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# **POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN REQUESTS OF FINNISH AND ESTONIAN EFL SPEAKERS**

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# ABSTRACT

Susan Tani: Politeness Strategies in Requests of Finnish and Estonian EFL speakers  
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Although politeness has been a popular research topic in the field of pragmatics for years, comparative studies on politeness of Finnish and Estonian EFL speakers have not been conducted.

The research question this thesis attempts to answer is what politeness strategies Finnish and Estonian EFL speakers use when making requests. The data consists of 20 Finnish and 20 Estonian participants, and it was collected using a questionnaire in the form of a discourse completion test. The data was analyzed using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and the coding manual developed for the CCSARP. The results show that both language groups preferred negative politeness, particularly conventional structures with the modals "can" and "could", when making requests.

Keywords: politeness, EFL, pragmatics, speech act, request

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# TIIVISTELMÄ

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Vaikka kohteliaisuus on ollut tutkimuskohde monella eri kielitieteen tutkimusalalla, vertailevia tutkimuksia suomalaisten ja virolaisten englannin vieraan kielen puhujien kohteliaisuudesta ei ole tehty.

Tutkimuskysymys, johon tässä tutkielmassa pyritään vastaamaan, on mitä kohteliaisuuden keinoja suomalaiset ja virolaiset englannin vieraan kielen puhujat käyttävät tehdessään pyyntöjä. Tutkimukseen osallistui 20 suomalaista ja 20 virolaista englantia vieraana kielenä puhuvaa nuorta, ja se kerättiin diskurssin täyttö testin muodossa olevalla kyselyllä. Aineisto analysoitiin käyttämällä Brownin ja Levinsonin kohteliaisuus teoriaa ja CCSARP- tutkimuksien tuloksien tulkintaan kehitettyä ohjekirjaa. Tulokset osoittavat, että sekä suomalaiset että virolaiset englannin vieraan kielen puhujat suosivat negatiivista kohteliaisuutta pyyntöjä tehdessä, erityisesti konventionaalisia rakenteita, joissa käytetään *can* ja *could* modaaleja.

Avainsanat: kohteliaisuus, englanti vieraana kielenä, pragmatiikka, puheakti, pyyntö

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## List of Abbreviations

B&L	Brown and Levinson
CCSARP	Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a second language
FTA	Face-threatening act
H	Hearer
ILP	Interlanguage pragmatics
NL	Native language
S	Speaker

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## 1. Introduction

Politeness has been the subject of various studies in different linguistic subfields. One of the best-known series of studies into the politeness phenomenon was the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project, or CCSARP, which studied variation in requests and apologies in seven different languages (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, 11-16). While the project was mostly focused on native speakers' realizations of speech acts, it featured data from non-native speakers of English, German, and Hebrew as well. According to Leech (2014, 261), interlanguage pragmatics is a field of study concerned with non-native speakers' pragmatic competence in their target language. Consequently, most studies in the ILP field compare native speakers with non-native speakers (e.g. Savic, 2014, Wang, 2011, Syahri, 2013). Studies comparing non-native speakers with different native languages are relatively scarce.

Due to globalization, people from different cultural backgrounds encounter each other and communicate more than ever. As English has received the status of an international lingua franca in the globalized world, the probability that non-native speakers of English will communicate with other EFL or ESL speakers is high (Mauranen, 2015, Leech, 2014, 261), which is why studies comparing EFL or ESL speakers from different cultures should be given more emphasis. Finnish and Estonian speakers of EFL make excellent candidates for this kind of study since, while their native languages are very similar, they are not mutually intelligible, which is why communication between Finns and Estonians is often done in English. Previous research into the pragmatics of Finnish and Estonian EFL speakers is scarce. Kankaanranta (2001) studied how Finnish and Swedish people communicated requests in English via email in a business context and Laaksonen (2019) conducted a comparative study on the pragmatic competence of Finnish and Japanese EFL speakers. While Finnish and Estonian requests have been studied

comparatively, no studies were found involving comparisons between Finnish and Estonian EFL speakers.

This study is a follow-up to all the previous pragmatic research done in the Finnish EFL context as well as previous studies into the politeness phenomenon in interlanguage pragmatics. The purpose of this study is to compare Finnish and Estonian EFL speakers' politeness strategies when making requests. The data is collected using a discourse completion test that has been adjusted from the ones used in previous studies (see section 3.). The data is analyzed using the framework provided by Brown and Levinson's politeness theory as well as the coding manual created for analyzing the data from CCSARP and provided in *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies* by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989).

This paper contains six sections. The following section provides an overview of the theoretical framework of the study and previous research into politeness and requests. Section 3 contains discussion of the method used in this study and presents the research question that the study attempts to answer. Sections 4 and 5 consist of the analysis of the data and a discussion of the results of the study. Section 6 is the concluding section, which provides final conclusions about the study and suggestions for future research.

## 2. Theoretical framework and previous studies

This section contains a summary of the theoretical framework of this study. This includes an outline of two politeness theories, viewpoints about the speech act of request and a small look into pragmatic transfer. Furthermore, a review of previous studies is presented.

