood	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	6	
Past Tense	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	
Downtoners	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	5	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	
Understaters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
>Please IM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM-PVO
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	38

Table 133_English speakers_Strangers High W_IM

	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STEF P - E+3	SOF R - E+4	AMB M - E+5	VALP - E+6	ALEG - E+7	STEF C - E+8	ANN G - E+9	MAR C - E+10	Total	
Internal Modification												
Request perspective (PVO)												
Hearer Oriented	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	9	
Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	
Hearer and Speaker Oriented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PVO
Impersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Downgraders												
Syntactic Downgraders												
Courtesy Pronoun	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Embedded 'If' clause	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	
Interrogative	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	10	
Negation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Subjectiviser	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	
Conditional mood	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Downgraders												
Consultative Devices	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	5	
Downtoner	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Hedges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Understaters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Softeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
> Please IM	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Upgraders												
Expletives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IM-PVO
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27

Table 134_Italian speakers_Strangers High W_IM

For Syntactic Downgraders, both sets consistently used Interrogatives, though the Italian Ss double as much (i.e. 10) compared to their British-English counterparts (i.e. 5), often further downgraded by Conditional (British-English Ss 6, Italian Ss 4), as in **“could you please give me a lift to take the furniture here?”** (EI5, RP11). However, the lesser use of Interrogatives by the British-English Ss was compensated by, and it is explicable considering, the higher use of other devices, such as “If” clauses (6), Subjectivisers and PT (4 each), often combined together, as in **“I just wondered if you could help me transport some things”** (EI4, RP11), whose structures, as already observed, preclude the use of interrogative forms. Conversely, these structures were employed by the Italian Ss to a much less extent, since they used “If” clauses and Subjectivisers only twice (2 each) and made no use of PT. In terms of Other Downgraders, there were some differences in usage, since the British-English Ss used mainly Downtoners (5), such as “maybe” or “by any chance”, and little CD, such as “is that okay?”, Hedges, such as “like” and

Understaters, such as “just” (2 each), whereas the Italian Ss used more CD (5) and few Downtoners and Please (2 each).

Overall, this higher use of IM by the British-English requesters (i.e. British-English Ss 38, Italian Ss 27) could be explainable considering the diverse usage made by the two sets and the reasons behind it. The British-English Ss’ higher use of mitigation seems relatable to their higher inclination toward downgrading their requests by means of devices that signal possibility of non-compliance (e.g. Downtoners) and overall reduce the perceived imposition (e.g. Understaters), which suggests they were more influenced by W. Conversely, the Italian Ss’ preference for moves that activate H’s cooperation (e.g. CD) signals that they, in an attempt to fill the D gap, were more influenced by this variable, and thus less worried about the W.

This seems confirmed by the RI, where the British-English Ss were more conscious, especially when asking the new neighbour for help (RP11), about *cushioning* the request “and allow for her to be able to say “no”” (ELI.P, RI), considering they were asking the H “to get out of her way” (ALA.M, RI) and even about offering a redress (RMR. RI; GEO.T, RI), to reduce the W. Conversely, in asking the new neighbour (RP11) the Italian Ss seemed more influenced by D and less worried about W. Indeed, the only Italian S who acknowledged that with this request “you’re not only asking for a car, you’re asking for time, so the other person has to drive, to be with you, and so one beer is not enough” (STEF.P, RI), did not seem to show he was worried about the possible imposition, but rather to wanting to make sure that he would have repaid the H’s back properly, showing he cared about building a relationship with the new neighbour. This explains why, in the roleplay, he offered to buy the H three beers (E13). Another Italian S mentioned to address the H in an informal and easy way to fill the D gap, as in “without using too much, you know, formality in my request .. so I didn’t use maybe too many “please” and, you know, I was really, polite but, you know, straightforward” (VAL.P, RI). However, it is noteworthy how VAL.P’s British-English counterpart perceived the Italian S’s request as impolite, because “it was just straight to the point, no apology or anything, (..) cos she seemed to think, almost expect that this would happen, so I think, just the way she phrased it, she didn’t seem to understand what a big thing it was” (RAC.B, RI). Considering such divergent evaluations, also this request scenario was included in the ES, to tease out participants’ perceptions. Both sets rated the S mostly as polite (British-English participants 38.24%, Italian participants

38.50%), followed by neither polite nor impolite (British-English participants 20.59%, Italian participants 34.38%). Yet, remarkably, 18.75% of the Italian participants also rated the S as impolite, while 17.65% of the British-English participants rated her as very polite. Nevertheless, many British-English participants, apart from observing that she did not say “please” (5, e.g. ES, ENG3, Q18B), also negatively evaluated the S, such as being *pushy* (ES, ENG33, Q18B), *expecting a lot* (ES, ENG4, Q18B), *cheeky* (ES, ENG8 Q18B), *not acknowledging the inconvenience* (ES, ENG16/ENG19, Q18B) and *not giving options to decline* (ES, ENG7, Q18B). They also observed how “the act of thanking is uttered quite quickly, as if she felt that she had a right to ask the favour” (ES, ENG13, Q18B) and that the S “was trying to be polite, but the request was still very direct. I assume this is just an intercultural miscommunication” (ES, ENG15, Q18B), which could explain why the Italian S perceived herself as polite whereas the British-English H rated her as impolite. On the other side, also the Italian participants observed about the lack of using “please” (3, e.g. ES, ITA7, Q18B), *taking the favour for granted* (ES, ITA24/ITA26, Q18B), that the S was *too centred to herself* (ES, ITA23, Q18B) and that she “could have been more humble” (ES, ITA14, Q18B). Still, they acknowledged five times that she had *not been too much pushy* (ES, ITA3, Q18B) or *invasive* (ES, ITA9, Q18B), nor that she *pretended* (ES, ITA12/ITA13, Q18B) or *forced it* (ES, ITA28, Q18B), showing a less negative evaluation of the S’s behaviour, more in line with the S’s own perception of herself.

Overall, all this suggests that the British-English speakers were more driven by the idea of imposition (W) than their Italian counterparts, echoing the cross-cultural results (section 6.5), where the Italian participants were shown to be more inclined toward closing the D gap.

However, in asking for a cigarette (RP8), the British cultural perspective associated with its high cost (which is relatable to W) seemed to have influenced both sets of groups. As recognised by two British-English Ss (“because I know cigarettes are expensive things”, ELL.B, RI; “they aren’t cheap”, RAC.B, RI) and one Italian S (“the thing I asked can be perceived as big (laugh), especially in this country,” ALE.G, RI.), cigarettes in the UK are expensive, which could explain why both sets did not feel at ease with this request. The Italian Ss mentioned that they were “extremely sorry to having to ask them” (SOF.R, RI) and “not super at ease in asking” (ALE.G, RI), and

the British-English Ss commented that “it wasn’t, the easiest of requests” (RAC.B, RI) and that “I don’t feel like it’s an easy thing to ask for, so it would have made me.. incredibly apologetic, over explaining my situation, thanking them endlessly” (CLA.J, RI). Moreover, also two Hs from both sets commented that “here cigarettes cost a lot, and so... I didn’t want to give her a cigarette” (VAL.P, RI), thus “it’s not the type of thing everyone would want to share” (OLL.B, RI), and the *expensiveness* of cigarettes in the UK was also acknowledged by both sets of participants in the ES (British-English 4, e.g. ES, ENG13/ENG18, Q12B; Italians 5, e.g. ES, ITA14/ITA20, Q12B).

Yet, in one case the Italian H’s own cultural perspective on this request appeared to have influenced his response. He remarked that “in Italy it works that if you ask for a cigarette, even if you are a stranger, you just help each other, (..) you are ehm, neither polite nor impolite with people that ask you for cigarette so.. I would say that, it would not influence my linguistic choice because, even if you are a stranger I would be friendly” (STEF.P, RI), showing to be oriented toward solidarity, therefore to be more influenced by D than W. This approach seems confirmed by the ES, where two Italian participants remarked that asking for a cigarette is “quite a normal thing in Italy less so in UK” (ES, ITA23, Q12B), because cigarettes cost much less there, that is why “I find in Italy we ask cigarettes to friends and strangers more easily” (ES, ITA29, Q12B).

Finally, on one occasion there was a mismatch of evaluations between the Italian S, who rated herself polite in asking, yet “because she was a stranger and I said too much things, I, it could have been perceived also like not polite”, because she was “invading too much the space of a stranger” (STEF.C, RI), and the British-English H who, despite the request for her last cigarette, rated the S between polite and very polite “because she came at me and was so like, so much out of politeness” (RMR, RI). Therefore, this roleplay was also included in the ES, to understand how outsider participants rated this request.

The British-English participants rated the S mostly polite (38.24%), followed by neither polite nor impolite (29.41%), whereas the Italian participants rated her mostly neither polite nor impolite (38.71%), followed by a high number of impolite ratings (29.03%). Additionally, though both sets often commented about the S being *pushy* (both 6, e.g. ENG6/ENG18, Q13B and ITA23/ITA29, Q13B), she was more harshly evaluated by the Italian participants, who also labelled her as *selfish*

twice (ES, ITA7/ITA13, Q13B), alongside *rude* three times (e.g. ES, ITA30, Q13B), *too direct* (ES, ITA7/ITA17, Q13B), *cheeky* (ES, ITA15, Q13B), *intrusive* (ES, ITA10, Q13B), *not giving any choice* (ES, ITA17, Q13B) and even *shameless* (ES, ITA31, Q13B). Conversely, the British-English participants, apart from mentioning that she did not use “please” (6) (e.g. ES, ENG2/ENG3, Q13B), defined her a few times as *selfish* (ES, ENG4, Q13B), *blunt/abrupt/direct* (ES, ENG12/ENG16/ENG17, Q13B) or *inappropriate* (ES, ENG33, Q13B), and also acknowledged that she said “thank you” (5) (e.g. ES, ENG2/ENG15, Q13B) and that she apologised (4) (e.g. ES, ENG5/ENG31, Q13B), which can explain why they rated the S more positively than their Italian counterparts. As these results seem to echo the Italian S and British-English H’ evaluations of the S’s linguistic behaviour, we could venture to argue that such different perceptions are due to the fact that in this case the Italian participants looked more at the overall behaviour and request in itself, whereas the British-English participants looked more at the politeness of the language employed by the S. In other words, the Italian participants appeared to rate the S more negatively because of her requesting the H’s last cigarette, which could be interpreted as signalling a lack of solidarity with the H (hence being influenced by the importance given to D), whereas the British-English participants appeared to rate the S less negatively because of the polite linguistic choices she made, despite it being the last cigarette, showing they were more influenced by the importance given to mitigating the imposition (i.e. W).

7.3.3.3.3 External Modification

Both sets made similar usage of EM in number (British-English Ss 38, Italian Ss 34). Both consistently used Grounders (British-English Ss 15, Italian Ss 13), as in “**I left my cigarette at home**” (EI1, RP8), and many Disarmers (British-English Ss 7, Italian Ss 6) (Tables 135-136), such as “sorry to bother you”, particularly when stopping the stranger to ask for a cigarette, in an attempt to avoid a possible refusal.

	RS - E+1	ALAM - E+2	BRAW - E+3	OLLB - E+4	ELLB - E+5	RACB - E+6	ELIP - E+7	RMR - E+8	GEO T - E+9	CLAJ - E+10	Total
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act											
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
> Address terms	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
> excuse me_sorry	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Checking on Availability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost Minimizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Disarmers	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	7
Establishing relationship	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounders	1	2	1	0	1	1	2	4	1	2	15
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	5
Please EM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweeteners	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

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Table 135_English speakers_Strangers High W_EM

	LB - E+1	GINP - E+2	STEF P - E+3	SOF R - E+4	AMBM - E+5	VAL P - E+6	ALE G - E+7	STEF C - E+8	ANN G - E+9	MARC - E+10	Total
External Modification-Adjunction to Head Act											
Alerters											
> Attention getters	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
> Address terms	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
> excuse me_sorry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
> excuse me_sorry+AT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Checking on Availability	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cost Minimizer	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Disarmer	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	6
establishing relationship	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	6
Getting a precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounder	1	2	1	2	1	2	0	0	2	2	13
Making restitutions-Offering awards	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Please EM	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Requestive Interjections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweetener	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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Table 136_Italian speakers_Strangers High W_EM

However, they made some differing usage of other devices. The British-English Ss also used many Alerters (6), and mainly Excuses, whereas the Italian Ss used only 3 of them, and mainly AGs, such as “hey”. The British-English speakers used many MR (5), such as “**I can, come back same time tomorrow and sort you out**” (EI3, RP8) and 3 ER in addressing the new neighbour, such as “**I’ve just moved in next door**” (EI2, RP11), while the Italian speakers used only 1 MR, but many ER (6), alongside Please (2) and CMs (2), such as “is it possible, could you help us with the car, **in case I am not bothering you too much?**” (EI3, RP11).

This different use corroborates the previous conclusions. That is, the British-English requesters using more Excuses and MR indicates that they were more worried about the possible imposition (W) on the strangers, but also about fairness, i.e. about keeping the balance between costs and benefits. Conversely, the Italian requesters employing more AGs and ER signals that they gave more importance to D and preferred positive politeness devices that activate H’s solidarity. This interpretation, which recalls the cross-cultural findings (section 6.2.2.2.3), seems confirmed by the ES, since many British-English participants (6/33) commented that asking the new neighbour for help involved something that was *time consuming*, *costs money* (e.g. ES, ENG15/28/30, Q17B) and even represents “personal space invasion” (ES, ENG21, Q17B). Conversely, only 3 Italian participants mentioned the time factor, plus only one specifically referred to the cost of driving (ES, ITA15,

Q17B), whereas a few highlighted that “it's normal for me asking/giving favour to someone that need help” (ES, ITA3, Q17B), seeming more open to ask or help a new neighbour, hence more influenced by the idea of solidarity (D).

7.4 Conclusions

This chapter has analysed the outcome of the intercultural roleplays, by distinguishing between the British-English and the Italian requesters, to tease out whether the two sets of Ss employed same or different devices and whether and how their choices were influenced by their culturally-embedded perceptions and importance attached to D and W and related rights/obligations. The analysis and discussion of the data were also supported by the comments of these same participants, as provided with their RI, alongside the comments provided in the ES by two other sets of British-English and Italian participants, who evaluated certain selected scenarios in terms of D, W and politeness.

The data has shown that there were not striking divergences between the British-English and the Italian Ss' linguistic choices. From both a general and group point of view, both sets of requesters always predominantly used the same HA strategy, i.e. RPC, showing they favoured indirect moves that check on H's availability, willingness or possibility to comply with the request, regardless of D and W. In terms of modifiers, both mostly employed HO Request perspective, followed by some use of SO to reduce the imposition, and this higher use was often linked to the higher perception of W. The requests were mostly structured with Interrogatives, often downgraded by means of Conditional (and particularly by the British-English Ss) and supported by Grounders, Alerters and, whenever the W was perceived as High with Acquaintances and Strangers, Disarmers.

Nevertheless, different intercultural patterns were sometimes detected in regard to the use of certain modifiers. The British-English Ss were shown to rely more on IM, particularly with Friends and Strangers, and on modifiers that overall showed tentativeness, whereas the Italian Ss were more inclined to use EM, especially with Friends and Acquaintances, and modifiers that overall sought cooperativeness. Specifically, the British-English Ss tended to use more negative politeness devices such as Downtoners, “If” clauses, Subjectivisers and Conditionals, which focus on reducing the possible imposition on the H by signalling uncertainty, showing more concern for the W. Conversely, the Italian Ss tended to use more positive politeness

devices, such as GP or ER to attempt closing the D gap and/or Please and CA directed at activating H's cooperation, showing they gave more importance to D. In support of this it is notable that even when they used the same devices, the two sets employed them in different contexts and with different functions. For instance, the British-English Ss used more Disarmers, such as "sorry to bother you", when addressing a Stranger even for a Low W request, which seem used as negative politeness moves to acknowledge the offence, while the Italian Ss used more Disarmers such as "I'm sorry" when addressing Friends, either for Low or High W requests, which instead seem used to positively disarm the familiar H. This study has thus shown that certain linguistic devices, such as Disarmers, can be used with different functions and for different reasons. This reflects Márquez Reiter's (2008) findings that the use of apologies as moves employed to remedy an offence have a double function, since they can be both face-redressive in regard to the hearers' negative face and face-supportive in regard to the speakers' positive face, as they depict a cooperative image of the speaker. Indeed, we can argue that these devices can be employed, as in this study, also to support and show cooperation toward the hearer. Hence, this study has shown the importance, when conducting contrastive pragmatics studies, of unpacking the possible multifunctionality of modifiers, such as Disarmers, which can be employed with different functions and to achieve different interactional goals.

In other words, as it was also confirmed by their RI, the British-English requesters appeared overall to be more influenced by W, regardless of D, and were more tentative with their recipients, and more concerned about not sounding as if they were imposing or invading the other's space, in comparison to their Italian counterparts who, conversely, seemed generally more influenced by D, regardless of W, by being more inclined to use devices that activate H's solidarity/understanding and/or close the D gap.