### 2.1 Politeness

Watts prefaced his book *Politeness* (2003) as follows: “Writing an introduction to politeness is like being in mortal combat with a many-headed hydra. You’ve barely severed one head when a few more grow in its place.” Politeness is a complex linguistic phenomenon that has spawned a large number of theories to account for it. Unfortunately, providing a truly comprehensive understanding of politeness is beyond the scope of this thesis. What follows instead is a brief account of two notable theories of politeness.

### 2.1.1 Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory

Arguably, the most comprehensive and detailed theory of politeness was proposed by Brown and Levinson in their book *Politeness: some universals in language usage* (1978, 1987). Their theory rests heavily on the dualistic notion of *face*, which they base on Goffman’s concept of face from *Interaction ritual* (B&L, 1987, 61). According to B&L (*ibid.*), face is defined as a person’s “public self-image” that consists of two sides: negative face and positive face. Furthermore, both faces have *face wants*, meaning the negative and positive faces of a person have different desires that seek to be fulfilled in a social interaction. In brief, the negative face want is the desire to be free from imposition, whereas the positive face want is the desire to be accepted (62).

Face-threatening acts, or FTAs, are verbal or non-verbal communicative acts that threaten the face wants of a person’s face (65). B&L identify two different ways of distinguishing between the types of FTAs: the kind of face that is threatened and the orientation of the threat (towards hearer or speaker). FTAs that offend H’s negative face are acts by which S does not avoid imposing something on H, thus threatening to limit his freedom of action (*ibid.*). In other words, H is under pressure to do something. Examples of this would include requests, commands and threats, as well as more positive acts such as advice, offers and compliments. Similarly,



FTAs that threaten S's negative face impose something on him, such as acceptance of apologies or offers and expressing thanks. In comparison, when S performs an FTA that offends H's positive face, S risks communicating that he does not care about H's feelings, thus rejecting H in some respect (66). FTAs that offend H's positive face include criticism, disagreements and bringing up taboo or sensitive topics such as politics. In a similar fashion, FTAs that threaten S's positive face, putting him under a risk of being rejected by H, include apologies, confessions and emotion leakage.<sup>1</sup>

B&L (74) argue that there are three sociological factors that have the most influence on the degree of politeness the interlocutor chooses: the social distance (D) and the relative power (P) of the communicative participants as well as the ranking of the imposition (R). D refers to how well the interlocutors know each other, while P is concerned with whether the other interlocuter is in a position of power over the other (77). R is considered to be culturally and situationally dependent and based on how much it interferes with the addressee's face-wants (ibid.) Although B&L focus on these three variables in their politeness theory, they do note that their "claim is not that they are the only relevant factors, but simply that they *subsume* all others" (80).

B&L introduce five super-strategies of politeness that the interlocutor can choose from depending on the context of the FTA.

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<sup>1</sup> "Non-control of laughter or tears" (B&L, 1987, 68)

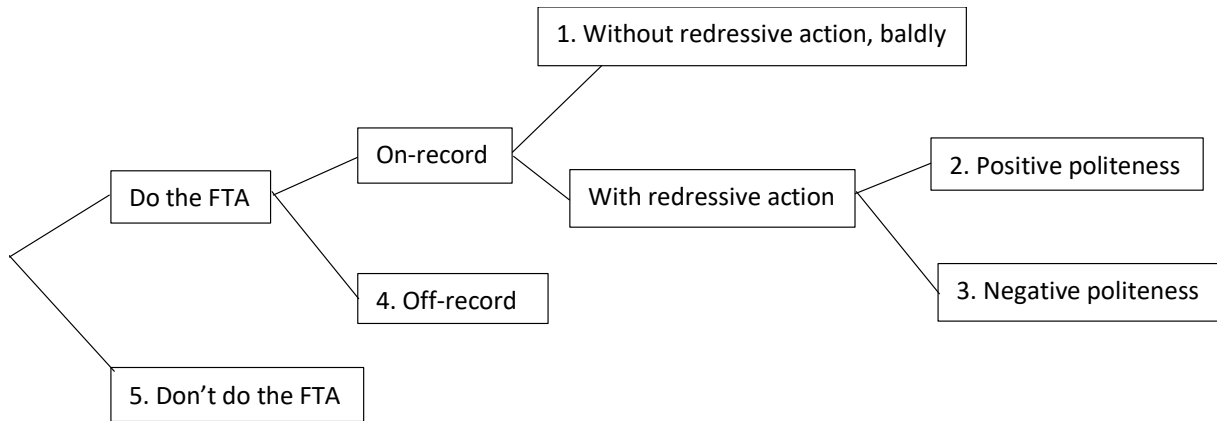


Figure 1. Five super-strategies of politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987, 69)

By following Fig.1 from left to right, the process by which the appropriate strategy is chosen can be seen. Super-strategy 5. can be considered the politest of them all as it bears no threat to anyone's face. However, by choosing this strategy S does not get the potential payoff that lies in making FTAs, such as H fulfilling S's request.