From all this we can conclude that also the intercultural data has shown that the main difference between the Italian and the British-English Ss lies on the fact that the former – in contrast to the latter- were more concerned about creating affiliation, rather than about the idea of non-imposition, which reflected in their linguistic choices, and which mirrors the cross-cultural findings (chapter 6). This study has therefore revealed differences in understandings of polite behaviour between the British-English and the Italian lingua-cultures, and has shown that in

the Italian lingua-culture polite behaviour is not simply a matter of avoiding imposition. The study therefore adds to studies of other languages that have highlighted that there may be other factors affecting linguistic politeness, such as Bravo's (2017) and Hernández Flores's (1999) for Spanish, which have shown that they are more focused on creating affiliation.

Nevertheless, the RI data has also shown an opposite phenomenon, i.e. how some Italian speakers, through a process of "intercultural mediation" (Liddicoat, 2014; McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016), critically interpreted the other (L2) culture's perspective in meaning making and consciously adopted what they considered the appropriate linguistic means (e.g. the use of politeness markers, such as "please") to request something from a British-English speaker. As they would have addressed an Italian-speaking H in a different and more direct way, this shows they were influenced by their awareness of, or beliefs about, British-English speakers' different linguistic preferences. The Italian Ss' use of stereotyped assumptions on what is (believed to be) polite in English also indicates two things. Firstly, it tells something about the nature of the linguistic repertoire the Italian speakers have been provided with when learning English as L2. Drawing on Sewell's (1999) idea of a language as a set of choices of symbolic forms, we can argue that the Italian speakers' L2 pragmatic repertoire seems to consist of stereotyped emblematic expressions which affected their standardised performances. Secondly, drawing on the British-English Ss' linguistic choices in those same scenarios, it shows how stereotyped assumptions about polite behaviour in a certain language are not necessarily mirrored by actual performances, particularly by the L1 speakers of that language.

Furthermore, the outcome of the ES has highlighted some discrepancies between how people think about appropriate behaviour and its actual enactment. We have seen how the Italian participants, and even more the British-English participants in the ES, gave importance to the use of certain "conventionally-polite" words, such as "please", in evaluating the appropriateness of linguistic behaviour, whereas in fact such devices were not used that much, and mostly only by the Italian requesters, during the roleplays. This has brought to light another interesting phenomenon, which is linked to the previous one just mentioned. That is, how stereotyped assumptions about what is linguistically polite can affect how people think, but not necessarily how they behave, and that the influence of such

stereotypes can be stronger in the case of L2 speakers (i.e., in this case, the Italian speakers), who have the knowledge of those stereotypes without possibly enough L2 pragmatic competence necessary to identify, in context, what other means can be successfully employed to achieve politeness. This could explain why, if we compare the linguistic choices of the Italian Ss in the intercultural roleplays with those of the Italian requesters of the intracultural roleplays in performing the same requests, we can observe that overall the choices of the Italian Ss in the intercultural roleplays did not reflect pragmatic transfer from their L1 in terms of speech act constructions, but rather reflected what they thought was the “English way” to make requests. Indeed, the Italian intracultural data (chapter 4) showed more variety of usage in terms of HAs, whereas the Italian intercultural data is characterised by an overwhelming use of RPC and less variety of usage, more in tune with the British-English Ss’ patterns. Certain structures, such as “would you mind” or “I was wondering if”, which are not present/used in the Italian language and intracultural data, were frequently used by the Italian Ss in the intercultural roleplays, once again mirroring the British-English Ss’ linguistic preferences. All this suggests that the Italian participants in the intercultural roleplays tended to follow some L2 linguistic conventions in addressing their British-English counterparts in English, particularly for what concerns the selection of the main speech act structures, and confirms the previous argument about L2 speakers engaging in intercultural mediation.

Yet, the intercultural differences detected in the use of mitigation still reflect each group’s own cultural-related values underpinning their different linguistic choices, which led the British-English Ss to favour indirect moves that reduce the perceived imposition of the request (e.g. Downtoners or Understaters) and the Italian Ss instead to prefer moves that seek for solidarity or affiliation (e.g. ER or ATs). This study therefore adds to Ogiermann’s (2009b) work, who observed that, in cross-comparing Polish, Russian, German and English, more cross-cultural differences could be expected in mitigating the levels of (in)directness employed in interaction, i.e. the illocutionary force of the HA, since the type of modifiers employed depends on what the S’s focus is, i.e. reducing the imposition (e.g. by means of Downtoners) or activating the H’s companionship (e.g. by means of ER). This implies that, since the choice of mitigation appears more dependent on what the speaker wants to achieve (i.e. seeking affiliation or not sounding as if imposing), it is more likely to

be influenced by the L1 culture's underpinning values and interactional goals, and therefore affect the L2 speakers' linguistic choices in intercultural interactions in L2. Drawing on Fernández Amaya (2008, 14), who remarked how an Algerian man, although he "spoke in English, he evaluated the behaviour of the other interactants according to his own cultural and communicative norms", we could observe the same pattern in the Italian Ss. That is, though speaking in their L2, and aware of the different L2 linguistic forms (available and preferable), they still perceived those requesting behaviours according to their own L1 culture and communicative norms, and performed accordingly, by choosing moves/modifiers that overall attuned with their values-based interactional goals.

This study has also shown that the use of a combined approach that employs performance and reflective data allows for the investigation of different nuances associated with language use and, most importantly, with the reasons behind strategy choices.

To conclude, although once again the small sample cannot allow for any generalisation, we can observe that the fact that the intercultural data has shown intercultural differences only in the use of mitigation, which seems reflecting underpinning socio-culturally-embedded values, and the fact that such results mirror the differences detected between the two groups in the cross-cultural analysis, appear to corroborate the overall findings. That is, that the British-English Ss were shown to be more influenced by W, regardless of D, while the Italian Ss were shown to be overall more influenced by D, regardless of W, even though they showed they were also influenced, though to a lesser extent, by their (stereotypical) awareness of the L2 communicative strategies and preferences.

Chapter 8 Conclusions

This thesis has investigated request realisation strategies of Italian and British-English speakers, and what sociopragmatic factors and underlying reasons influence their linguistic choices, on three different levels. RQ1 addressed it from an intracultural perspective, RQ2 addressed it from a cross-cultural perspective, and RQ3 addressed it from an intercultural perspective. Hence this concluding chapter will be divided into six sections: the first three sections addressing each RQ, a following section on the contribution and implications of this research, a section on the limitations and a closing section with final remarks.

8.1 Research Question 1: What are the main request realisation strategies used by British-English and Italian speakers? (1.a) Are they influenced by D and/or W? (1.b) How speakers understand and apply these factors when realising requests?

In addressing RQ1 intracultural dyadic roleplays and individual follow-up retrospective interviews were conducted with two sets of participants, Italian speakers and British-English speakers. The Italian intracultural data has shown that the Italian speakers preferred more direct strategies in addressing a close person for Low W requests, particularly RPC forms that signal certainty of compliance, but more indirect request strategies (e.g. SF) and more mitigated forms (e.g. "If" clauses, Conditional and Negation) that index not taking compliance for granted, whenever they perceived the W as higher or when addressing unfamiliar people. They were shown to strongly rely on the use of HO in association with pronoun choice to address their recipient, by either using the familiar 'tu' with friends or the formal 'lei' with acquaintances or strangers, and to generally rely more on EM, particularly Grounders and ATs, that activate H's solidarity, be the recipient a familiar person or not. To address RQ1a, all this suggests that their linguistic choices were more influenced by D, reflecting an inclination for positive politeness moves that activate H's understanding and cooperation, and for moves, such as HO, that allow them to do relational work, by means of pronoun choice, rather than by a concern for W and for the idea of imposition. To address RQ1.b, they were shown to treat D differently, according to whether there was closeness, which allowed them to be more direct, or unfamiliarity, which lead them to show respectful

distance, and to interpret W mostly as an objective cost to the H, rather than as a threat, invasion or burden, which meant that they rarely acknowledged the imposition in making their requests.

The British-English intracultural data has shown that the British-English speakers heavily relied on RPC strategies, Grounders and Disarmers, regardless of D and W, and were inclined toward mitigating their requests by means of moves, such as Conditionals, Understaters, “If” clauses and Subjectivisers, both with familiar and unfamiliar people, that signal tentativeness and not taking compliance for granted. They also appeared to be oriented toward moves that mitigate the burden on the H, particularly by means of SO, whenever the W was perceived as higher and even more with unfamiliar people. To address RQ1a, their linguistic behaviour seemed overall more influenced by W and the concern about not sounding as imposing on or invading the others’ space/freedom, regardless of D, hence more inclined toward negative politeness moves that avoid imposition. In turn, to address RQ1b, such linguistic patterns seem to be a consequence of the fact that the British-English were shown to understand W in terms of imposition and burden on the H, and that this perception of W impacted on their overall interpretation of and emphasis given to D and on their consequent behaviour. Since the concern for W mostly prevailed, even when addressing a friend, their requests generally reflected more uncertainty, tentativeness and acknowledgement of the potential offence.

8.2 Research Question 2: What are the cross-cultural similarities/differences between British-English and Italian speakers in terms of request realisation strategies, factors and reasons influencing their choices?

To address RQ2, the two sets of informants’ linguistic choices in making requests according to different levels of D and W, their perceptions/understandings of such variables and of related rights and obligations, and their evaluations of own/other’s linguistic behaviour were cross-compared. The differences between the two lingua-cultures’ linguistic preferences were shown to relate to different perceptions, understandings, interpretations and importance attached to different variables and to the underpinning values and related expectations.

The fact that the Italian speakers were generally more influenced by D, to which they attached more importance, and not as much influenced by W and particularly by the idea of imposition, led them to perceive the requests overall as less weighty – particularly those requests directed at friends, or as less problematic – particularly those to acquaintances and strangers, than their British-English counterparts. This meant that the former appeared less concerned with face issues with familiar people, and to be generally more at ease in requesting, even with unfamiliar people, than the latter. This in turn indicates that the Italian speakers, because of their inclination toward D, relied on the idea of solidarity and interdependence, and among friends of certainty of compliance (see Màrquez Reiter et al. 2005), and felt generally more confident in asking, i.e. to have more right to ask, in accordance with their association rights (see Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003). This explains why they preferred mitigation moves that activated H's cooperativeness (i.e. EM, such as Alerters/ATs). This inclination toward solidarity might also explain why they never interpreted W as a burden or an inconvenience for the H, even when addressing unfamiliar people. Indeed, they viewed those requests as something that (just) required lots of politeness related to R, as with the Professor, or as normal things to ask, as with the favour from a stranger or with the elderly neighbour, which even led them to use fewer politeness markers, showing they were more comfortable with such requests, again in accordance with their association rights based on interdependence. Also in the special case of requesting a neighbour for help, where they were shown to be influenced by both D and W, a still marked orientation toward D is confirmed by their choice to address the 'special' stranger with 'tu' to close the D gap, rather than with the formal 'lei' used with unfamiliar people.

Conversely, the fact that the British-English speakers were more concerned about W, always understood as an imposition/burden on the H, regardless of D, meant that they overall tended to rate the requests' W, even those directed to friends, higher than the Italian Ss did, to show concern for face issues and often to feel uncomfortable in making such requests, which in some cases they were perceived as a threat to possessions (e.g. borrowing the friend's notes or the Professor's book). In turn, this concern for W explains their use of more elaborated or indirect request forms, particularly "do/would you mind" or "I was wondering if" forms, or SO, whenever they perceived the W as higher. Furthermore, the fact that certain

requests, such as asking for information or a favour from strangers, were often perceived as “weird”, since they were invasive of others’ space, time, or freedom, indicates that they had a different perception of their right to ask. That is, that they had less right to ask, acknowledging the others’ right to do how they wished, hence that they had fewer expectations of compliance, in accordance with the idea of equity rights and obligations (Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003), in comparison to the Italian Ss.

8.3 Research Question 3: How do Italian speakers realise requests in British-English and to what extent does this reflect Italian language patterns, values and expectations?

To address RQ3 intercultural roleplays in English between Italian and British-English Ss were conducted, followed by individual retrospective interviews. To support the interview data, evaluative surveys were conducted with two other sets of Italian and British-English participants, who evaluated some extracts which showed intercultural discrepancies between the Italian and the British-English Ss in evaluating each other’s behaviour.

Overall, the intercultural data has shown that the Italian Ss differed from the British-English Ss not so much in terms of request forms, but more markedly in terms of the underlying reasons and/or values behind their linguistic choices, which were influenced in two opposite ways.

On one side, the Italian Ss’ behaviour was mostly driven by the different importance they attached to/different perceptions of D and W and related expectations, which particularly reflected in a different use of mitigation. Mirroring the outcome of the intracultural analysis, they were more inclined to use EM, especially with Friends and Acquaintances, and positive politeness devices directed at closing the D gap (e.g. GP and ER) and/or activating H’s cooperation (e.g. Please and CA), and showed less concern about the possible imposition, in comparison to their British-English counterparts. As also confirmed by their RI, their linguistic choices were overall more influenced by D, regardless of W, which explains why they tended to be, especially with friends, more direct, or sought to activate H’s solidarity/understanding. This suggests a sort of pragmatic transfer in terms of the choice of mitigation, which is explicable considering that the use of modifiers appears more affected by cultural-related values, depending on the S’s focus and

interactional goals (Ogiermann, 2009b), which in this case seems to be seeking solidarity or affiliation.

However, this orientation toward D sometimes led to intercultural mismatches, particularly in terms of different perceptions of rights/obligations and related expectations, which were examined through the ES. The perceptions and evaluations of the Italian participants in the ES seemed to corroborate intercultural differences in understandings, evaluations and related expectations, particularly when requesting from a friend, showing they gave more importance to closeness, which allowed for a more direct, or less mitigated approach, and less importance to the idea of W, once again, never understood as a burden.

On the other side, some Italian Ss showed they were influenced by their intercultural pragmatic awareness of the British-English speakers' linguistic patterns and preferences, which led them to act consciously different from how they would have requested in their L1. The RI data has shown how some of them, through a process of "intercultural mediation" (Liddicoat, 2014; McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016), critically interpreted the other (L2) culture's perspective in meaning making and adopted what they considered the appropriate linguistic means to make requests to British-English speakers in English, for instance by using politeness markers, such as "please". Moreover, some of their choices, particularly in terms of speech act constructions, reflected what they thought was the "English way" to make requests, rather than a pragmatic transfer from their L1. They overwhelmingly used RPC, more in tune with the British-English Ss' patterns and employed certain constructions, such as "would you mind" or "I was wondering if", which are not present/used in the Italian language, indicating an adaptation to the British-English Ss' linguistic structures.

Nevertheless, the data has also shown that in some instances the Italian Ss, though employing the same modifiers as the British-English Ss, used them in different contexts, with different functions and for different reasons. Paradigmatic is the use of Disarmers, since while the Italian Ss often used "sorry" with friends, which seemed employed to win H's understanding and cooperativeness, hence as a positive politeness strategy, the British-English Ss more frequently used the expression "sorry to bother you", particularly with unfamiliar people, which instead appeared employed for acknowledging the imposition, thus as a negative politeness move. This study, as mentioned in section 7.4, adds to findings for other

languages that have shown that Disarmers may have dual roles in request action formation. For Spanish, Márquez Reiter (2008) has found that apologising moves employed to show regret for an offence caused to the other have a double function, i.e. they can be used as both face-redressive, hence as negative politeness means, and face-supportive, thus as positive politeness moves. Therefore, this study has shown that, when conducting pragmatics studies, it is important to acknowledge and investigate the possible multifunctionality of modifiers, such as Disarmers, which can be employed with different functions and to achieve different interactional goals.

These findings suggest that, though the Italian Ss often used the same request strategies as their British-English counterparts, they did not necessarily employ them for the same reasons. Sometimes they used those same structures (e.g. “I was wondering if” forms) not because they were their preferred ones, according to their underpinning values and beliefs about appropriate behaviour, but rather because they considered them the British-English’ preferred structures. On other occasions they used different forms of the same type of modifier (e.g. Disarmer), to achieve different interactional goals. This indicates that it is pivotal to always unpack the reasons behind linguistic choices, as also pointed out by Márquez Reiter and colleagues (2005), particularly in cross/intercultural pragmatic research, since the same choices can reflect different motives, and only by understanding such motives it is possible to really capture the subtleties behind apparently similar linguistic behaviours and explain overall cross/intercultural differences.

8.4 Contribution and implications

This thesis has contributed to the field of pragmatics in the following terms.

Firstly, by studying the under-researched language-pair of British-English and Italian from multiple perspectives, it contributes to the expansion of cross-cultural and intercultural studies. Also, by using a multi-method composed by roleplays, retrospective interviews and evaluative surveys, it has highlighted how cross-cultural and intercultural differences exist, not only in linguistic repertoires, but also, and most importantly, in perceptions and understandings of context and of sociopragmatic variables, such as D and W, and in the importance attached to them, and of related rights and obligations, and consequent expectations and evaluations of own/others’ linguistic behaviour. Furthermore, it has shown that such

differences in perceptions and understandings reflect culturally-embedded values and beliefs, such as an orientation toward solidarity vs non-imposition, that deeply influence the reasons behind linguistic choices and behaviour. This implies the importance of teasing out such values, views and related expectations and evaluations, to properly understand diversities across cultures, or different lingua-cultures' uses of language. In fact, even though speakers (from different lingua-cultures) may employ the same request forms, their choices are not necessarily made for the same reasons, and hence do not reflect the same values, functions or interactional goals (Craig et al. 1986, Màrquez Reiter et al 2005; Ogiermann, 2009b). This is particularly true for request strategies such as RPC, since this category includes a wide range of different forms, ranging from bare requests performed in the present indicative (e.g. *'mi dai x'* [lit. "do you give me x"]), to more elaborated requests, such as by means of conditional or "would you mind" forms. While bare requests are very direct and can signal certainty of compliance, and they can be employed to activate the H's solidarity and companionship based on the optimistic view that the H is happy to comply, more elaborated requests convey indirectness and hesitation, reflecting the values of non-imposition and of respect for others' autonomy, showing that compliance is not taken for granted. The same applies for the use of modifiers, such as Disarmers, which, as the intercultural analysis has shown (sections 7.3.1.1.2, 7.3.3.1.3, 7.4), have been used with different interactional goals by the two sets of informants. The Italian speakers often employed "sorry" with friends, as a positive politeness strategy that, by apologising in advance, had the function to disarm the H and activate his/her cooperativeness. The British-English speakers frequently used "I'm sorry to bother you" with unfamiliar people, as a negative politeness means that, by referring to the idea of bothering, acknowledge the potential offence. This highlights the need for future research in pragmatics to focus more on speakers' understandings/perceptions of contextual variables and consequent evaluations of linguistic behaviours, because this type of investigation is the only way to enable a full understanding of speakers' linguistic choices and of the underpinning reasons, particularly from a cross-cultural and intercultural angle.

Moreover, this study has revealed that the best way to attend to all these elements when designing pragmatics studies across cultures is by combining discourse and perception data. The roleplay data could only offer some insights into Italian and

British-English request realisation strategies, and only by using the retrospective interviews was it possible to analyse in-depth what the differences were between these two lingua-cultures, by bringing to light people's actual understandings and interpretations of D and W and related rights and obligations, plus their expectations and related evaluations of own/others' linguistic behaviours.

Another major contribution of this thesis is to have revealed that HO, usually associated with the idea of imposing on the H, in fact can have different functions, according to the grammatical system of a language. This adds to previous research (House, 2006) that has highlighted that, due to differences in politeness related communicative preferences or even norms, HO can be associated with different functions depending on the language system of the lingua-culture that is investigated. We have seen how in the Italian language system HO has the important function of doing relational work, and that its use is an important way to do that, by means of pronoun choice. Put differently, in the Italian language employing HO is not necessarily understood as putting a burden on the H, as it would be in the English language (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989), since it allows for the possibility of showing deference/respect to others. As observed in section 6.3.4, highlighting the H's role by using HO can be a way to give them the control to decide whether or not to comply with the request (Venuti 2020). Furthermore, we also argued that the possibility of invoking a relationship with the H by means of HO seems to outweigh the concern for the possible imposition on the H. This may hold even truer for FTAs such as requests, since being able to signal the relationship with the H, either by invoking closeness or by showing respectful distance, may play a key role for the success of the request. This result opens up a new avenue for research, because it demonstrates that we need to think about HO in a more nuanced way, and reveals the need for future research in pragmatics to investigate the different functions of HO, going beyond the usual understanding of this move as simply burdening the H and as being too direct, particularly in case of requests. Finally, this investigation highlights the necessity to study more languages, cross and intercultural, and in turn to raise even more awareness of the intercultural implications of cross-cultural differences among interactants. A better understanding of such dissimilarities, and especially of the fact that cross and intercultural diversities in linguistic choices, even within the same context, can be (and often is) a matter of differences in underpinning socio-cultural values, can help

overcoming stereotyping about certain lingua-cultures, such as that some are 'more polite' than others. This holds particularly true for the language-pair under investigation, since the stereotype about British-English speakers being 'more polite' than other lingua-cultures, such as the Italian, should be addressed and such differences understood for what they are. That is, that these two groups perceive, understand, enact and evaluate politeness differently, according to different underlying values and beliefs, which lead them to prioritise either respecting the other's freedom and independence by avoiding imposition (the British-English), or seeking solidarity and interdependence, by invoking/managing the relationship with the H or by activating H's cooperation (the Italians). In other words, as also argued by other researchers (e.g. Craig et al., 1986; Ogiermann, 2009b), negative and positive politeness are qualitatively, rather than quantitatively, different, and add negative politeness is not necessarily more polite than positive politeness.

8.5 Limitations

This investigation encountered the following limitations.

Firstly, the very small sample makes generalisation difficult, and more research needs to be conducted, on a larger scale, to offer a more comprehensive understanding of this language-pair's patterns and especially of the reasons behind their linguistic preferences.

Secondly, although this study attempted to control the age range of participants and the occupational status, there were inevitably some differences, such as the age range of around twenty years, and this means that in a small study sample there might be other elements that are impacting on participants' linguistic choices other than language and culture.

Thirdly, the use of roleplays raises the question of the authenticity of performances, since participants' enactments may not correspond to their actual behaviour. As Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2005) has observed, there is often a gap between what people think they would say and their actual linguistic behaviour. Nevertheless, the use of open-ended roleplays allows for flexibility and more dynamic and spontaneous interaction and varied use of speech acts and forms, hence makes it possible to collect data which is comparable to naturally occurring data. Roleplays, even if open-ended, may also be affected by the limited amount of context that can be made available for participants, e.g. in terms of the relational history between interactants (Haugh, 2011; see also Márquez Reiter, 2021) and/or the historical

rationale behind the scenario(s) (Slugoski & Turnbull, 1988), which might influence how the scenarios are interpreted by the participants. Different understandings of a roleplay task may lead to performances that cannot be used for a specific research project, and some of the data had to be excluded from the analysis in this study for this reason.

8.6 Final remarks

Despite all these limitations, this thesis has the undoubtable originality of having studied an unresearched language-pair by a multiple (intra, cross and cultural) perspective. It has the merit of having investigated not only participants' linguistic choices, in terms of request forms and modification, and what contextual factors influenced them, but also and most importantly what usually remains unresearched (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021), i.e. how their perceptions and understanding of such factors, and of related rights and obligations, reflected into their choices. Using roleplays supported by follow-up retrospective interviews has revealed that cross and intercultural diversities exist not only, or necessarily, in terms of linguistic resources and preferences, but first and foremost in terms of understandings/interpretations of (and importance attached to) sociopragmatic variables and related rights and obligations, expectations and consequent evaluations of linguistic behaviour. Additionally, using RI has also made possible to categorise the different request scenarios (in terms of different levels of D and W) based on participants' ratings, rather than relying on the analyst's interpretation, and hence to examine what people do, according to what factors and their perceptions and understanding of them. Lastly, this thesis has the further merit of having discovered how pivotal cross-cultural differences in grammatical resources can affect the functionality of certain devices, such as HO. It has shown that HO can be used with different functions, such as to do relational work, and that not necessarily it is perceived as only burdening the H, in turn showing that we need to think of HO in a more nuanced way, opening up a new avenue for further cross-cultural studies in different languages that might have the same grammatical resources and functions, to deepen the understanding of the use of this strategy.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of roleplays scenarios, with instructions

Appendix 2: Retrospective interviews' questions guide

Appendix 3: Evaluative surveys' template

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Appendix 7: Information sheet for roleplays and retrospective interviews

- a. English version
- b. Italian version

Appendix 8: Consent form templates for roleplays and retrospective interviews

- a. English version
- b. Italian version

Appendix 1: List of roleplay scenarios, with instructions

Appendix 1.a: in English

Explain to use imagination to enact the open roleplays, by behaving in a way you think you would in a natural conversation

Explanation of roleplays: if you are required an action (letter A), you start; if you are not required any action (letter B), you wait for the other person to start.

1. Requesting at the restaurant

1A) You work in a restaurant and you are going to take the order from a customer who has just sat down. What do you say? Please start the conversation.

1B) You are in a restaurant and the person in charge of taking the order comes to your table.

2. Asking information to a stranger

2A) You are looking for, but cannot find place X (the library), you notice a person of around your age and you decide to ask her/him, what do you say?

2B) You are in a street and someone who you don't know of around your age approaches you.

3. Borrowing money from a friend

3A) You are out with a friend and you do not have any cash. You are heading to a place where they do not accept card and there is no cash point on the way. You need to borrow some money from him/her, what do you say?

3B) You are out with a friend and heading to a place.

4. Borrowing notes from a friend

4A) You have been ill and have missed some lectures/classes. You meet your friend and you are due an assignment soon and you want to borrow your friend's notes, what do you say?

4B) You meet a friend who attends the same classes as you.

5. Asking information to an elderly stranger

5A) You are visiting place X and have been walking for a while in search of the museum, but you cannot find it, you decide to ask someone and you see an elderly man/woman is coming in your direction, what do you say?

5B) You are an elderly woman/man and a young person approaches you.

6. Borrowing book from an unfamiliar Professor

6A) You are due an assignment and you really want to read a book to write it, but all the copies of this book are already borrowed. You know that Professor X has a copy of this book as you have seen it in his/her office one day, but you do not know him/her very well. One day you decide to visit his/her office and ask him/her, what do you say?

6B) You are a Professor and the other participant is a student you don't know very well.

7. Borrowing a pen/phone from a friend

7A) You are with a friend and someone calls you. You need to quickly write down a telephone number somewhere, but you have no pen, what do you say to your friend?

7B) You are with a friend who receives a telephone call.

8. Asking for a cigarette to a stranger

8A) You just finished work and it has been a long day. You can't wait for a cigarette, but once you are out you realise you forgot them home and there is no place that sells tobacco around. Outside there is someone smoking, and you would like to ask him/her, what do you say?

8B) You are outside a building where you work and you are smoking. Someone who you don't know approaches you.

9. Asking a familiar Professor for a lift

9A) You have just missed your last bus and you notice a Professor you know that is coming your way. You happen to know that s/he lives in your neighbourhood and you are tired and do not want to wait for another hour for the next bus and wonder if you could get a lift, what do you say when s/he gets closer?

9B) You are a Professor and are walking toward your car to go home, a student who you know and lives close to you approaches you.

10. Asking a flatmate to stop making a noise

10A) It's evening, you are very tired and want to go to sleep. However, your flatmate is listening to music and it is so loud that you can hear it and cannot sleep. You decide to speak with him/her and see if you can get her/him turn it down, what do you say?

10B) It's evening, you are in your room listening to music and your flatmate knocks on your door.

11. Asking a new neighbour help for moving items

11A) You just moved to your new flat and still need to take there some stuff quite urgently. All your friends with a car are busy and you noticed your new neighbour has a car, so you wonder if s/he could help you. What do you say to him/her?

11B) You got back home and once you get out of your car you notice that the new neighbour who has just moved in approaches you.

12. Asking for a lift to a friend

12A) You met your friend at a pub. You walked there as it is only 15 minutes, while your friend drove there. You are both about to leave, and you feel tired and do not want to walk back home and hoping on a lift. What do you say to him/her?

12B) You met your friend at a pub. You friend walked there as s/he lives 15 minutes away while your drove there. You are both about to leave.

13. Borrowing a pen from a stranger

13A) You are walking in a street and you see an interesting ad about a flat to rent and you want to take a note, your phone's battery is off and you need a pen to write it down somewhere; you notice that someone is walking toward you, what do you say?

13B) You are walking in a street and a stranger approaches you.

14. Asking a friend for a cigarette

14A) You are out with a friend, you just realised you have run out of cigarettes and there is no place that sells tobacco around, and you would like to smoke, what do you say to your friend?

14B) You are outside with a friend.

15. Asking an elderly neighbour to stop making a noise

15A) You need to work and get something done for tomorrow, but your next-door neighbour, an elderly person, is watching TV very loudly and you cannot concentrate. You decide to speak with him/her, and ask if the volume can be turned down, what do you say?

15B) You are an elderly person watching TV and someone knocks on your door: it's your neighbour.

Appendix 1.b: in Italian

Spiegare di usare immaginazione dove necessario, ma rapportandovi nel modo in cui pensate vi esprimereste in una conversazione reale.

Spiegazione delle roleplay: se vi e' richiesta una azione (lettera A), iniziate, se non vi e' richiesta una azione (lettera B), aspettate che l'altra persona inizi.

1. Ordinare al ristorante

1A) Lavori in un ristorante e vai al tavolo di un cliente per prendere l'ordine. Cosa dici? Inizia la conversazione.

1B) Sei in un ristorante e devi ordinare. Il/la cameriere/a arriva per prendere l'ordine.

2. Chiedere informazioni a uno/a sconosciuto/a

2A) Stai cercando la biblioteca, ma non riesci a trovarla, noti una persona piu' o meno della vostra eta' e decidi di chiedere a lei, cosa dici?

2B) Sei per la strada e una persona piu' o meno della vostra eta' vi si avvicina.

3. Chiedere dei soldi in prestito

3A) Sei fuori con un amico/a e non hai contanti con te. Siete diretti verso un posto che non accetta carta di credito-debito e non ci sono bancomat nei paraggi. Hai bisogno di chiedere dei soldi in prestito al/la tuo/a amico/a, cosa dici?

3B) Sei fuori con un amico/a e siete diretti verso un posto che non accetta carta di credito-debito.

4. Chiedere in prestito degli appunti a un amico/a

4A) Sei stato malato e hai perso alcune lezioni. Incontri un amico/a e, siccome ti devi preparare per un esame, vuoi prendere in prestito i suoi appunti, cosa dici?

4B) Incontri un amico che frequenta la tua stessa classe/seminario.

5. Chiedere informazioni a uno sconosciuto anziano

5A) Stai visitando una citta' e stai cercando il museo ma non riesci a trovarlo, noti una persona anziana che sta venendo nella tua direzione e decidi di chiedere a lei, cosa dici?

5B) Sei una persona anziana e una persona piu' giovane ti si avvicina.

6. Chiedere in prestito un libro a un Professore che non conosci

6A) Devi prepararti per un esame e hai bisogno di un libro, ma tutte le copie presenti in biblioteca sono state già prese in prestito da altri studenti. Sai che il Professore X ha una copia nel suo ufficio perche' un giorno ci sei stato e l'hai vista,

ma non conosci il Professore X molto bene. Un giorno decidi di andare nel suo ufficio e chiederglielo, cosa dici?

6B) Sei un Professore ed uno studente che non conosci molto bene si reca nel tuo ufficio.

7. Chiedere in prestito una penna-telefono ad un tuo amico

7A) Sei con un/a amico/a e qualcuno ti chiama; hai bisogno di segnarti un numero, cosa dici al/la tuo/a amico/a?

7B) Sei con un/a amico/a, che riceve una chiamata.

8. Chiedere una sigaretta a uno/a sconosciuto/a

8A) Hai appena finito di lavorare, esci dall'edificio e non vedi l'ora di fumarti una sigaretta, ma ti rendi conto che te le sei scordate. Non ci sono tabacchini a giro, e fuori dall'edificio c'è una persona che sta fumando, e pensi di chiedere a lei, cosa dici?

8B) Sei fuori e stai fumando e qualcuno che non conosci ti si avvicina.

9. Chiedere un passaggio ad un/a Professore/ssa

9A) Hai appena perso l'ultimo tram per andare a casa e noti un/a Professore/ssa che conosci che sta camminando nella tua direzione. Sai che il/la Professore/ssa X abita vicino a casa tua e ti domandi se potresti chiedergli un passaggio, cosa dici, una volta che si è avvicinato/a?

9B) Sei un/a Professore/ssa, stai andando a casa e uno studente che conosci che sai abita nei vostri dintorni ti si avvicina.

10. Chiedere al/la tuo/a coinquilino/a di smettere di fare rumore

10A) E' sera, sei stanco/a e vuoi andare a dormire, ma il/la tuo/a coinquilino/a sta ascoltando la musica a volume molto alto e non riesci a dormire. Decidi di parlargli/le per chiedere di abbassare il volume. Cosa dici?

10B) E' sera, sei in camera tua e stai ascoltando la musica quando la tuo/a coinquilino/a bussa alla porta.

11. Chiedere al/la tuo/a nuovo/a vicino/a aiuto a spostare la tua roba

11A) Ti sei appena trasferito/a nel tuo nuovo appartamento e hai ancora alcune cose da portarci con una certa urgenza. Tutti i tuoi amici con la macchina sono impegnati e hai notato che il/la tuo/a nuovo/a vicino/a ha la macchina, così ti domandi se ti potrebbe aiutare. Cosa gli/le dici?