If S chooses to do the FTA, he needs to choose between off-record and on-record strategies. Off-record strategies are used when S wants there to be several possible interpretations to what he says. This way S can avoid responsibility for committing an FTA as he can simply deny performing it (211). While this is a safer route for S as he avoids the threat of an FTA, H might not be able to interpret the act correctly, thus leaving S's goal for doing the FTA unfulfilled. The off-record strategy is further divided into 15 sub-strategies of politeness which include hints, tautologies, irony and so forth. On the contrary, if S goes on-record, it is clear to H what has been communicated (68). According to B&L, a bald on-record strategy is used "whenever S wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency more than he wants to satisfy H's face" (95).

If S wants to take into consideration H's face wants, he can go on-record using redressive action, meaning that S modifies the FTA to indicate that the face threat is not intended (70). This can be done using positive or negative politeness. Positive politeness is aimed at H's positive face and the desire to be accepted (101). Positive politeness communicates to H that his desires and goals are shared by S (ibid.). This can be done through claiming common ground and showing interest in H's wants, joking or even by giving gifts to H. Overall, there are 15 sub-strategies to the positive politeness strategy. In comparison, negative politeness is directed to H's negative face and the want to be free of imposition (129). B&L call negative politeness "the heart of respect behaviour" as the purpose of using negative politeness is to minimize the imposition of the FTA that is performed (ibid.). Negative politeness strategy consists of ten sub-strategies, such as conventional indirectness, hedging, apologizing etc. According to B&L, negative politeness is the most conventionalized politeness strategy in Western culture (130).

As B&L's detailed politeness theory is easily comparable to other languages, it has received a great deal of criticism, particularly from the viewpoint of Eastern languages and cultures. Sachiko Ide has criticized the Western bias in B&L's theory, where individual's goals motivate politeness (Leech, 2014, 36). Similarly, Watts (2003, 102) cites various non-Western critics of B&L, who argue that their theory is too individualistic and thus not applicable to cultures in which "the individual is defined by virtue of her/his membership in the social group". Despite of its criticisms, B&L's politeness theory remains the most extensive theory on the matter that has been introduced.

## 2.1.2 Leech's model of politeness

Another theory of politeness is provided by Leech in his book *Pragmatics of Politeness* (2014). The politeness theory he proposes is a revised version of his earlier model of politeness from the book *Principles of Pragmatics* (1983). Leech's model is based on Grice's conversational principles and it features ten maxims of politeness.

Leech differentiates between two types of politeness: sociopragmatic politeness and pragmalinguistic politeness. Whereas pragmalinguistic politeness has to do with semantics and thus does not take into consideration the context of the utterance, sociopragmatic politeness is relative to the utterance's context (Leech, 2014, 88). Despite the differences, Leech argues that these two types of politeness should not be studied separately as "they are both facets of pragmatics: one facing toward language and the other toward society" (2014, 15). Leech also utilizes the terms *neg-politeness* and *pos-politeness* which are derived from B&L's politeness theory. However, Leech does simplify their meaning in his theory: *neg-politeness* means reducing the offense (11) and *pos-politeness* giving value to the hearer (12).

Similarly to B&L, Leech (2014, 104) presents five factors that affect the degree of politeness: 1) vertical distance, 2) horizontal distance, 3) cost and benefit, 4) strength of socially defined rights and obligations and 5) self-territory and other-territory. Vertical distance, horizontal distance and cost and benefit are equivalent to B&L's P, D and R factors. Strength of socially defined obligations concerns the fact that if H performs an FTA on a person who has an obligation to fulfill that FTA, it affects the degree of politeness (*ibid.*). For example, if H requests something from a customer servant, he may not use mitigating devices as he would with a colleague. Self- and other-territory refer to whether the interlocutors belong to the same group

or not (ibid.), and, according to Leech, the group memberships are a matter of a degree (ibid.). The illocutionary goals of communication also influence the degree of politeness (Leech, 2014, 89). Leech presents four different categories of speech acts depending on their illocutionary goals: competitive, convivial, collaborative and conflictive. According to him, only competitive and convivial speech acts include politeness as the other two do not need mitigating strategies to fulfill their illocutionary goal (ibid.).

Leech's model of politeness can be summed up as his General Strategy of Politeness: "In order to be polite, S expresses or implies meanings that associate a favorable value with what pertains to O [other] or associates an unfavorable value with what pertains to S" (90). He goes on to present the ten maxims of politeness that compose the GSP.

<b>Maxim</b>	<b>Maxim in imperative mood</b>
Generosity (M1)	Give high value to H's wants
Tact (M2)	Give low value to S's wants
Approbation (M3)	Give high value to H's qualities
Modesty (M4)	Give low value to S's qualities
Obligation of S to H (M5)	Give high value to S's obligation to H
Obligation of H to S (M6)	Give low value to H's obligation to S
Agreement (M7)	Give high value H's opinions
Opinion reticence (M8)	Give low value S's opinions
Sympathy (M9)	Give high value H's feelings
Feeling reticence (M10)	Give low value S's feelings

Figure 2. Component maxims of the GSP (Leech, 2014, 92)

The maxims oriented towards H demonstrate pos-politeness while the ones oriented towards S and tinted grey are examples of neg-politeness. Using pos-politeness S can make an offer (M1), compliment (M3), apologize (M5), agree with (M7) or congratulate (M9) H. On the other hand, neg-politeness is used to make mitigated requests (M2), self-deprecate (M4), reply to apologies with minimizing the offender's fault (M6), soften S's opinions (M8) or avoid sharing S's

negative feelings (M10). In addition to providing examples of the types of speech acts used with different maxims, Leech discusses the language used with the maxims. As an illustration, M1 usually incorporates direct speech especially with offers (92), such as “Have another drink!”, while M8 includes hedges, such as “I think” or “might”, to soften the statement of opinions (97).