11B) Sei appena rientrato/a a casa e come scendi dalla macchina noti che il/la nuovo/a vicino/a si avvicina.

12. Chiedere un passaggio ad un amico/a

12A) Ti sei incontrato con un amico/a in un pub. Ci sei andato/a a piedi perche' abiti a soli 15 minuti dal pub, mentre il tuo amico/a ti ha raggiunto con la macchina. State per andarvene, non ti va di rientrare a piedi e vorresti un passaggio. Cosa dici al tuo/a amico/a?

12B) Ti sei incontrato con un amico/a in un pub. Ci sei andato/a in macchina, mentre il/la tuo/o amico/a e' venuto a piedi perche' abita a soli 15 minuti dal pub. Siete in procinto di andarvene.

13. Chiedere in prestito una penna ad a uno/a sconosciuto/a

13A) Stai camminando per una strada e noti un annuncio interessante per un appartamento da affittare e vuoi segnarti il numero, ma il tuo telefono si e' spento e hai bisogno di una penna per scriverlo da qualche parte; noti una persona che sta camminando nella tua direzione, cosa le dici?

13B) Stai camminando per una strada e una persona ti si avvicina.

14. Chiedere una sigaretta ad un/a amico/a

14A) Sei fuori con un/a amico/a, siete appena usciti dal locale dove eravate per andare a fumare e ti rendi conto di non aver le sigarette e non ci sono tabacchini nei paraggi, cosa dici?

14B) Sei fuori con un/a amico/a e siete appena usciti dal locale dove eravate per andare a fumare.

15. Chiedere a un/a vicino/a anziano/a che abita accanto a te di smettere di fare rumore

15A) Hai bisogno di lavorare e di finire una cosa per domani, ma il vicino/a anziano/a che abita alla porta accanto sta guardando la TV a volume molto alto e non riesci a concentrarti. Decidi di parlargli/le. Cosa dici?

15B) Sei una persona anziana e stai guardando la TV quando senti bussare alla porta: e' il tuo vicino.

Appendix 2: Retrospective interviews' questions guide

Appendix 2.a: in English

Participants ID

Roleplays between British/British -
Italians/Italians (cross appropriately),

Ref. No. _____

in _____ (state language).



>> Rating can be flexible (e.g. can be a 1.5, and you are free to rate in any different way if you feel like the suggested rating, for instance, "being polite", does not express how you would rate it)

1. How would you assess the type of social situation that was going on during each performed roleplay, in terms of the type of relationship existent between participants (e.g. close or distant) and in terms of the type of favour being requested (e.g. it is a small thing or a big thing to ask (or being asked) in the context (i.e. weight of imposition)? Please rate both with reference to the following scales and explain with as much details as possible why you gave such ratings:
 - Distance (1 no distance/friends - 2 low distance/acquaintances - 3 distance/strangers)
 - Weight of imposition (1 very small thing - 2 small thing - 3 neither small nor big - 4 big thing - 5 very big thing)
2. Do you think your perceptions on the level of distance and of weight of imposition have influenced the linguistic choices you made, and how?
3. How would you rate the level of (im)politeness of your contribution, in a scale from
1 very polite - 2 polite - 3 neither polite nor impolite - 4 impolite to 5 very impolite?
Please explain with as much details as possible why you gave such a rating.
4. How would you rate the level of (im)politeness of the other participant's contribution, in a scale from **1 very polite - 2 polite - 3 neither polite nor**

impolite - 4 impolite to 5 very impolite? Please explain with as much details as possible why you gave such a rating.

5. How do you think the other participants rated the level of (im)politeness of your contribution, in a scale from **1 very polite - 2 polite - 3 neither polite nor impolite - 4 impolite to 5 very impolite**, and why you think so?
6. Any other comments you would like to share?

(Specific questions related to the particular episode - Optional)

Appendix 2.b: in Italian

ID del Partecipante

Roleplays tra Inglese/Inglese -

Italiani/Italiani (barrare ove necessario)

Ref. No. _____

in _____ (dichiara lingua).



>> La valutazione è flessibile, puoi dare per es. 1.5 o esprimerla in modo diverso

1. Come valuteresti il tipo di situazione sociale in atto durante i roleplay: per esempio, per ogni roleplay che hai impersonato, come valuteresti il tipo di relazione esistente tra i partecipanti (per es. familiarità o formalità)? Come valuteresti il tipo di favore richiesto nel contesto, in termini di peso della imposizione della richiesta (per es., lo consideri una piccola cosa da chiedere o una grande cosa)? Nell'esprimere la tua valutazione fai riferimento alle seguenti scale, e spiega con maggior dettaglio possibile il perchè di tali valutazioni:
 - Distanza (1 no distanza/amici - 2 poca distanza/conoscenti- 3 distanza/sconosciuti)
 - Peso della imposizione (1 molto basso - 2 basso - 3 nè basso nè alto- 4 alto - 5 molto alto)
2. Secondo te, la tua interpretazione delle varie situazioni in termini di distanza e peso della richiesta ha influenzato le tue scelte linguistiche, e se si come?
3. Come valuteresti il livello di (s)cortesia del tuo contributo, in una scala da 1 molto cortese - 2 cortese - 3 nè cortese nè scortese - 4 scortese a 5 molto scortese? Spiega con maggior dettaglio possibile le ragioni per cui hai dato tale valutazione.
4. Come valuteresti il livello di (s)cortesia del contributo dell'altro partecipante, in una scala da 1 molto cortese - 2 cortese - 3 nè cortese nè scortese - 4 scortese a 5 molto scortese? Spiega con maggior dettaglio possibile le ragioni per cui hai dato tale valutazione.

5. Secondo te, come pensi che gli altri partecipanti abbiano valutato il livello di (s)cortesia del tuo contributo, in una scala da **1 molto cortese - 2 cortese - 3 nè cortese nè scortese - 4 scortese a 5 molto scortese**, e perchè pensi ciò?
6. Hai qualsiasi altro commento?
7. (Domande specifiche relative al particolare episodio - Opzionale)

Appendix 3: Evaluative surveys' template

Participants ID

Roleplays between British/British -
Italians/Italians (cross appropriately),

Ref. No. _____ in _____ (state language).



You will be asked to evaluate 5 scenarios. Please listen to the audio-recording of each performance that you are going to evaluate, to get the gist of the scenario, read the transcript provided of the parts you are asked to evaluate and evaluate it as explained in the following points. Please repeat these steps for each scenario.

Scenario 1

How would you rate the type of relationship existent between the two participants (e.g. close or distant)?

Distance (1 friends - 2 acquaintances - 3 strangers)

1

2

3

How would you rate the request, is it a small or a big thing to ask, given the type of relationship and the context?

Weight of imposition (1 very small thing - 2 small thing - 3 neither small nor big - 4 big thing - 5 very big thing)

1

2

3

4

5

How would you rate the level of politeness of the participants?

(Im)politeness of the participants (1 very impolite - 2 polite - 3 neither polite nor impolite - 4 polite - 5 very polite)

Participant A (the one who makes the request)

1

2

3

4

5

Participant B (the one who responded to the request)

1

2

3

4

5

Please comment, with as much details as possible, why you rated participants A and B' performances as you did.

Scenario 2

How would you rate the type of relationship existent between the two participants (e.g. close or distant)?

Distance (1 friends - 2 acquaintances - 3 strangers)

1

2

3

How would you rate the request, is it a small or a big thing to ask, given the type of relationship and the context?

Weight of imposition (1 very small thing - 2 small thing - 3 neither small nor big - 4 big thing - 5 very big thing)

1

2

3

4

5

How would you rate the level of politeness of the participants?

(Im)politeness of the participants (1 very impolite - 2 polite - 3 neither polite nor impolite - 4 polite - 5 very polite)

Participant A (the one who makes the request)

1

2

3

4

5

Participant B (the one who responded to the request)

1

2

3

4

5

Please comment, with as much details as possible, why you rated participants A and B' performances as you did.

Scenario 3

How would you rate the type of relationship existent between the two participants (e.g. close or distant)?

Distance (1 friends - 2 acquaintances - 3 strangers)

1

2

3

How would you rate the request, is it a small or a big thing to ask, given the type of relationship and the context?

Weight of imposition (1 very small thing - 2 small thing - 3 neither small nor big - 4 big thing - 5 very big thing)

1

2

3

4

5

How would you rate the level of politeness of the participants?

(Im)politeness of the participants (1 very impolite - 2 polite - 3 neither polite nor impolite - 4 polite - 5 very polite)

Participant A (the one who makes the request)

1

2

3

4

5

Participant B (the one who responded to the request)

1

2

3

4

5

Please comment, with as much details as possible, why you rated participants A and B' performances as you did.

Scenario 4

How would you rate the type of relationship existent between the two participants (e.g. close or distant)?

Distance (1 friends - 2 acquaintances - 3 strangers)

1

2

3

How would you rate the request, is it a small or a big thing to ask, given the type of relationship and the context?

Weight of imposition (1 very small thing - 2 small thing - 3 neither small nor big - 4 big thing - 5 very big thing)

1

2

3

4

5

How would you rate the level of politeness of the participants?

(Im)politeness of the participants (1 very impolite - 2 polite - 3 neither polite nor impolite - 4 polite - 5 very polite)

Participant A (the one who makes the request)

1

2

3

4

5

Participant B (the one who responded to the request)

1

2

3

4

5

Please comment, with as much details as possible, why you rated participants A and B' performances as you did.

Scenario 5

How would you rate the type of relationship existent between the two participants (e.g. close or distant)?

Distance (1 friends - 2 acquaintances - 3 strangers)

1

2

3

How would you rate the request, is it a small or a big thing to ask, given the type of relationship and the context?

Weight of imposition (1 very small thing - 2 small thing - 3 neither small nor big - 4 big thing - 5 very big thing)

1

2

3

4

5

How would you rate the level of politeness of the participants?

(Im)politeness of the participants (1 very impolite - 2 polite - 3 neither polite nor impolite - 4 polite - 5 very polite)

Participant A (the one who makes the request)

1

2

3

4

5

Participant B (the one who responded to the request)

1

2

3

4

5

Please comment, with as much details as possible, why you rated participants A and B' performances as you did.

Thank you for your contribution!

Appendix 4: System of conventions for transcriptions

..	Short pause
....	Longer pause
(...)	Part of utterance or of conversation omitted
(?)	Utterance not clear
[sic]	Grammar mistake in the speech
[]	To contain words not said but implied, that can be inferred from the context or the translation (for the Italian data)
()	To contain comments/actions of the participants expressed/performed during (e.g. laugh) or outside (beginning of end of) the roleplay(s) (e.g. knocking)
(I:)	Questions/comments made by the Interviewer during/while the participant's answering, to probe or check
I:	Direct question made by the Interviewer at the end of the participant's answer to get more information

Appendix 5: List of salient extracts for the Evaluative Surveys

1. RP3 (money from friend) (RAC.B_VAL.P – E16)

Scenario 1: (Valeria and Elizabeth are going out for dinner when the following exchange occurs)

Valeria: ohh, Oh my God, we are going to that restaurant, I forgot to get some cash .Do you have some money you can lend me?

Elizabeth: Ehmm, I think I do. How, how much do you need?

Valeria: I think, 30 quid is fine? Is for dinner, so I don't know, maybe...

Elizabeth: yeah, ehm, I might, I might have enough, to be able to cover it, ehm. I'll, I'll have a look, if not we can stop at the bank and I'll get some from there

Valeria: okay, thank you very much

Elizabeth: okay, no problem

2. RP8 (cigarette from stranger) (RMR_STE.C - E18)

Scenario 2 (Silvia approaches Rebecca in the road while the exchange occurs)

Silvia: Hi there! Ehm, sorry, ehm, can I ask you, for a cigarette? Eh, Do you have one?

Rebecca: ehm, yeah, I've got one spare, if you really need one..

Silvia: oh, your last one? I'm so desperate for like, having a cigarette right now, I've just had a long day and I'm like, I'd really like one, I mean I didn't want to take your last one cos I know, you know, the last one is the last one, but..

Rebecca: it's fine, I can get some more later, here you go

Silvia: thank you, thank you, you saved my day, thank you

3. RP11 (favour from new neighbour) (RAC.B_VAL.P – E16)

Scenario 3 (Valeria encounters Elizabeth, her new neighbour, in front of the house, when the exchange occurs)

Valeria: oh hi Elizabeth, I've just noticed that I need, I forgot some stuff in my previous flat, and, would you mind to, to bring me there? So, you know, with the car, would be much easier for me, to, to go there and come back, to take the last things

Elizabeth: okay, sure, you, you've just moved in, haven't you, yeah? How, how far is it, that we have to go?

Valeria: no just, two neighbourhoods, ehm like, ten kilometres?

Elizabeth: okay, that's fine, as long, as long as I'm back in half an hour, that, that's fine, I can do that for you, no, no worries

Valeria: thank you very much

Elizabeth: okay

4. RP7 (favour from a friend/noting a number down) (GIN.P_ALA.M – E12)

Scenario 4 (Alice and Giulia are hanging out, and Alice receives a phone call, when the exchange occurs)

Alice: Hi ehm, do you mind just taking down this number if I just ehm, read it out to you, can you write it down for me?

Giulia: yeah of course, no problem

Alice: yeah, that would be like, 075211

Giulia: alright

Alice: yeah, thank you

Giulia: it's alright

5. RP10 (asking the flatmate to turn the volume down) (GIN.P_ALA.M – E12)

Scenario 5 (Giulia and Alice live in the same flat)

Giulia: HI, I'm sorry to ruin your party or something, but I'm really trying to sleep, please please can you turn it down the music, please?

Alice: oh yeah

Giulia: I'm so sorry to bother..

Alice: no no no that's fine, I'll, I'll turn it down a little bit and tell everybody

Giulia: thank you, sorry about that

Alice: to turn to keep it, keep it low

6. RP6 (book from Professor) (MAR.C_CLA.J – E110)

Scenario 6 (Claire went to her Professor's office when the exchange occurs)

Claire: Hi, ehm, sorry to disturb you ehm

Professor: Good morning

Claire: morning, ehm Professor, I have an assignment due and there's a book that would be perfect to support me but I haven't, basically there's none left in the ehm, library, and I noticed a few weeks ago that you have a copy and, I was going to be a bit cheeky, and ask to borrow it, to support me and my assignment, and I'll get it back to you like really speedy, it's just this is the perfect book and I, I can't find it anywhere else, I was wondering if that was okay?