Leech’s model of politeness is another comprehensive theory of the politeness phenomenon. In fact, Watts (2003,63) stated that only Leech and B&L have developed politeness theories that are elaborate enough to be tested against real languages, which is why these two theories are often used when studying politeness in languages. Similarly to B&L, Leech provides numerous examples in his theory, as well as detailed case studies on apologies and requests, which makes for effortless comparisons between his model and real language data.

## 2.2 Speech Act of Request

Requests are incorporated in many studies of the politeness phenomenon (e.g. Salvesen 2015, Elmianvari and Kheirabadi 2013, Peterson 2010). According to Thuruvan and Yunus (2017, 213) requests are a popular research area in the field of pragmatics because of their frequent occurrence in everyday interaction. The availability of an existing coding system, which was created for CCSARP, certainly adds to the appeal of studying requests.

Searle (1975, 355) defines requests as directives which he says are “attempts ... by a speaker to get the hearer to do something”. In *Speech Acts* (1969, 66), Searle provides an outline on requests and identifies the attempt to get H to do what is requested as an essential condition for requests. According to Searle (ibid.), requests have a sincerity condition as well, meaning S cannot request something he does not want to happen. Additionally, he defines the preparatory conditions of requests as 1) H’s ability to do what is requested and 2) the probability that H will

not do what is requested without being requested (*ibid.*). Finally, Searle points out that the only difference between commands or orders and requests is the preparatory condition that S holds authority over H (*ibid.*), meaning even if requests are made using an imperative such as “Give me the remote”, they still count as requests rather than commands if S and H are on the same level regarding authority or H is in a position of power over S.

In B&L (1987) requests are defined as face-threatening acts, or FTAs. Specifically, requests are identified as a threat to H’s negative face (B&L, 1987, 65). According to B&L, small requests often incorporate positive politeness, whereas with bigger requests negative politeness is favored (1987, 57). Off-record strategies of politeness are used, when making requests that are imposing enough to make S reconsider making the request (*ibid.*) Similarly, Leech (2014, 134) acknowledges that indirectness is considered closely related to politeness, especially with English requests. Leech’s definition of requests is similar to that of Searle’s, as he defines one of the key characteristics as a proposition for H to do something (2014, 136). However, Leech adds that requests often come at a cost to H and with benefit to S (*ibid.*) Leech lists the three strategies for performing requests as follows: direct strategies, on-record indirect strategies and off-record indirect strategies (2014, 147). Direct strategies include imperatives and performatives, while on-record indirect strategies contain different types of statements and questions. Off-record indirect strategies consist of hints, which Leech further divides into statement and question hints. While Leech recognizes the connection between indirectness and politeness, he does note that when hints are used to make requests and, consequently, H is left to infer the intended meaning of the utterance, it is “the reverse of polite” (2014, 144). Indirectness of a request does not correlate with the politeness of said request.

To conclude this section, the literature defines requests as speech acts which attempt to elicit an appropriate reaction from H. Because requests are costly to H, they require mitigating language devices, to soften the imposition (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, 12), but this does not mean that requests are always paired with negative politeness. Indeed, as Leech mentions (2014, 134), requests can be made with “an amazing range” of strategies.

### 2.3 A look into pragmatic transfer and the Finnish and Estonian politeness contexts

Pragmatic transfer is a phenomenon that is closely connected with second language acquisition research (Kasper, 1992, 203). It can be loosely described as the assumption that a second language speaker’s native language pragmatics affects his production of the L2 (ibid.).

According to Kasper (1992, 208), interlocutors have a variety of strategies and forms to choose from, when they perform a linguistic act. All these varieties communicate the same illocution, but they “vary in their relational meaning, or in politeness” (ibid.), which means they can be understood differently.

Kasper (1992) differentiates between positive and negative transfer. According to Leech (2014, 263) positive transfer means that the L1 and L2 have similar pragmatic properties, which is why it does not cause miscommunication in L2. Conversely, negative transfer happens when the pragmatic perceptions and behaviors disagree within the L1 and L2, causing the L2 speaker to project his L1 pragmatic knowledge onto his L2 production, thus resulting in possible miscommunication (Kasper, 1992, 213). To better understand possible pragmatic transfer, a look into the pragmatics of the native language of the L2 speakers is called for.