Professor: mmh, yes, sure, but please please bring it back to me

Claire: yes yes

Professor: because it is important

Claire: yeah of course, yeah, thank you so much, I promise I will, thank you

Professor, thank you so much

Professor: you're welcome

Appendix 6: Research ethics form approved by Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick



Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC):

Application Form for Research Ethical Approval

Date: 2/10/2019		Version: 1	
SECTION 1. APPLICANT DETAILS			
1.1 APPLICANT			
Applicant's Title (optional):		[REDACTED]	
Applicant's Forename:		Valentina	
Applicant's Surname:		Bartali	
School or Department:		CAL	
Warwick e-mail address:		valentina.bartali@warwick.ac.uk	
Contact telephone number:		07479561429	
Applicant's Status:			
STUDENT:		STAFF:	
Undergraduate Student <input type="checkbox"/>		Professor <input type="checkbox"/>	
Taught Postgraduate Student <input type="checkbox"/>		Associate Professor <input type="checkbox"/>	
Postgraduate Research Student <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Assistant Professor <input type="checkbox"/>	
Name of course/qualification: PhD in		Research Fellow <input type="checkbox"/>	
Applied Linguistics		Teaching Fellow <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Please specify: [REDACTED]	
1.2 SUPERVISOR (COMPLETE FOR ALL STUDENT PROJECTS)			
Supervisor's Title:		Professor	
Supervisor's Forename:		Tony	
Supervisor's Surname:		Liddicoat	
Supervisor's Post:		Professor in Applied Linguistics	
Supervisor's Faculty/School and Department:		CAL	
Supervisor's Warwick e-mail address:		a.liddicoat@warwick.ac.uk	
Supervisor's contact telephone number:			
1.3 OTHER INVESTIGATORS/COLLABORATORS (INTERNAL & EXTERNAL)			
Please list all other known collaborators, internal and external to Warwick, including the name of the company/organisation or Investigator's Warwick department/school and their role in the project: [REDACTED]			
1.4 REFERRALS			

HSSREC Application Form for Ethical Approval; version number: 1.3; Version date: 03/04/2019

<p>Has the Project been referred to HSSREC from another REC or delegated process? No</p> <p><i>If yes, please provide the reason:</i></p> <p>Referred by department as not within the remit for delegated approval <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please provide details: <input type="text"/></p>
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SECTION 2. PROJECT DETAILS	
2.1 Project Title:	A synchronic cross-cultural investigation of request strategies in Italian and British-English and the issue of how culturally-bound understandings of politeness can affect their intercultural interactions.
2.2 Estimated start date:	1/11/2019
2.3 Estimated completion date of project:	31/01/2020
2.4 Does the project involve the NHS or social care:	No
<p>2.5 Type of Project: https://warwick.ac.uk/services/ris/research_integrity/researchethicscommittees/biomed/study_design/</p> <p>Research <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NHS Service evaluation or Development <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NHS Clinical Audit <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other- please specify: <input type="text"/></p>	
2.6 Research Sponsor:	N/A
If not research in the NHS, please state N/A	
2.7 Funder:	N/A
If unfunded, please state N/A	
2.8 IDEATE/Funder reference (if applicable)	<input type="text"/>
If your study is funded, please provide a reference	
<p>2.9 Links with other HSSREC applications</p> <p>Is the project linked to any other HSSREC application? No</p> <p>If yes, detail: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Project title: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Chief Investigator: <input type="text"/></p> <p>HSSREC Reference (if known): <input type="text"/></p> <p>Nature of linkage: <input type="text"/></p>	

SECTION 3: BACKGROUND/LAY SUMMARY
<p>Please provide a lay summary of the project:</p> <p>The summary should be brief and easily understood by someone who is not an expert in the area. Definitions and explanation of terms should be provided (avoid technical language).</p> <p><i>To include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a description of the proposed study and population to be studied building on review of previous studies/evidence the scientific benefit of the proposed study

The study proposes to investigate what request strategies and preferences are used by Italians and by British-English (intra-cultural investigation). It also aims to investigate how each group's strategies and preferences may influence each group's (Italians, English) linguistic choices when performing requests in another language, in cases of intercultural interactions: in other words, if Italians, when speaking in English with an English person, are influenced by their Italian strategies repertoire and if English people, when speaking in Italian with an Italian, are influenced by their English strategy repertoire. As many cross-cultural (intra-cultural) and intercultural studies (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989; House, 2006) have been conducted on different language-pairs, which have acknowledged culturally-driven differences in choosing how to perform requests, but no extensive research has been conducted on the language-pair of Italian/British-English, this study aims at filling this gap. Furthermore, as the main difference that can be detected between Italians and British-English concerns the level of (in)directness in performing such requests, investigating this language-pair will allow to shed light on such differences and to increase the understanding of culturally-driven differences, and hopefully will enable to overcome the tendency of stereotyping (e.g., Italians are rude because they are direct).

SECTION 4 RISK AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS CHECKLIST

Complete the checklist ticking 'Yes' or 'No' to all questions.

Where you have ticked 'Yes' to a question below, you will need to specifically address the ethical issues raised by that point and detail what safeguards will be put in place to minimise the potential risks/harm in the relevant section of the application form or in the space provided.

		Yes	No
A	Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent or in a dependent position (e.g. children, your own students, over-researched groups, people with learning difficulties, people with mental health problems, young offenders, people in care facilities, prisoners)? <i>(If yes, please provide details in section 7 – Informed Consent)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B	Will participants be taking part in the study without their consent or knowledge at the time, or will deception of any sort be involved (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places)? <i>(If yes, please provide details in section 7 – Informed Consent)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C	Is there a risk that the highly sensitive nature of the subject might lead to disclosures from the participant concerning their involvement in illegal activities or other activities that represent a threat to themselves or others (e.g. sexual activity, drug use, or professional misconduct)? If yes, please provide details: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
D	Could the study induce psychological distress or anxiety, or produce humiliation, or cause harm, or lead to negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicable to studies involving sensitive topics, vulnerable participants as well as studies involving driving experiments, simulators, computational or physiological experiments. For the latter, please detail potential risks associated with any equipment and how these will be monitored and addressed in the space below. Please also consider the risk to individuals if any personally identifiable data collected as part of the study is accidentally disclosed. Please see guidance note for more information. If yes, please provide details: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
E	Does the study involve substantial physical exertion? If yes, please provide details: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
F	Does the study involve the administration of any substance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	If yes, please provide details: <input type="text"/>		
G	Does the study involve physically intrusive procedures , use of bodily materials or human tissue , or DNA/RNA analysis ? If yes, please provide details: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
H	Is any reward , apart from travelling and other expenses, to be given to participants? If yes, please provide details and justification for this, to ensure this is appropriate, and not seen as a bribe or to coerce participants into taking part. <input type="text"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I	Could the proposal give rise to researchers having any conflicts of interest ? https://warwick.ac.uk/services/finance/resources/regulations/fp1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider relationships/previous personal interactions with participating organisations, participants etc. If yes, please provide details including how this will be managed: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
J	Will any part of the project be undertaken overseas? If yes, please state which Country/Countries, the locations at which the project will be undertaken, e.g. public place, school, company, hospital, University, researcher's office, including the services of an overseas cloud hosting provider for storage or a market research company etc. and the local permissions in place for this (where required): Italy , in private spaces agreed with the participants (e.g. private rooms in cafés, pubs and/or if possible, in private spaces in libraries or universities). Please see University Guidance for data processing overseas: https://warwick.ac.uk/services/idc/dataprotection/internationaldatatransfers/	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K	Will the researchers go to any areas where their safety may be compromised ? If yes, please provide details, including what measures will be put in place to minimise risks and ensure the researcher's safety. A risk assessment should be submitted with the application: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
L	Will pregnant women be participants in the study? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please note, while you may not purposefully be recruiting pregnant women to the study, consider if any special measures would need to be put into place or if it is appropriate for these individuals to take part, e.g. safety risks If yes, please provide details: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
M	Will the study involve children under 5 years old ? If yes, please provide details: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
N	Is the research commissioned by the military ?* If yes, please provide details: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
O	Is the research commissioned under an EU security call ?* If yes, please provide details: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P	Does the research involve the acquisition of security clearances ?* If yes, please provide details: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Q	Does the research concern terrorist or extreme groups ?* If yes, please provide details: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
R	Does the study involve any additional ethical considerations or risks to participants or the researcher that are not listed above? If yes, please provide details: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 5: STUDY DESIGN, METHODOLOGY & ANALYSIS

5.1 Clearly state the research aim(s) of the project:

To include:

- a clear explanation and justification for the research question(s)/aim(s)

Research questions:

1. How are request strategies constructed in contemporary British-English and Italian language?

And, as sub-questions:

1.a: Are such strategies influenced by factors, such as (un)familiarity and age?

1.b: What are the main cross-cultural differences?

2. How do such cross-cultural differences impact the choices made by Italians and British during their intercultural communication in, respectively English and Italian?

As many cross-cultural (intracultural) and intercultural studies have been conducted on different language-pairs, which have acknowledged culturally-driven differences in choosing how to perform requests, but no extensive research has been conducted on the language-pair of Italian/British-English, this study aims at filling this gap. Furthermore, as the main difference that can be detected between Italians and British-English concerns the level of (in)directness in performing such requests, investigating this language-pair will allow to shed light on such differences and to increase the understanding of culturally-driven differences, and hopefully will enable to overcome the tendency of stereotyping (e.g., Italians are rude because are direct).

5.2 What are the objective(s) for the project:

- Objectives are intermediate steps that will help you to meet your research aim(s)

Collect a body of role play data

Collect a body of reflective interview data

Complete an evaluative survey

5.3 Study design and data collection methods:

To include:

- a clear description of the study design and data collection methods
- a suitable design should reflect the aim(s) of the study
- This may include ethnography/observations, interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, document analysis etc.
 - **Ethnography/Observations**- what/who will be observed, by whom, for how long? What equipment (if any) will be used for recording etc.?
 - **Interviews**- who is conducting the interviews, how, where and when- by telephone/in person/skype; will they be recorded- how? How long will they last? How will the interview guide be developed? etc.
 - **Focus groups**- who is leading, how will they be organised, when and where will they take place, how will they be recorded? How long will they last? etc..
 - **Questionnaires**- who has designed the questionnaire, who will distribute it, how long will it take to complete etc.
 - **Document analysis**- what documents will be requested, where from, by whom, what permissions are in place for this etc.
 - **Experimental** – what tests/lab work will be undertaken on participants, by whom, is specialist training required before undertaking?
 - **Secondary analysis of previously collected data**- analysis of data that has been previously collected by a third party for research or other purposes, that is not publicly available e.g. healthcare, student, financial records. Please state whether the data set is identifiable or anonymised.

To address RQ1-2, a study, characterised by both a cross-cultural and an intercultural perspective will be conducted to identify request forms and politeness strategies used by British people and Italians. The data will be collected by a multi-method approach, including roleplays, retrospective interviews and evaluative surveys, and analysed by means of synchronic (socio-linguistic) qualitative discourse analysis (DA).

The synchronic investigation will be divided into two parts: a study of production and a study of reflections on performances, both with an intracultural and an intercultural component.

The study of performances (enacted with role-plays) will investigate: on an intracultural level, British English and Italian request strategies and any cross-cultural difference; on an intercultural level, whether such intracultural differences are reflected in the intercultural interactions between the two counterparts.

I will be conducting the role plays and the interviews, in person. They will be audio and/or video-recorded, depending on participants' preferences, will last around 30minutes/1hour. Scenarios will be designed with some clear instructions for the performance of open role plays. The interview guide will discuss aspects of the role plays and so the focus will depend mainly on the outcomes of the roleplay, but it will contain some preliminary questions on how they evaluated/perceived own and other's performance.

Following this, the study of reflections on performances will try to tease out how the participants perceived their and others' linguistic behaviours and to interpret and understand any episode of intercultural clash that occurred. To back up this data, some salient parts of the performances will be object of evaluative surveys by other two sets of participants.

I will design the written surveys, drawing on previous research and they will be composed of evaluative scales and space for comments on previous ratings; I will conduct them in person, by handing the surveys, or if not possible via Skype, by sharing with the participants the necessary files, and they will take around 30 minutes.

All the data collection, unless it will take place online via Skype (for the Evaluative surveys) will be conducted in private spaces agreed with the participants (e.g. private rooms in cafés, pubs and/or if possible, in private spaces in libraries or universities).

5.4 Data Analysis

To include:

- Specifically what data sets will be collected (name, date of birth, email address, ethnicity, health status, financial records, IP addresses, etc.)
- whether this data will be collected directly from participants (e.g. via questionnaires/interviews) or indirectly, from a third party (previously collected data set) and how i.e. web form, online application, paper form
- Detail the analysis methods that will be undertaken e.g. content analysis, framework analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis etc. and any statistical analyses.
- Describe how and by whom any data will be transcribed, coded, de-identified, stored, transferred, accessed, archived
- Any software used in the analysis should be specified and detailed how it will be used in the project

The data will be collected in form of roleplays, retrospective interviews and evaluative surveys. Only the name, contact details and cultural background/ethnicity will be recorded, but name and contact details will not be shared or used in the research, as the data will be pseudonymised as soon as the data collection is concluded. The role plays will be analysed with discourse analysis while the retrospective interviews will be analysed with content analysis. For the evaluative surveys, the data from the ratings on a Likert scale will be analysed statistically, while the open answers given in clarification of the ratings will be analysed with content analysis.

Any dealing with the data (collection, transcription, analysis, storage etc.) will only be handled by myself. Data will be securely password protected and stored on my Onedrive.

SECTION 6: RECRUITMENT

6.1 State the total number of planned participants and the sampling strategy; provide justification for this:

To include:

- The rationale behind the proposed size of the sample
- Will the sample size provide enough data to answer the research question?
- If sampling will be continued until saturation is reached, then this should be stated and linked to the research question
- Sampling strategy- is this random, snowball, purposive, convenience etc.
- What is the rationale for this- it should reflect the methodological framework for the study

There will be 136 participants in total: two sets of participants in the intracultural roleplays (and the retrospective interviews) (4 dyads made up of 8 Italians and 4 dyads made up of 8 British-English), two sets of participants in the intercultural roleplays (and the retrospective interviews) (2 sets of 10 dyads, composed

by 20 Italians and 20 British English), 2 sets of participants in the evaluative surveys, 20 participants for the evaluation of the intracultural data (10 Italians and 10 British-English) and 60 for the evaluation of the intercultural data (15 Italians and 15 British-English for the Intercultural roleplays in Italian and 15 Italians and 15 British-English participants for the Intercultural roleplays in English). Sampling strategy: snowball, according to specific criteria (i.e. English/Italians from English/Italian cultural background only, within 2-5 years of L2 experience, based in England/Italy).

The intracultural roleplays between Italians and the intercultural roleplays in Italian will take place in Italy. The intercultural roleplays between English and the intercultural roleplays in English will take place in England.

The rationale behind this design is to be able to grasp cross-cultural and intercultural request strategies, preferences and differences and investigate the evaluations behind certain choices and how own/others linguistic choices are perceived in a certain way and why.

The rationale behind the assumed appropriateness of the sample size and of the selection criteria is supported by previous and similar studies, whose design is similar in terms of sample size and design.

6.2 Where applicable, state the breakdown of participants by type and number of each type of participant, e.g. children (include age), parents, teachers, health care professionals etc.:

Type of Participant:

Number:

8+10 English-speaking participants in the UK (Intracultural roleplays and evaluative surveys)

8+10 Italian-speaking participants in Italy (Intracultural roleplays and evaluative surveys)

10 Italian participants in the UK (Intercultural roleplays in UK)

10 English participants in the UK (Intercultural roleplays in UK)

10 Italian participants in Italy (Intercultural roleplays in Italy)

10 English participants in Italy (Intercultural roleplays in Italy)

15 Italians and 15 English participants in the UK (Evaluating Intercultural roleplays in English -UK)

15 Italians and 15 English participants in Italy (Evaluating Intercultural roleplays in Italian - Italy)

6.3 Please provide clear inclusion criteria:

For the intracultural data: Italian only cultural background (i.e. who speak Italian as a first language and had their primary socialisation in Italy), based in Italy, for Italians; British only cultural background (i.e. who speak English as a first language and had their primary socialisation in England), based in England, for the English; this to minimise as much as possible exposure to other cultures. For the intercultural roleplays: Italians only cultural background, for Italians, British only cultural background, for the English, in the same terms and for the same reasons as above; for the intercultural roleplays in Italian the participants will be based in Italy, unless not possible, and in the latter case they will be based in England; for the intercultural roleplays in English, they will be based in England; also, for the intercultural data participants will be selected with an experience of knowledge of the language and/or of living in the target language country for a period between 2 and 5 years to ensure consistency.

6.4 Please provide clear exclusion criteria:

participants with mixed cultural background for the above reasons.

6.5 Please detail how participants will be recruited to the study:

To include:

- How participants will be identified/screened and approached; by whom?
- Where participants will be recruited from and when?
- Detail the source of any personal information that may be used to identify participants. If this information will be accessed by someone outside the team who would have access to this information as part of their day to day role, the reason for this should be explained, and permissions detailed e.g. healthcare, student records etc.
- Will any vulnerable groups be recruited?
- What materials will be used to recruit participants- please provide copies of posters, leaflets, invitation emails, etc.
- Where will the above materials be advertised: list and provide details of locations, websites, social media etc.
- Will any recruitment tools be used e.g. SONA- please specify and provide details.

Participants will be identified through a snowball sampling procedure, by myself directly, as soon as the ethical form will be approved; where the snowball procedure is not possible, they will be personally recruited from language cafés, interNations website and/or other social groups identified via Facebook, Meetup. In case of language cafés, I will go to those cafés to network with English speaking Italian and with Italians; in case of interNations website, I will search for resident in Italy (ideally in/close to Florence, as it is my hometown, so more feasible to conduct the roleplays) who are originally from England and have been living in Italy for 2-5 years, I will contact and network with them. The minimum personal information as name and contact details will be only used to categorise participants, whose data will then be pseudonymised. Therefore any personal information will not be used in the research and will be securely stored and accessed only by myself.

SECTION 7: INFORMED CONSENT

7.1 Please detail the process for obtaining informed consent.

Informed consent must be obtained prior to the participant undergoing any research activities that are specifically for the purposes of the study. This should involve discussion with potential participants or their legally acceptable representative; the presentation of written materials e.g. participant information leaflet(s) –PIL(s) and consent form, and the opportunity to ask questions.

To include:

- *How and when informed consent will be obtained- written, verbal etc. provide details and justification. Justification must also be provided if informed consent will not be sought or if consent will be assumed (please note this needs to be appropriate to the study type).*
- *Who will be taking consent? What training has been undertaken for this?*
- *When and how potential participants will be issued with the information leaflet, in what format and how long they will be given to consider taking part?*
- *Does the study involve children- if so, will consent be obtained from parents, if not provide clear justification why not.*
- *Are the informed consent materials appropriate for the target audience- consider age / language / literacy levels / cultures etc.*

Informed consent will be obtained in a written form, by signing the form after reading the information sheet that I have prepared specifically for this data collection. These documents will be provided to the participants at least 1 week in advance before the data collection takes place, so that they have the chance to familiarise with the content and take a properly informed decision. The consent forms will therefore be handed on the day of the data collection and be signed by the participants and by myself.

7.2 Please detail how participants withdraw from the study if they have requested to do so.

The process by which an individual can withdraw their participation from the study without giving a reason or experiencing any detrimental effects e.g. should they not wish to continue with their participation in an interview or focus group.

To include:

- *Consideration for any data already collected up until this point- whether it is possible for this to be removed. E.g. it may not be possible to identify data once submitted for an anonymous survey. This needs to be clear in the participant information leaflet (PIL).*
- *Researchers should specify up to what point participants can withdraw their data from a study and how a participant would request this- this also needs to be clear in the participant information leaflet (PIL).*
- *Consideration should be given to when data will be anonymised, analysed, published etc. make sure it is possible/feasible for data to be withdrawn if this is being offered to participants. It may be appropriate to provide a time frame for withdrawal.*

As specified in the information sheet, they will be able to withdraw, without giving any reason, at any point until the data analysis starts, by simply communicating this to myself. This deadline is because, as explained in the PIL, once the data analysis starts the data will be pseudonymised, therefore it will not be possible to identify participants' contributions. In order to exercise this right, just before the data analysis starts they will be informed, so that they will be able to withdraw, if they wish so.

SECTION 8: DATA COLLECTION, USE & STORAGE (DPA 2018 & GDPR)

For projects involving processing of personally identifiable data, please map the data flow to indicate the data controller(s) and data processor(s). This can be submitted as a separate document if necessary, please see accompanying guidance note from the Information Data Compliance Team.

8.1 Does the project involve the collection, analysis or storage of personally identifiable data? Yes

'Personal data' is any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person- a 'data subject'.

An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier (such as a name, an identification number, location data, financial data, opinion, an online identifier), or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, socio-economic, cultural, race, religion, trade union membership, political beliefs, medical, gender or social identity of that natural person.

If yes, please provide details of what will be collected: name and contact details

8.2. Does the project involve the collection, analysis or storage of any personally identifiable special category data or criminal offence data? No

Special category data includes personal data which is by its nature, particularly sensitive in relation to fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals such as: racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data (for the purpose of identifying a natural person), data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation. This type of data merits specific protection as the context of its processing. Failure to handle this data correctly could result in significant risks to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individuals.

If yes, please provide details of what will be collected and for what purpose:

What measures are being implemented to reduce or eliminate the risk to these participants' data for the duration of the period that their personal data is collected and stored? Please see accompanying guidance note for more information.

8.3 Does the project involve the collection or analysis of personal data relating to children under 13 or vulnerable groups? No

UK law provides that for data protection purposes an individual aged under 13 years old is considered a child. For the purposes of the GDPR, a child is someone aged under 16 years old, although Member States are able to reduce this age. Please consider Member State law as Parental/Guardian consent will be required for a child participating in the research.

If yes, please provide details of what will be collected:

For what purpose do you need to process the children's or vulnerable person's data?

What measures are being implemented to reduce or eliminate the risk to these participants' data for the duration of the period that their personal data is collected and stored?

8.4 Who will have access to the study data?

Include individuals internal and external to the University and what level of access they have to the data e.g. anonymised, pseudonymised, identifiable etc.

Please note you will need to hold a University approved data sharing/processing agreement with each third party (external to the University) with whom data is to be shared.

I will be the only one who have access to all the identifiable data; my supervisors will be able to access the pseudonymised data.

8.5 During the project, will data be hosted on any external platforms or use new technology? No

e.g. Apps, online survey tools (qualtrics, Bristol online surveys etc.), recruitment tools (Prolific, SONA etc.), cloud hosting tools.

If yes, please provide details of the system(s) and how they operate:

Have you contacted Information Security (informationsecurity@warwick.ac.uk) regarding whether these technologies will be required to go through the Information Assurance workbook approval process? <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/idc/informationsecurity/faqs/purchasingissues/> Select

<p>How and when will the data be deleted and who by?</p> <p>With participants' consent the pseudonymised data will be preserved for at least 10 years; personal data will be stored till the end of the project and the conclusion of the examination process. After this the data will be deleted by myself.</p>
<p>8.6 Will any research activities be audio or video recorded? Yes</p> <p><i>This needs to be clear in the participant information leaflet and consent form.</i></p> <p>If yes, please provide details of what will be recorded, how long it will be kept, how it will be stored securely and how it will be deleted: Roleplays will be audio/video-recorded, depending on the consent obtained. Retrospective interviews will be audio-recorded. They will be kept for at least the conclusion of the project and of the examination process, unless participants will have consented for the researcher to keep the data securely stored in her Onedrive for at least 10 years for using such data for further research or publication on the same field (interactions). The data will be password protected. It will then be deleted by myself.</p>
<p>8.7 Will data be shared with any organisation external to the University for processing? No</p> <p><i>e.g. external transcription services, external statistics support, archiving etc.</i></p> <p>If yes, please provide details of the sharing arrangements: clarify whether the data shared will be identifiable, the external organisation to which it will be sent and what contracts/arrangements are in place to safeguard the data and ensure the data processors/controllers will comply with data protection requirements:</p>
<p>8.8 Please detail how, where, in what format and for how long the research data will be stored securely, including on back up storage.</p> <p><i>e.g. hard/electronic copies, locked filing cabinets in researcher's office, encrypted files, password protected devices, Warwick servers. Please also consider consent forms here. These should be stored separately to research data.</i></p> <p>As above stated, it will be stored securely for a minimum period up to the conclusion of the examination process, and if specific consent for at least 10 years; it will be stored in my Onedrive, data will be secured and encrypted with password.</p>
<p>8.9 For this project, will data be processed, (to include the collation, collecting, distributing, sharing, accessing, reviewing, amending, deletion) transferred or stored in any Countries outside UK? No</p> <p><i>e.g. the use of transcribing service outside the UK, market research company, cloud hosting provider</i></p> <p>If yes, please provide details of the country/countries and the collection/transfer/storage arrangements:</p>
<p>8.10 Describe compliance and proportionality measures in place to satisfy the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR.</p> <p><i>e.g. how will you ensure: fairness and transparency to research participants, data quality, data minimisation (only collect data which is necessary for the purpose(s) of the study), purpose limitation (no further processing of the data for purposes incompatible to those for which it was collected), de-identification of the data as soon as possible, appropriate technical and organisational measures in place to avoid unauthorised access and accidental loss or damage to data etc. Please see accompanying guidance note from the Information Data Compliance Team to help answer this question.</i></p> <p>The PIL will be detailed with all the necessary information to allow participants to take an informed decision. Data minimisation and purpose limitation will be assured by storing only minimum personal information which will not be used in the research, but only kept for categorisation of the participants; de-identification will be assured as data will be pseudonymised as soon as data analysis starts; data will be protected with a password to avoid possible loss of the data. Backup with protected password will be done to avoid damage of data.</p>
<p>8.11 Is it anticipated that there will be any future use of the data? Yes</p> <p>If yes, please provide details (if known at this stage). This should be clear in the Participant Information Leaflet and on the consent form if there is potential for future use of this data: It will be asked in the consent form if participants consent that their data will be kept and used after the end of the project for further research, analysis, investigation, publication or presentation on the same topic: the study of interactions.</p>

SECTION 9: DISSEMINATION

HSSREC Application Form for Ethical Approval; version number: 1.3; Version date: 03/04/2019

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Please describe the dissemination arrangements for the study:

To include:

- What will happen to the results at the end of the study
- Will this study have any pathways to impact? ('Pathways to Impact' are activities designed to ensure any potential impact is realised, measured and evidenced.)
- How and where will the results be reported/published?
- Are there any plans to notify/debrief the participants of the outcome of the study, either by provision of the publication, or via a specifically designed newsletter, presentation etc.?
- If it is possible for the participant to specifically request results from the researcher when would this information be provided e.g. after the Final Study Report had been compiled or after the results had been published?

The results at the end of the study will be included in the thesis and may also be used in publications and presentations on the same subject. As detailed in the PIL the participants will be able to ask to be informed on the results and to be provided of a summary, once the final study report is compiled.

SECTION 10: FURTHER INFORMATION (OPTIONAL)

Please provide any further details/information relevant to this application that may aid the ethical review process.

To include:

- For complex studies with multiple work packages, collaborators or steering groups, applicants may wish to submit a protocol or supplementary documents in addition to this application form detailing the roles and responsibilities of each party.
- Projects that require further approvals e.g. HRA approval for research in the NHS may also wish to submit a protocol for review.
- Peer review
- Patient and public involvement
- Flow diagram
- Data management plan

SECTION 11: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

HSSREC will need to review all participant facing documents associated with this application.


There may be more than one type of each document for each study, i.e. multiple participant information leaflets if there are different participant groups, or work packages.

Please specify below, which documents have been submitted with this application (where applicable):

- Participant information leaflet(s)
- Consent form(s)
- Poster(s)/advertisement(s)
- Invitation email(s)
- Questionnaire(s)/Survey question(s)
- Interview schedule(s)/topic guide(s)
- Data Collection form
- Data flow map
- Data Management Plan
- Risk assessment
- Protocol (optional- needs to be consistent with the application)
- Other, please specify: List of feasible scenarios for the roleplays

Appendix 7: Information sheet for roleplays and retrospective interviews

Appendix 7.a: English version



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR ROLEPLAYS AND INTERVIEWS

Study Title: A cross-cultural investigation of request strategies in Italian and British-English and how they are performed in the intercultural interactions.

Investigator: Valentina Bartali

Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

Please ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Who is organising and funding the study?

This study is being undertaken as part of a PhD program at the University of Warwick. It is an unfunded study.

What is the study about?

The study is about interactions, about how Italians/British-English people communicate, among themselves and between each other, particularly in making requests.

What would taking part involve?

The study will collect role plays of conversations. If you decide to take part in the roleplays, you will be asked to perform up to eight fictional scenarios in pair, where one participant performs a request (for instance, to ask for a lift/ to stop making a noise/ to borrow money/ ask for a favour; request assistance/a service, within offices/shops/restaurant contexts; request information) and the other has to respond. For each scenario you will be provided with some information and guidelines, but for the rest you will have to improvise. The roleplays will last between 30 minutes and 1 hour, and will be, with your consent, audio and/or video-recorded.

At the end of the roleplays you will also be invited to participate in an interview to discuss your reactions to the roleplays and how you assessed the social situation (e.g. in terms of distance and weight of imposition). The individual interview will last maximum 30 minutes, and will be, with your consent, audio and/or video-recorded.

Do I have to take part?

1

No. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and choosing not to take part will not affect you in any way. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign the consent form provided to confirm that you agree to take part.

You can also choose to withdraw your participation at any time before the data analysis starts, without giving a reason. Further details about withdrawing from the study are provided later on in this document.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this project.

What are the possible disadvantages, side effects or risks, of taking part in this study?

There are no disadvantages, side effects, risks, and/or discomfort involved in taking part in this study. If, for any reason, you feel uncomfortable during the study, you have the right to pause or cancel your participation and this will not affect you or your circumstances in any way.

Expenses and payments

There are no costs involved for you in taking part in this study and no payment will be provided.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

Yes, I will follow strict ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence. Your data will be kept confidential during the study and after the study, and your name, identity and other personal information (e.g. contact details) will not be shared with anyone and will not be used in the research.

Your data will be collected in person, to investigate how interactions are performed. Although the roleplays and the individual interviews will be audio and/or video-recorded, these recordings will be kept confidential and will not be seen or heard by anyone other than the researcher and her thesis supervisors. The data will be transcribed by me and only these transcriptions will be used in the thesis or in any publications or presentation about the research.

To distinguish your contribution, a pseudonym will be used. Thus, although direct quotes from your contributions might be used in the research report/publication, there will be no way to identify you.

You will be asked whether you give permission for the audio or video-recording to be used with another set of participants for the second stage of this research, where these participants will be asked to comment on your performance. In case you will not give permission, only the transcripts will be provided to these participants.

The data will be stored in cloud storage and will be password protected to ensure security. I will be the only person who can access the data. The data will be stored at least for the duration of the research project and until the examination process is completed. However, if you accept to give specific consent for the data to be kept beyond this project, to be used by me for further research on interactions, the data will be securely accessed and kept, as

explained above, for at least 10 years.

What will happen to the data collected about me?

As a publicly-funded organisation, the University of Warwick have to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information from people who have agreed to take part in research... This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, such as this, we will use your data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the research study.

We will be using information from you in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. We are committed to protecting the rights of individuals in line with data protection legislation.

Research data will be pseudonymised as quickly as possible after data collection. This means all direct and indirect identifiers will be removed from the research data and will be replaced with a participant number. The key to identification will be stored separately and securely to the research data to safeguard your identity. Once the data analysis has begun, it will not be possible to withdraw the data.

Data Sharing

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. The University of Warwick has in place policies and procedures to keep your data safe.

This data may also be used for future research, subject to your consent at the outset of this research project, as mentioned above.

For further information, please refer to the University of Warwick Research Privacy Notice which is available here: <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/idc/dataprotection/privacynotices/researchprivacynotice> or by contacting the Information and Data Compliance Team at GDPR@warwick.ac.uk.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on being part of the study?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate will not affect you in any way. If you decide to take part in the study, you will need to sign a consent form, which states that you have given your consent to participate.

If you agree to participate, you may nevertheless withdraw from the study at any point before data analysis begins, without giving a reason, without affecting you in any way.

You have the right to withdraw from the study completely after the completion of the data collection, thus to refuse that your data will be used, at any point before the data analysis starts. You will be informed when this will happen so that you have the option of withdrawing and of declining any further contact by study staff after you withdraw...

To safeguard your rights, we will keep the minimum personally-identifiable information collected (e.g. your name and surname) secure in line with the University's Information and Data Compliance policies.

What will happen to the results of the study?

Pseudonymised excerpts from your contributions in the roleplays and from the individual interviews will be used for my PhD research, for academic and professional publications and for presentations at Conferences. If you wish to receive a copy of my findings, I will provide a summary of these to you. The results (which will only include pseudonymised data) might be discussed with my supervisors, with fellow research students or other academic staff from my academic department at the University of Warwick.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the Graduate Progress Committee, Centre of Applied Linguistics.

Who should I contact if I want further information?

If you have any questions about any aspect of the study, or your participation in it, not answered by this participant information sheet, please contact:

Me, the researcher: Valentina Bartali, Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK, Tel.: +44 (0)7479561429, Email: Valentina.Bartali@warwick.ac.uk

My supervisor: Prof. Tony Liddicoat, Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK, Tel: +44 (0) 2476523944, Email: A.Liddicoat@warwick.ac.uk

Who should I contact if I wish to make a complaint?

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm you might have suffered will be addressed. Please address your complaint to the person below, who is a senior University of Warwick official entirely independent of this study:

Head of Research Governance

Research & Impact Services
University House
University of Warwick
Coventry
CV4 8UW
Email: researchgovernance@warwick.ac.uk
Tel: 024 76 522746

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer, Anjali Bajaj, Information and Data Director who will investigate the matter: DPO@warwick.ac.uk.

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not lawful you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Sheet

FOGLIO INFORMATIVO PER I PARTECIPANTI ALLE ROLEPLAYS E ALLE INTERVISTE

Titolo della ricerca: Un'investigazione cross-culturale sulle strategie di richiesta usate nella lingua Italiana ed in quella Inglese e su come queste sono realizzate negli incontri interculturali.

Ricercatore: Valentina Bartali

Introduzione

Siete invitati a prendere parte a uno studio di ricerca. Prima di decidere, e' importante che capiate il motivo per cui la ricerca viene condotta e cosa implica la vostra partecipazione. Dunque, e' importante che leggiate le seguenti informazioni con attenzione. Se volete, potete parlare con altri di questo studio.

Non esitate a chiedere qualsiasi chiarimento o ulteriore informazione, e prendetevi il tempo necessario per decidere se volete o meno partecipare a questo sondaggio.

Chi organizza e supporta finanziariamente questo studio?

Questo studio e' condotto come parte di un programma di dottorato svolto presso la Università di Warwick e non è finanziato.

Quale e' l'oggetto dello studio?

Lo studio riguarda le interazioni, e vuole investigare come gli Italiani e gli Inglesi comunicano, tra di loro (es. Italiani con Italiani) o l'uno con l'altro (es. Italiani e Inglesi), in particolare quando devono fare richieste.

Che cosa comporta prendere parte in questo studio?

Questo studio avra' come oggetto roleplays (giochi di ruolo). Se decidete di prendervi parte, vi sarà chiesto di simulare fino a otto diversi scenari, in coppia con un altro partecipante, dove uno dei partecipanti farà delle richieste (per es, chiedere un passaggio/di smettere di fare rumore/ di prendere in prestito dei soldi/ un favore; richiedere assistenza/ un servizio in un ufficio/ al ristorante/ in un negozio), mentre l'altro dovrà rispondere. Per ogni scenario vi verranno fornite alcune informazioni e direttive, ma per il resto dovrete improvvisare. Le roleplays dureranno tra i 30 minuti e 1 ora e saranno, con il vostro consenso, audio e/o video-registrate.