Although both Finnish and Estonian belong to the Balto-Finnic subgroup of the Finno-Ugric language family and are considered very similar, they differ notably with respect to politeness (Hickey & Stewart, 2005, 189). This is due to Finnish adhering to Scandinavian politeness standards as it has been influenced by Swedish, whereas Estonian adheres to Central-European politeness standards due to German's impact on that language (ibid.). Finnish requests are usually performed in a questioning mode in order to leave the choice of compliance to the hearer (Hickey & Stewart, 2005, 200), such as *Avaisitko oven?* (Would you open the door?) or *Avaatko oven?* (#Do you open the door?). The verbs often have suffixes, such as *-ko*, that signal uncertainty (ibid.). In addition, understating adverbs, such as *vähän*, are used frequently in Finnish requests (ibid.). On the other hand, Estonian requests vary from direct requests to off-record requests (Hickey & Stewart, 2005, 210). While directness is favored in urgent situations or when imposition on H is small (ibid.), Estonian requests are often made off-record using pre-sequences, that signal that a request is coming (Hickey & Stewart, 2005, 212.). In fact, the addressee might even complete the requests himself (ibid.). In *Politeness in Europe* (2005, 210), statements about S's shortcomings are suggested to be typical way of making off-record requests in Estonian.

In summary, Finnish politeness tends to be negative, whereas Estonian politeness varies from on-record to off-record politeness depending on the situation. Due to pragmatic transfer, it is probable that some of these characteristics of Finnish and Estonian politeness bleed into Finnish and Estonian EFL speakers' English production.

## 2.4 Review of previous studies

As mentioned in section 2.2, there is a substantial number of studies about politeness in requests. The studies presented in this section compare EFL or ESL speakers with native speakers of English, as comparative studies of EFL speakers with different L1s are relatively scarce. For example, Faerch and Kasper (1989) conducted a study on internal and external request modification with native Danish, German and British English speakers as well as Danish German and Danish English speakers. While the data included foreign language speakers, their target languages were different, namely English and German. However, their data allows for comparisons between Danish EFL speakers and British native speakers. The results showed that “the most widely used request strategy is *conventional indirectness* in the form of a *query preparatory procedure*” (1989, 222), meaning the modals *can* and *could* are used most often when making requests. Danish EFL speakers’ choice of the query preparatory strategy varied between 56% and 97%, while with British native speakers it varied from 78% to 99%.

Similar results were found in the studies by Wang (2011), Savic (2014) and Syahri (2013) where EFL speakers of different native language backgrounds were again compared to native speakers. All three studies found that EFL speakers opt for the query preparatory strategy with reference to ability. This strategy is defined by B&L as negative politeness, more specifically the conventionally indirect strategy, which is considered most prevalent in English requests (B&L, 1987, 130 and Leech, 2014, 134). Furthermore, Savic’s (2014) study focuses specifically on advanced EFL speakers, thus indicating that the level on English education has little effect on the

results. All three studies were conducted using a discourse completion test, however, Savic and Syahri both included an oral role play version in addition to a written test.

### 3. Method and Research Questions

In this section, the methods chosen for data collection and data analysis for the present study are discussed. Furthermore, the research question that the study attempts to answer is presented along with the hypothesis of the study.

The present study belongs to the field of descriptive research as it attempts to describe Finnish and Estonian EFL speakers' politeness in requests. Thus, the purpose is to provide information about what elements are present in Finnish and Estonian EFL communication, rather than trying to explain why they are present. However, as this is a small-scale study, significant conclusions cannot be made from the results. While the overall data consisted of 31 Finnish and 54 Estonian EFL speakers, 11 Finnish and 34 Estonian participants had to be excluded due to unsuitable native languages, misunderstanding of questions, unfulfilled questionnaires, and so on. As a result, the study involves 40 participants in total, consisting of 20 Finnish and 20 Estonian participants. As the participants were recruited from Finnish and Estonian high schools, all participants are 16 to 19 years of age. The reason for conducting this study on high school students stems from the fact that the majority of them will not become English majors at a university, meaning their English education will not continue after high school. After all, the goal is to be able to draw preliminary conclusions about how average Finns and Estonians use English when making requests.

The data was collected using a questionnaire in the form of a discourse completion test. While Finnish participants were given a paper version of the questionnaire, participants from

Estonia filled in an electronic version. The DCT consisted of eight dialogues that were preceded by a brief description of the situations to provide context for the participants. Each dialogue contained one request. Furthermore, the dialogues varied on the degree of three sociological factors: the social distance (D), the relative power (P) and the ranking of imposition (R). These variants were chosen as they are considered by both B&L (1987, 80) and Leech (2014, 104) to be important factors when determining the degree of politeness in communication. The following are the summarized versions of the situations presented in the DCT:

1. Unfamiliar (D+), professor (P+), extension on an essay (R+)
2. Roommate (D-, P=), borrow sugar (R-)
3. Unfamiliar (D+), neighbor(P=), a ride to school (R+)
4. Familiar (D-), boss (P+), a couple of days off (R+)
5. Unfamiliar (D+), police officer (P+), help with luggage (R-)
6. Friend (D-, P=), a loan (R+)
7. Favorite teacher (D-, P+), borrow a pen (R-)
8. Stranger on a bus station (D+, P=), borrow a lighter (R-)

In previous studies the DCTs have incorporated rather simple dialogues (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, 14, Salvesen 2015, Syahri 2013), usually consisting of a clear indication that a request should be performed. For the present study, the dialogue was elaborated and filled with extra blank spaces for the participants to fill in, in order to distract them from what was actually being studied. This was done in the hope that participants would not overthink their answers, thus providing more natural language. However, it must be kept in mind that as written speech is not comparable to natural speech, the participants of this study may not use the expressions they wrote down in real-life situations.