Alla fine delle roleplays sarete invitati a partecipare a una intervista per discutere le vostre reazioni alle roleplays e come avete valutato la situazione sociale, per es. in termini di distanza e peso della richiesta. Le interviste, condotte individualmente, dureranno massimo 30 minuti e saranno, con il vostro consenso, audio e/o video-registrate.

Devo prendere parte?

No. Ovviamente la partecipazione a questo studio è completamente volontaria e potete scegliere di non prenderne parte senza alcun problema. Se decidete di partecipare, vi sarà richiesto di firmare un modulo per il consenso informato, dove confermerete che accettate di prendere parte a questo studio.

Potete comunque decidere di ritirarvi in qualsiasi momento, fino a che l'analisi dei dati avrà inizio, senza dover dare alcuna spiegazione. Per ulteriori dettagli sulla procedura di ritiro si veda p. 3 di questo foglio informativo.

Quali sono i possibili benefici connessi con il prendere parte a questo studio?

Non ci sono benefici diretti per voi connessi a questa partecipazione.

Quali sono i possibili svantaggi, effetti collaterali o rischi connessi con il prendere parte a questo studio?

Non ci sono svantaggi, effetti collaterali, rischi e/o disagi connessi col prender parte a questo studio. Ad ogni modo, se per qualunque motivo doveste sentirvi a disagio durante lo studio, avete il diritto di sospendere o interrompere la vostra partecipazione, senza alcuna conseguenza negativa.

Spese e pagamenti

Prendere parte a questo studio non comporta alcun costo, e non sono previsti pagamenti per la vostra partecipazione.

La mia partecipazione sarà mantenuta confidenziale?

Sì. Lo studio sarà condotto nel rispetto della normativa etica e legale ed ogni informazione che vi riguarda sarà usata con riservatezza. I vostri dati saranno tenuti segreti durante e dopo lo studio, ed il vostro nome, identità o qualsiasi altro dato personale (es. numero di telefono) non saranno condivisi con nessuno e non saranno usati nella ricerca.

I dati saranno raccolti di persona, con lo scopo di investigare come le interazioni vengono realizzate. Sebbene le roleplays e le interviste verranno audio e/o video-registrate, queste registrazioni saranno conservate con riservatezza e non saranno esaminate o ascoltate da nessuno altro al di fuori di me e dei miei supervisor. I dati saranno trascritti da me e solo tali trascrizioni verranno usate nella tesi o in qualsiasi altra pubblicazione o presentazione relativa a questa ricerca.

Per distinguere il vostro contributo, saranno usati pseudonimi. Dunque, anche se nella tesi o in altra pubblicazione connessa con questa ricerca dovessero essere usate citazioni dirette prese dai vostri contributi e/o commenti, non sarà possibile identificarvi in alcun modo.

Vi verrà richiesto, se date il vostro consenso a che le audio e/o video-registrazioni possano essere usate con altri partecipanti della seconda fase di questa ricerca, dove a questi partecipanti verrà richiesto di commentare sulle vostre esecuzioni delle roleplays. Qualora non doveste prestare il vostro consenso, a questi partecipanti verranno fornite solo le trascrizioni.

I dati saranno conservati in una memoria di archiviazione online (OneDrive) a cui solo io avrò accesso e sarà protetta con password per garantirne la sicurezza. I dati saranno conservati, conservati, come minimo, per tutta la durata della ricerca e fino a che la procedura di

esaminazione sarà conclusa. Ad ogni modo, se consentite a dare il vostro specifico consenso affinché i vostri dati vengano conservati anche oltre questo progetto, per essere usati per studi futuri su interazioni, i vostri dati saranno conservati come sopra spiegato per almeno 10 anni.

Che cosa succederà ai dati raccolti che mi riguardano?

L'università di Warwick, in qualità di organizzazione finanziata pubblicamente, ha il dovere di assicurare che le informazioni personali che permettono di identificare le persone che hanno deciso di prendere parte nella ricerca possono essere utilizzate solo se vi è un pubblico interesse.

Questo significa che quando decidete di prendere parte ad uno studio di ricerca come questo, i vostri dati saranno usati nelle modalità necessarie per condurre la ricerca e analizzarne i risultati.

I vostri dati saranno usati per lo svolgimento dello studio e dunque noi agiremo come i responsabili del controllo dati per questo studio. Ci impegnamo a proteggere i diritti degli individui in linea con la legislazione sulla protezione dati.

I dati raccolti saranno pseudonomizzati il prima possibile non appena terminata la raccolta. Questo significa che qualsiasi diretto o indiretto elemento identificativo sarà rimosso dai dati e sostituito con un numero identificativo del partecipante. Elementi identificativi verranno salvati e memorizzati separatamente in modo da salvaguardare la vostra identità. Per questo motivo, *una volta che la analisi dei dati sarà iniziata, non sarà più possibile ritirare il consenso dall'uso dei dati.*

Condivisione dei Dati

I vostri diritti di accesso, modifica e spostamento delle vostre informazioni sono limitati, in quanto abbiamo bisogno di usare le vostre informazioni in modi specifici di modo da assicurare che la ricerca sia accurata e affidabile. L'Università di Warwick ha in atto procedure che garantiscono il mantenimento sicuro dei dati.

I vostri dati potranno essere usati per studi futuri, con il vostro consenso, come menzionato sopra.

Per ulteriori informazioni, potete controllare il link della Università di Warwick, disponibile qui: <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/idc/dataprotection/privacynotices/researchprivacynotice> oppure potete contattare il gruppo responsabile per il trattamento delle informazioni: GDPR@warwick.ac.uk.

Che cosa succede se decido di non essere più parte di questo studio?

La partecipazione a questo studio è completamente volontaria. Siete liberi di rifiutare di parteciparvi senza alcuna conseguenza negativa. Se decidete di partecipare, vi sarà richiesto di firmare il consenso informato con il quale confermate la vostra partecipazione.

Se decidete di partecipare, potete comunque ritirarvi in qualsiasi momento, fino a quando avrà inizio l'analisi, senza dover dare alcuna ragione e senza alcuna conseguenza negativa.

Avete il diritto di ritirarvi completamente dallo studio dopo che avete partecipato alla raccolta dei dati, e quindi di rifiutare che i vostri dati siano utilizzati, in qualsiasi momento purché

prima che abbia inizio l'analisi dei dati. Verrete informati di quando l'analisi dei dati sarà iniziata di modo da darvi la possibilità di ritirarvi e di decidere di non essere più contattati dallo staff preposto alla ricerca.

Al fine di garantire i vostri diritti, verrà conservato solo il minimo indispensabile dei vostri dati personali che permettono la vostra identificazione (es. nome e cognome), in modo sicuro ed in linea con le normative della Università.

Che cosa succederà ai risultati di questo studio?

Passaggi pseudonimizzati presi dai vostri contributi durante le roleplays e dai commenti dati durante le interviste saranno usati nella mia ricerca di dottorato, per pubblicazioni accademiche e professionali e per presentazioni a Conferenze. Se desiderate ricevere copia dei miei risultati, vi fornirò un sommario degli stessi. I risultati (che conterranno solo dati pseudonimizzati) potranno essere discussi con i miei supervisori, con i miei colleghi universitari o con altri membri accademici del mio dipartimento all'Università di Warwick.

Chi ha revisionato questo studio?

Questo studio è stato revisionato ed approvato dalla Commissione preposta presso il Centro di Lingue Applicate (Graduate Progress Committee).

Chi devo contattare se voglio ulteriori informazioni?

Se avete domande riguardo qualsiasi aspetto di questo studio, o sulla vostra partecipazione, che non ha trovato risposta in questo foglio informativo, si prega di contattare:

Me, la ricercatrice: Valentina Bartali, Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK, Tel.: +44 (0)7479561429, Email: Valentina.Bartali@warwick.ac.uk

Il mio supervisore: Prof. Tony Liddicoat, Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK, Tel: +44 (0) 2476523944, Email: A.Liddicoat@warwick.ac.uk

Chi dovrei contattare se voglio fare un reclamo?

Per qualsiasi reclamo riguardo il modo in cui lo studio è stato condotto o per altri disagi che potete aver sofferto, si prega di rivolgersi alla persona indicata qui sotto, il quale è un Ufficiale della Università di Warwick completamente indipendente da questo studio:

Head of Research Governance

Research & Impact Services

University House

University of Warwick

Coventry

CV4 8UW

Email: researchgovernance@warwick.ac.uk

Tel: 024 76 522746

Se desiderate fare un reclamo relativo a come sono stati trattati i vostri dati personali, potete


contattare il nostro **Ufficiale preposto alla protezione dei dati, Anjeli Bajaj**, il quale si prenderà cura di investigare il caso: DPO@warwick.ac.uk.

Se non siete soddisfatti sulla risposta ricevuta o credete che il nostro modo di trattare i dati personali non sia in linea con la legge potete rivolgere reclamo al seguente ufficio:
Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Grazie per aver dedicato il vostro tempo a leggere questo foglio informativo

Appendix 8: Consent form templates for roleplays and retrospective interviews

Appendix 8.a: English version



WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

CONSENT FORM - ROLEPLAYS (AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS)

Participant ID:

Title of Project: *A cross-cultural investigation of request strategies in Italian and British-English and how they are performed in the intercultural interactions.*

Name of researcher: *Valentina Bartali*

Name of their Academic Supervisors: *Prof Tony Liddicoat; Dr Troy McConachy*

Please initial the boxes

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation in the data collection is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. I also understand that I can withdraw from the study, after data collection is completed, at any point until the data analysis begins and that I can refuse my data to be used and that I will be informed about when it starts.
3. I consent to the roleplays (and the interview, where applicable) being audio- and video-recorded (cross if necessary if you do not agree to one of the two).
4. I consent to the use of the audio/video-recording in the second part of the research and that other participants will listen to or watch them.
5. I consent to the use of pseudonymised verbatim quotations in publications resulting from this study (the thesis or further publications on it, presentations at conferences).
6. I understand that my data will be securely stored at least until the research project and the examination process has completed.

7. I am happy for my data to be used by Valentina Bartali in future research on interaction and I give permission for my data to be securely stored for this reason for a minimum of 10 years.

8. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher
taking consent

Date

Signature



CONSENSO INFORMATO- ROLEPLAYS (E INTERVISTE)

ID del Partecipante:

Titolo del Progetto: *Un'investigazione cross-culturale sulle strategie di richiesta usate nella lingua Italiana ed in quella Inglese e su come queste sono realizzate negli incontri interculturali.*

Nome del ricercatore: *Valentina Bartali*

Nomi dei Supervisor: *Prof Tony Liddicoat; Dr Troy McConachy*

Si metta una crocetta ove acconsentite

1. Confermo di aver letto e compreso il foglio informativo relativo allo studio di cui sopra, e di aver avuto la possibilità di valutare le informazioni ivi provviste, di porre domande e di ottenere risposte soddisfacenti.
2. Ho compreso che la mia partecipazione ai roleplay è volontaria e che sono libero/a di ritirarmi senza dover dare alcuna spiegazione, senza che i miei diritti siano in alcun modo pregiudicati. Ho inoltre compreso che posso ritirarmi dallo studio, dopo che la raccolta dati si è conclusa, in qualsiasi momento prima che l'analisi dei dati venga iniziata e rifiutare che i miei dati vengano utilizzati, e che verrò informato/a su tale inizio.
3. Do il consenso alla audio e video-registrazione (cancellare, se necessario, se non consentite a una delle due) delle roleplays e delle interviste.
4. Do il consenso all'uso delle audio/video-registrazioni nella seconda parte della ricerca e acconsento che altri partecipanti ascoltino o guardino le registrazioni.
5. Do il consenso all'uso di citazioni pseudonimizzate, prese dai miei contributi, nelle pubblicazioni risultanti da questo studio (la tesi o altre pubblicazioni future attinenti ad essa, presentazioni a conferenze).
6. Ho compreso che i miei dati saranno conservati in modo sicuro almeno fino alla conclusione del progetto di ricerca e al processo di esaminazione.

7. Acconsento a che i miei dati siano usati da Valentina Bartali in ricerche future su interazioni e do il consenso a che i miei dati siano conservati in modo sicuro, a tal fine, per un minimo di 10 anni.

8. Acconsento a prendere parte allo studio di cui sopra.

Nome del Partecipante

Data

Firma

Nome del Ricercatore
ricevente il consenso

Data

Firma

Appendix 9: List of roleplays with ratings given by participants

Appendix 9.a: Intracultural roleplays with ratings given by participants

RP2	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
I1	(S)3;(H)2	(S)3; (H)1	2	2	2
I2	(S-H)3	(S)3; (H)2	2	2	1
I3	(S-H)3	(S)1; (H)2	2	2	4
I4	(S-H)3	(S-H)2	2	2	2
Averages of Italian Ss' rating > D= 3 ; W= 2.25 > ratings between 1-3					
E1	(S-H)3	(S-H)1	1	2	1.5
E2	(S-H)3	(S)2.5;(H)2	2	2.5	2
E3	(S-H)3	(S)3;(H)2	1	1	2
E4	(S-H)3	(S)3.5;(H)1.5	1	1	2
Averages of British-English Ss' rating > D= 3 ; W= 2.5 > ratings between 1-3.5					

RP3	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
I1	(S-H) 1	(S)4; (H)2	1	1	2
I2	(S-H) 1	(S)2; (H)3	2	2	2
I3	(S-H) 1	(S)3; (H)4	3	3	3
I4	(S-H) 1	(S)4; (H)3	1	1	2
Averages of Italian Ss' rating > D= 1 ; W= 3.25 > ratings between 2-4					
E1	(S-H)1	(S)4; (H)2	1	2	1
E2	(S)1; (H)1.5	(S)4;(H)3	2	3	3
E3	(S-H)1	(S-H)4	2	2	2
E4	(S-H)1	(S)4;(H)3	1	1	2
Averages of British-English Ss' rating > D= 1 ; W= 4 > all ratings of 4					

RP4	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
I1	(S-H)1	(S)2; (H)3	1	2	2
I2	(S-H)1	(S)3; (H)2	1	2	2
I3	(S-H)1	(S-H)2	3	3	3
I4	(S-H)1	(S)2; (H)4	2	2	2
Averages of Italian Ss' rating > D= 1 ; W= 2.75 > ratings between 2-3					
E1	(S)2; (H)1	(S)3; (H)2	1	3	1
E2	(S)1.5; (H)1	(S)3.5;(H)2	2	2.5	2
E3	(S)2; (H)1	(S)4;(H)2	1	2	2
E4	(S)1; (H)2	(S)3;(H)2.5	2	2	1
Averages of British-English Ss' rating > D= 1.62 ; W= 3.37 > ratings between 3-4					

RP5	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
I1	(S)2;(1)3	(S-H)1	2	2	2
I2	(S-H)3	(S)2; (H)3	1	2	2
I3	(S-H)3	(S)3; (H)1	2	2	1
I4	(S-H)3	(S)2; (H)3	2	2	2
Averages of Italian Ss' rating > D= 2.75 ; W= 2 > ratings between 1-3					
E1	(S-H)3	(S-H)1	1	1	1
E2	(S-H)3	(S)2;(H)3	1	1.5	2
E3	(S-H)3	(S-H)2	1	1	1
E4	(S-H)3	(S)2;(H)3	1	1	1
Averages of British-English Ss' rating > D= 3 ; W= 1.75 > ratings between 1-2					

RP6	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
I1	(S)2; (H)3	(S-H)2	1	1	1
I2	(S)3; (H)2	(S)5; (H)2	1	1	1
I3	(S)2; (H)3	(S)2; (H)4	2	3	2
I4	(S-H)3	(S)4; (H)2	3	2	4
Averages of Italian Ss' rating > D= 2.5 ; W= 3.25 > ratings between 2-5					
E1	(S-H)2	(S)4; (H)2	1	2	1
E2	(S)2.5; (H)2	(S)4;(H)3.5	1.5	2	2
E3	(S-H)2	(S-H)4	1	2	1
E4	(S)2; (H)3	(S)4;(H)3	1	1	1
Averages of British-English Ss' rating > D= 2.75 ; W= 4 > all ratings of 4					

RP7	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
I1	(2)1	(1)1;(1)3	2	2	2
I2	(2)1	(2)1	2	3	3
I3	(2)1	(1)2; (1)1	4	3	2
I4	(2)1	(2)2	2	2	2
Averages of Italian Ss' rating > D= 1 ; W= 1.5 > ratings between 1-2					
E1	(2)1	(1)2;(1)1	2	2	2
E2	(2)1	(1)2;(1)1	3	3	3
E3	(2)1	(2)1;	4	4	2
E4	E-E-2(N/A)				
Averages of British-English Ss' rating > D= 1 ; W= 1.7 > ratings between 1-2					

RP8	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
I1	(S)3; (H)2	(S)2; (H)3	2	2	2
I2	(S-H) 3	(S)4; (H)2	1	1	1
I3	(S-H) 3	(S)3; (H)2	3	3	3
I4	(S-H) 3	(S)3; (H)4	2	2	3
Averages of Italian Ss' rating > D= 3; W= 3 > ratings between 2-4					
E1	(S-H)3	(S)3; (H)2	1	4	1
E2	(S-H)3	(S)1.5;(H)3	2	2.5	3.8
E3	(S-H)3	(S-H)4	2	3.5	2
E4	(S-H)3	(S)3;(H)1	2	2	2
Averages of British-English Ss' rating > D= 3 ; W= 2.87 > ratings between 1.5-4					

RP9	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
I1	(S-H) 2	(S)4; (H)4.5	1	2	1
I2	(S-H) 2	(S)3; (H)5	1	1	2
I3	(S-H) 2	(S-H)4	1	2	2
I4	(S-H) 2	(S-H)4	1	1	2
Averages of Italian Ss' rating > D= 2 ; W= 3.75 > ratings between 3-4					
E1	(S-H)2	(S)4.5; (H)4	1	2	1
E2	(S-H)2	(S)4.5;(H)4	1.5	3	2
E3	(S-H)2	(S)5; (H)3.5	1	1	1.5
E4	(S-H)2	(S)5;(H)4.5	1	1	1
Averages of British-English Ss' rating > D= 2 ; W= 4.75 > ratings between 4.5-5					

RP10	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
I1	(S)1; (H)3	(S)4; (H)5	5	5	4
I2	(S-H)1	(S)4; (H)3	1	2	2
I3	(S)1; (H)2	(S)3; (H)1	5	5	5
I4	(S-H)2	(S)2; (H)3	3	3	2
Averages of Italian Ss' rating > D= 1.25 ; W= 3.25 > ratings between 2-4					
E1	(S)1.5; (H)2	(S-H)3	1	2	1
E2	(S-H)1	(S-H)2	3	3	2
E3	(S)1; (H)2	(S-H)3	4	5	2
E4	(S-H)1	(S)1;(H)2	3.5	3.5	2
Averages of British-English Ss' rating > D= 1.12 ; W= 2.25 > ratings between 1-3					

RP11	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
I1	(S)3; (H)2	(S)5; (H)1	1	1	1
I2	(S-H)3	(S)4; (H)5	1	1	1
I3	(S-H)3	(S-H)4	1	2	4
I4	(S)3;(H)2	(S-H)4	1	2	2
Averages of Italian Ss' rating > D= 3 ; W= 4.25 > ratings between 4-5					
E1	(S)2; (H)3	(S)4; (H)5	1	3	1
E2	(S)2; (H)3	(S-H)4	2	2.5	1.5
E3	(S)2.5; (H)3	(S)5; (H)4.5	1	1	1.5
E4	(S)2; (H)3	(S)4;(H)3.5	1	1	1
Averages of British-English Ss' rating > D= 2.12 ; W= 4.25 > ratings between 4-5					

RP12	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
I1	(S-H) 1	(S)3; (H)1.5	4	4	2
I2	(S-H) 1	(S)3; (H)1	2	2	1
I3	(S-H) 1	(S)3; (H)2	2	3	3
I4	(S-H) 1	(S)3; (H)2	2	2	2
Averages of Italian Ss' rating > D= 1 ; W= 3 > all ratings of 3					
E1	(S-H)1	(S-H)2	1	3	1.5
E2	(S-H)1	(S-H)3	2	2.5	2
E3	(S-H)1	(S)3; (H)2	2	2	2
E4	(S-H)1	(S)3.5;(H)3	2.5	2.5	2
Averages of British-English Ss' rating > D= 1 ; W= 2.87 > ratings between 2-3.5					

RP13	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
I1	(S)2; (H)3	(S-H)2	2	2	1
I2	(S-H)3	(S)2; (H)3	1	1	2
I3	(S-H)3	(S)3; (H)2	2	2	3
I4	(S-H)3	(S)4; (H)2	1	2	2
Averages of Italian Ss' rating > D= 2.75; W= 2.75 > ratings between 2-4					
E1	(S-H)3	(S)3; (H)3.5	2	2	1
E2	(S-H)3	(S)2;(H)2.5	3	3	1
E3	(S-H)3	(S)4; (H)1	1	2	2
E4	(S-H)3	(S)3;(H)1.5	1.5	1	2
Averages of British-English Ss' rating > D= 3 ; W= 3 > ratings between 2-4					

RP14	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
I1	(S-H) 1	(S)3; (H)1	3.5/4	3.5/4	3
I2	(S-H) 1	(S)2; (H)1	2	3	1
I3	(S-H) 1	(S)2; (H)3	4	3	3
I4	(S-H) 1	(S)3; (H)2	3	3	2
Averages of Italian Ss' rating > D= 1 ; W= 2.5 > ratings between 2-3					
E1	(S-H)1	(S)2; (H)1	1.5	2	2
E2	(S-H)1	(S)1.5;(H)2	2.5	2.5	2
E3	(S-H)1	(S)4; (H)2	2	3	1
E4	(S-H)1	(S)3.5;(H)2	2	2	2
Averages of British-English Ss' rating > D= 1 ; W= 2.75 > ratings between 1.5-4					

RP15	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
I1	(S)3; (H)2	(S)5; (H)1	3	4	1
I2	(S)2; (H)3	(S)2; (H)5	5	5	5
I3	(S-H)2	(S)4; (H)2	4.5	3	2
I4	(S-H)2	(S)2; (H)3	2	2	3
Averages of Italian Ss' rating > D= 2.25 ; W= 3.25 > ratings between 2-5					
E1	(S-H)2	(S)4; (H)3	1.5	2	1
E2	(S-H)2	(S)2; (H)4	2	4	1
E3	(S-H)2	(S)4; (H)3	1	1	3
E4	(S-H)2	(S)2; (H)3	2	2	1
Averages of British-English Ss' rating > D= 2 ; W= 3 > ratings between 2-4					

Appendix 9.b: Intercultural roleplays with ratings given by participants

RP2	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
EI1	(S-H)3	(S)2-(H)1	1	2	1
EI2	(S-H)3	(S)1-(H)2	3	2	3
EI3	(S-H)3	(S)3-(H)1	1	3	1
EI4	(S-H)3	(S)1-(H)2	3	1	3/4
EI5	(S-H)3	(S)3-(H)2	1	2	1/2
EI6	(S-H)3	(S)1-(H)2	1	3	1
EI7	(S-H)3	(S-H)2	2	2	2
EI8	(S-H)3	(S-H)2	1	2	1
EI9	(S-H)3	(S)2-(H)3	3	2	3
EI10	(S-H)3	(S-H)2	1	1	2.5
Average rating> D=3; W=1.9 > ratings between 1-3					

RP3	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
EI1	(S-H)1	(S-H)3	2	1	2
EI2	(S-H)1	(S)4-(H)3	2	2	2
EI3	(S-H)1	(S)4-(H)3	1	1	1/2
EI4	(S-H)1	(S)2/3-(H)2	3	2	4
EI5	(S-H)1	(S-H)4	3	1/2	3
EI6	(S-H)1	(S-H)4	2	3	2
EI7	(S-H)1	(S-H)4	3.5	2	2
EI8	(S-H)1	(S)3-(H)4	2	2	2
EI9	(S-H)1	(S)4-(H)1	1	3	3
EI10	(S-H)1	(S)4-(H)3.5	1	1	2
Average rating> D=1; W=3.65 > ratings between 2-4					

RP4	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
E11	(S)1-(H)2	(S-H)2	2	1	2
E12	(S-H)1	(S)2-(H)5	2	3	3
E13	(S-H)1	(S)2-(H)1	2	3	2
E14	(S-H)1	(S)4-(H)3	2	2	1/2
E15	(S-H)1	(S-H)2	2	3	2/3
E16	(S-H)1	(S)2/*4-(H)4 *H different ratings is due to H realising at the end of interview that she requested H's own written notes	2 *this rating was given before H realised that she requested H's own written notes	4	2 *this rating was given before H realised that she requested H's own written notes
E17	(S-H)1	(S)2-(H)3	3	2	2
E18	(S-H)1	(S)4-(H)3	2	1	2
E19	(S)1-(H)2	(S)5-(H)2	1	1	1
E110	(S)1.5-(H)2	(S)4.5-(H)2	2	1	3
Average rating> D=1.05; W=2.95(*3.15) > ratings between 2-5					

RP5	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
E11	(S-H)3	(S)1-(H)2	1	1	1
E12	(S-H)3	(S)2-(H)1	1	2	1
E13	(S-H)3	(S)1-(H)3	1.5	1	1.5
E14	(S-H)3	(S)2-(H)1	2	2	3
E15	(S-H)3	(S)3-(H)2.5	2	1	2
E16	(S-H)3	(S)1-(H)2	2	2	2
E17	(S-H)3	(S)2-(H)1	1	1	1
E18	(S-H)3	(S-H)2	1.5	2	2
E19	(S-H)3	(S)2-(H)1	2	1	2
E110	(S-H)3	(S)2-(H)3	2	1	2
Average rating> D=3; W=1.8 > ratings between 1-3					

RP6	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
EI1	(S-H)2	(S)4-(H)3	2	1	2
EI2	(S-H)2	(S-H)4	1	2	3
EI3	(S)2-(H)3	(S)4-(H)3	1	2	2
EI4	(S-H)2	(S)4-(H)2	1	2	2
EI5	(S-H)2	(S)4-(H)3	1	2	1
EI6	(S-H)3	(S)2-(H)3	2	2	3
EI7	(S)3-(H)2.5	(S-H)2	1	2	1
EI8	(S)2-(H)2.5	(S)4.5-(H)3	2	1	2
EI9	(S)3-(H)1.5	(S-H)5	1	2	1
EI10	(S)2-(H)3	(S)4-(H)5	1	1	3.5
Average rating> D=2.3; W=3.75 > ratings between 2-5					

RP7	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
EI1	(S-H)1	(S-H)1	3	1	1
EI2	(S-H)1	(S)2-(H)1	4	2	3
EI3	(S-H)1	(S-H)1	3	2	3
EI4	(S-H)1	(S-H)1	3	1	2
EI5	(S-H)1	(S-H)2	3	2	3
EI6	(S-H)1	(S-H)2	2	1	2
EI7	(S-H)1	(S-H)1	3	3	3
EI8	(S-H)1	(S)1-(H)2	3	3	2.5
EI9	(S-H)1	(S)2-(H)1	3	3	3
EI10	(S-H)1	(S)1-(H)3	2	2.5	2
Average rating> D=1; W=1.4 > ratings between 1-2					

RP8	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
EI1	(S-H)3	(S)4-(H)2	2	1	2
EI2	(S)2-(H)3	(S)3.5-(H)3	2	2	3
EI3	(S-H)3	(S)4-(H)1	2	1	2
EI4	(S-H)3	(S)4-(H)2	2	2	2
EI5	(S-H)3	(S)4-(H)1	1	3	1.5
EI6	(S-H)3	(S)3-(H)4	(1)2	4	n/a
EI7	(S)2.5-(H)3	(S)4-(H)2	2	2	2
EI8	(S-H)3	(S-H)4	2	1.5	4
EI9	(S-H)3	(S)4-(H)2	2	2	2
EI10	(S-H)3	(S-H)4	1	1	2
Average rating> D=2.8; W=3.85 > ratings between 3-4					

RP9	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
EI1	(S-H)2	(S-H)4	2	2	1
EI2	(S)2-(H)3	(S)5-(H)4	1	3/4	2
EI3	(S)3-(H)2	(S-H)5	1	1	1
EI4	(S-H)2	(S-H)4	2	3	3
EI5	(S-H)2	(S-H)5	2	1	2
EI6	(S-H)2	(S-H)4	2	2	4
EI7	(S)2.5-(H)3	(S-H)4	1	1	1
EI8	(S-H)2	(S-H)3	1	2	1
EI9	(S)1.5-(H)2	(S)4-(H)2	2	2	2
EI10	(S-H)2	(S-H)5	1	2	2
Average rating> D=2.1; W=4.3 > ratings between 3-5					

RP10	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
EI1	(S-H)1	(S)3-(H)1	2	1	3
EI2	(S)1-(H)1/2	(S)4-(H)2	4	1	4
EI3	(S-H)1	(S)3-(H)1	3	3	3
EI4	(S-H)1	(S)4-(H)2	2	2	2
EI5	(S)1/2-(H)3	(S-H)2	3	2	3
EI6	(S)1-(H)2	(S-H)3	4	4	4
EI7	(S-H)1	(S)2-(H)1	4	3	3
EI8	(S)1-(H)1.5	(S-H)2	2	2	2
EI9	(S-H)2	(S)4-(H)3	2	2	2
EI10	(S)1/1.5-(H)1	(S)4-(H)2	1	1	2
Average rating> D=1.2; W=3.1 > ratings between 2-4					

RP11	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
EI1	(S-H)3	(S-H)4	1	2	1
EI2	(S)2-(H)3	(S-H)5	1	4	2
EI3	(S)2-(H)3	(S)3.5-(H)5	2	2	2
EI4	(S-H)3	(S)3-(H)4/5	2	3.5/4	3
EI5	(S-H)3	(S)4-(H)4.5	2	1	2
EI6	(S-H)3	(S-H)5	2/3	4	3
EI7	(S-H)3	(S)4-(H)5	2	1	2
EI8	(S-H)3	(S)5-(H)4	1	2/4 *2=linguistic choice 4= request in itself	1.5
EI9	(S)2-(H)3	(S)4-(H)5	2	2	2
EI10	(S-H)3	(S)5-(H)3	1	1	1
Average rating> D=2.7; W=4.25 > ratings between 3-5					

RP12	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
E11	(S-H)1	(S-H)2	3	2	2
E12	(S-H)1	(S-H)2	2	2	2
E13	(S-H)1	(S)2-(H)1	3	3	3
E14	(S-H)1	(S)2.5/3-(H)3	2.5	2	3.5
E15	(S-H)1	(S-H)2	2/3	2	2/3
E16	(S-H)1	(S-H)2	2	2	2
E17	(S-H)1	(S-H)2	3	2	3
E18	(S-H)1	(S-H)2	2	2	2
E19	(S-H)1	(S-H)3	3	2	3
E110	(S-H)1	(S)4-(H)3	3	1	3
Average rating> D=1; W=2.37 > ratings between 2-4					

RP13	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
E11	(S-H)3	(S)2-(H)1	1	1	1
E12	(S-H)3	(S)4-(H)3	2	2	2
E13	(S-H)3	(S)3-(H)1	2	1/2	2
E14	(S-H)3	(S)4-(H)3	½	2	1/2
E15	(S-H)3	(S)3.5-(H)4	½	2	4
E16	(S-H)3	(S)2-(H)3	1	2	1
E17	(S-H)3	(S-H)2	1	2	1
E18	(S-H)3	(S-H)2	2	2	2
E19	(S-H)3	(S-H)1	2	2	2
E110	(S-H)3	(S)3.5-(H)2	1	1	1
Average rating> D=3; W=2.7 > ratings between 2-4					

RP14	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
E11	(S-H)1	(S)1-(H)2	½	1	2
E12	(S-H)1	(S)3-(H)1	2	2	3
E13	(S-H)1	(S)1-(H)2	3	1	3
E14	(S-H)1	(S)2-(H)3	2	1.5	3
E15	(S-H)1	(S-H)3	3	2	3
E16	(S-H)1	(S)4-(H)1	2	2	3
E17	(S-H)1	(S)2-(H)3	2.5	1	2.5
E18	(S-H)1	(S)3-(H)2	2	2	3
E19	(S-H)1	(S)2-(H)1	3	1	3
E110	(S-H)1	(S)1-(H)2	1	1	1
Average rating> D=1; W=2.2 > ratings between 1-4					

RP15	*(S)= Speaker (H)= Hearer				
DYADS	D	W	Politeness Evaluation Of Self	Politeness Evaluation By Other	S's Perceived Politeness Evaluation By The H
EI1	(S)2/3-(H)2	(S)2-(H)4	1	2	1
EI2	(S-H)2	(S-H)4	2	4	3
EI3	(S)2.5-(H)2	(S)4-(H)1	1	2	2
EI4	(S-H)2	(S)4-(H)3	1	3	3
EI5	(S-H)2	(S-H)3	2	1	2
EI6	(S)3-(H)2	(S-H)3	2	2	2
EI7	(S)2-(H)2.5	(S-H)2	1.5	1	1.5
EI8	(S-H)2	(S)2.5-(H)2/4	2	2 her 4 the request	3
EI9	(S-H)2	(S)3-(H)1	2	1	2
EI10	(S)2-(H)2.5	(S)5-(H)4	1/2	2/3	4
Average rating> D=2.2; W=3.25 > ratings between 2-5					