The data was analyzed using two complementary methods. B&L's politeness theory was mainly used for concluding the politeness strategies used in requests, whereas the CCSARP coding manual was used to analyze smaller elements in the semantic formulae of the requests. It should be noted that some features of the requests found in the data were not presented in either the politeness theory or the coding manual. Their categorization was determined subjectively with the help of both B&L's theory and the CCSARP coding manual.

The research question in this study is what politeness strategies Finnish and Estonian EFL learners use when making requests. It is hypothesized that 1) while in most situations both Finnish and Estonian EFL learners opt for negative politeness, namely the query preparatory strategy with reference to ability, 2) Estonians use more variation regarding their politeness strategies than Finns. The first part of the hypothesis is based on previous studies that have shown remarkable consistency in their results, while the second part assumes that pragmatic transfer will take place when Finnish and Estonian interlocutors use L2 English.

#### 4. Analysis of the data

In the following part of this thesis, the analyzed data will be presented. First, the general politeness strategies will be addressed, after which a more detailed account of different types of requests is given. Additionally, in sections 4.2 and 4.3 the semantic formulae of the requests are considered.

## 4.1 Politeness strategies

In both native language groups, all of B&L's super strategies of politeness were used when making requests, with the exception of "Not doing the FTA" as it was not provided as an option in this study.

Strategy/Situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
On-record		1	1	8		7	6	2	25
Positive		1		1	1				3
Negative	16	15	13	11	16	5	14	16	106
Off-record	4	1	1		1	7		1	15
Mixture		2	5		2	1		1	11

Figure 3. Finnish group's politeness strategies

Strategy/Situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
On-record		1		8	1	11	1		22
Positive			2					1	3
Negative	11	16	17	12	19	4	16	13	108
Off-record	9	3				5	3	6	26
Mixture			1						1

Figure 4. Estonian group's politeness strategies

For both NL groups, negative politeness was the preferred politeness strategy. In the Finnish group, negative politeness was used 66% of the time, whereas in the Estonian group it was used 67% of the time. Furthermore, both groups realized negative politeness as the query preparatory in most situations. In the Finnish group query preparatory was used in 90% of the cases where negative politeness was used as the super strategy, while the Estonian group used query preparatory little less, namely in 79% of the situations.

In addition to negative politeness, Finnish participants seemed to favor on-record strategies, while the Estonian group used both off-record and on-record strategies. Finnish participants favored on-record strategies in situations 4, 6, and 7, while the Estonian group used them primarily in situations 4 and 6. However, Estonian participants used more off-record strategies and, in fact, its use even surpassed negative politeness strategies in situation 6. Both off-record and on-record politeness were the two most used strategies in the Finnish group in situation 6, which was the only situation in the Finnish group, where negative politeness was not the most used politeness strategy.

Positive politeness was used surprisingly little by both NL groups. However, the Finnish group showed some mixing of two strategies where positive politeness was always included. The mixture usually combined negative and positive politeness, but cases of on-record and positive politeness used together appeared as well. Nevertheless, the mixture of strategies always included positive politeness in this data. The mixture of strategies was most used in situation 3 in the Finnish group.

## 4.2 Requests in socially close contexts

Both NL groups showed overall preference for negative politeness in situations, where H was familiar to S. However, in situation 6, in which an imposing request is made to a friend, both groups show more preference towards on-record and off-record strategies.

Strategy/Situation	2 (P=, R-)	4 (P+, R+)	6 (P=, R+)	7 (P+, R-)	Total
On-record	1	8	7	6	22
Positive	1	1			2
Negative	15	11	5	14	45
Off-record	1		7		8
Mixture	2		1		3

Figure 5. Finnish group's requests in socially close contexts

Strategy/Situation	2 (P=, R-)	4 (P+, R+)	6 (P=, R+)	7 (P+, R-)	Total
On-record	1	8	11	1	21
Positive					0
Negative	16	12	4	16	48
Off-record	3		5	3	11
Mixture					

Figure 6. Estonian group's requests in socially close contexts

The Estonian group showed somewhat greater preference for on-record politeness in situation 6 than the Finnish group, which used off-record politeness as much as on-record politeness. Both NL groups used more complex semantic structures in situation 6, utilizing grounders to justify the request. However, the Estonian group included a little more complexity in their structures than the Finnish group. However, the Finnish group used more understaters, such as “some”, than their Estonian counterparts. Both groups used same politeness strategies in situation 4 as well, in which an imposing request is made to an authority figure. While both groups had more requests made using negative politeness, on-record politeness was a popular



strategy as well. The requests were performed using relatively simple structures with understaters and imposition minimizers.

Situations 2 and 7 included mostly negative politeness in both groups, however, the Finnish group had some requests made using on-record politeness in situation 7 as well. For both groups, situation 2 was the one where more complex requests were performed. Although both groups included understaters in situation 2, Estonian participants used them more often in addition to utilizing more grounders as well.

### 4.3 Requests in socially distant contexts

As in section 4.2, in which requests made in a socially close situation were examined, both groups again showed overall preference for negative politeness in situations where H was unfamiliar to S. However, in situation 1, where an imposing request is made to an authority figure, Estonian participants favored off-record politeness.

Strategy/Situation	1 (P+, R+)	3 (P=, R+)	5 (P+, R-)	8 (P=, R-)	Total
On-record		1		2	3
Positive			1		1
Negative	16	13	16	16	61
Off-record	4	1	1	1	7
Mixture		5	2	1	8

Figure 6. Finnish group's requests in socially distant contexts

Strategy/Situation	1 (P+, R+)	3 (P=, R+)	5 (P+, R-)	8 (P=, R-)	Total
On-record			1		1
Positive		2		1	3
Negative	11	17	19	13	60
Off-record	9			6	15
Mixture		1			1

Figure 7. Estonian group's requests in socially distant contexts

In both groups, negative politeness was shown clear preference in all situations where H was unfamiliar. However, in situation 3, where an imposing request is made to an H of equal social status, mixtures of strategies was used by Finnish participants. Both groups utilized rather simple structures when making requests in situation 3, with Finnish participants showing a little more individual variation in their structures. The Finnish group also had surprisingly many instances of positive politeness in situation 3, whereas the Estonian group used more imposition minimizers.

In situations 5 and 8, where the request is small, both NL groups favored negative politeness. However, the Estonian group's requests were more complex than the Finnish group's. In situation 5 where H is an authority figure, Estonians used understaters, imposition minimizers and conditional clauses while Finnish participants opted for simpler structures. While the difference in complexity is smaller in situation 8, where H is of equal social status, Estonian requests again included more additional structures, such as understaters, politeness markers and positive politeness, which were absent from the Finnish data.

The biggest difference between the groups is in situation 1. While Estonians preferred negative politeness in the situation, they did have many instances of off-record politeness, which was less used by the Finnish group. In this case, the Finnish group's requests showed more complexity regarding their structure as they included more grounders and understaters than the Estonian participants. In fact, the Finnish data overall showed most complexity in situation 1, while situations 5, 2 and 6 produced the most complex answers in the Estonian group.

## 5. Discussion of results

The purpose of this study was to find out what politeness strategies do Finnish and Estonian EFL speakers use when making requests. The analysis shows that both NL groups preferred negative politeness as it was used 66% of the time in the Finnish group and 67% of the time in the Estonian group. This makes sense since negative politeness is considered a very conventional way of making requests (B&L, 1987, 129, Watts, 2003, 189), making the probability of it being the most taught request strategy in schools high. Additionally, it likely occurs often in English speaking media which in turn is consumed by EFL speakers. This might explain its common use by EFL speakers.

On-record politeness was the second most used strategy in the Finnish group, while for Estonian participants it was off-record politeness. As Estonian requests are often made using off-record strategies, it might explain their frequent use of said politeness strategies since pragmatic transfer affects politeness practice as well. However, Estonians used off-record politeness in situations where imposing requests were performed, which is common in English requests as well (B&L, 1987, 57). Finnish participants showed preference for off-record and on-record strategies with imposing requests as well. What does not seem fit into English request-making customs, is making imposing requests using on-record strategies as some Finnish and Estonian participants did (*ibid.*). This might be due to pragmatic transfer, but further studies on the subject are needed to conclude the reason for such request strategies. In fact, it should be noted that all references to possible pragmatic transfer are merely speculation as this study is not adequate to answer such questions.

With respect to variation in strategies, it is difficult to tell which group had more. Both groups only had one situation in which negative politeness was not the most used request strategy. However, the Finnish group showed more individual variation as there were five instances where situational strategies varied between at least four different strategies, whereas in the Estonian group situational strategies never varied between more than three strategies.

To summarize, the hypothesis of the study was mostly confirmed. Negative politeness was the most used politeness strategy as was hypothesized, but variation presented more in the Finnish group.

## 6. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate how Finnish and Estonian EFL speakers realize politeness strategies in requests. It was concluded that negative politeness was the most used politeness strategy in both NL groups, with some situational and individual variation in their respective groups.

Furthermore, this study provided insight on what should be paid more attention to when teaching English as a foreign language in Finnish and Estonian high schools. It would appear that neither in Finland nor in Estonia is pragmatics incorporated in English education in the comprehensive school. Although the conventional negative politeness, especially the query preparatory strategy, has been adopted successfully by most EFL speakers, it should be noted in the context of English language education that there exists a wide range of strategies for making requests and other speech acts, and not all of them are performed the same way. For example, while in Finnish *Tarvitsen pari päivää lomaa* (“I need a few days off”) might be considered

indirect, in English, statements of want and need are considered rather direct (B&L, 1987, 97, Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, 18) and can seem impolite in certain contexts.

Although the effect of pragmatic transfer on the results was speculated in the previous section, further studies on the subject are needed to sufficiently conclude that such phenomenon has taken place. Future studies should contain comparisons on how speakers perform speech acts in their L1 as well as L2, as this could provide a clearer indication of pragmatic transfer. Furthermore, studies on politeness in L2 should include evaluations by native speakers of the studied L2 as this would provide valuable information on how successful the L2 speakers' communication of politeness is.

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## Appendix

### The discourse completion test

Read through the following descriptions and dialogues carefully and try to imagine yourself in the situations. You will get more information about each situation by reading the dialogue before writing your response. Pay attention to the other characters and the circumstances. How would **you** react? Fill in the blank spaces in the dialogues by writing down what you would say in each situation. Be sure to fill in all eight dialogues before submitting the test.

#### **Situation 1: At a lecture**

**You are sitting in a lecture hall at your school and waiting for a lecture to begin. You have been feeling sick and you have missed school for a while. This lecture is held by a new, unfamiliar professor. Your friend enters the hall and sits next to you.**

Friend: Hi, how's it going?

You:

Friend: Did you finish the essay that was due today? I had no idea what the professor wanted but at least I got something written down... How about you?

You: What? It was due today?

Friend: Yeah, I mean... You forgot?

You: Apparently. Oh god... Is the professor strict? Should I ask him for some extra time?

Friend: Well, it's not like you have a choice, really. I don't actually know much about the new professor, but he seems nice.

You:

**At the end of the lecture you approach the professor.**

You:

Professor: Oh, that's fine. Will you be able to finish it in two weeks?

You:

Professor: No problem. If you want, I can lend you some literature about the topic you're interested in. I have a few journals in my office that you might find helpful.

You:

Professor: That's fine. Always happy to help students. Come by my office tomorrow and I'll hand you the journals.

You:

Professor: See you tomorrow then.

You:

## **Situation 2: In a kitchen**

**You are in the kitchen at your house, which you share with two roommates, Emma and Oliver. You have lived together for a year and know each other well. Your roommate enters the kitchen.**

You:

Oliver: Hi. What's up?

You: Nothing, I'm baking.

Oliver: **\*laughs\*** Baking? Are you now?

You: Shit. I forgot to buy sugar! How could I forget the sugar?

Oliver: Go ask Emma if you can borrow some from her, I think she has a bag of sugar somewhere.

You:

**You leave the kitchen and go to your other roommate's door.**

Emma: Yeah?

You:

Emma: Sure, it's on the third shelf in the left cabinet.

You:

Emma: Are you making something good? Can I have some when it's done?

You: Mhm, I'll call when it's ready.

**You finish baking a pie and call Emma to join you and Oliver in the kitchen.**

Emma: Is it done?

You:

Emma: Oh my god! It's smells so good!

Oliver: And tastes amazing. This is really good!

You:

Emma: He's right, it's so tasty. Thanks, roomie!

Oliver: Yeah, thanks for the pie.

You:

Emma: Next time Oliver can make something for us.

You:

### **Situation 3: In the lobby of an apartment building**

**You are standing in the lobby of your apartment building. You were leaving for school, but it started raining heavily. A neighbour comes down the stairs. You don't really know each other, but you have seen each other at your school.**

Neighbour: Morning. Horrible weather isn't it?

You:

Neighbour: Yea, and it started so suddenly. I thought today was going to be a sunny day for sure. Well, thank god I have a car.

You:

Neighbour: Sure, I'll give you a ride. Let's go.

You:

**You sit in your neighbour's car and you realize that you don't even know her name.**

You:

Neighbour: Nice to meet you! I'm Sophia. What class do you have next?

You: English, I think.

Sophia: Right. I'll drop you off at the language department then.

You:

Sophia: So... What kind of music do you like to listen to?

You:

Sophia: Really? I've never heard of that. Can you put some on from your phone so I can listen?

You: Sure.

**You listen to your music for a while as you get closer to the school.**

Sophia: Okay, could you turn the music off? I don't really like it.

You:

Sophia: Well, we're here.

You:

Sophia: You're welcome. See you!

#### **Situation 4: At work**

**You are at your workplace where you gift wrap various items. You need a couple of days off from work next week. Your boss of two years is in his room. You knock on the door and open it a little bit.**

You:

Boss: Come in, come in. By the way, I heard you did excellent work on the packaging the other day. Good job.

You:

Boss: So, how can I help you?

You:

Boss: Okay, let me just check the schedule... I don't see why that would be a problem, but is it okay if I'll let you know tomorrow? I'm pretty sure you can take the days off, but I have to check how much product we have for next week.

You:

Boss: By the way, would you mind working a few extra hours this Thursday? Jimmy called in sick, so I need a replacement.

You:

Boss: Okay, don't worry. I understand. I'll ask someone else.

You: Maybe ask Olivia? She mentioned that she doesn't have anything important this week.

Boss: That's a great idea. Thank you!

You:

Boss: Is there anything else I can help you with?

You: No, sir.

Boss: Back to work then. I'll let you know tomorrow about the days off.

You:

#### **Situation 5: At a train station**

**You are at a train station and have with you a heavy suitcase. You notice that there aren't any escalators and you need to drag your suitcase up the regular stairs. Because your luggage is heavy, you are having some trouble carrying it up to the platform. When you are halfway through, two police officers start climbing the stairs. You need some help carrying your suitcase.**

You:

Police officer 1: Of course! Let me grab it.

You:

Police officer 1: No problem. But what on earth are you carrying with you? It's so heavy.

You:

Police officer 2: Where are you travelling?

You:

Police officer 2: Hmm... I think this is the wrong platform. Doesn't that leave from platform 4?

You:

Police officer 2: Are you sure?

You: Quite sure. Maybe I'll check just in case.

Police officer 1: Do that. You don't want to realize you're on the wrong platform when your train is already leaving.

You: Hmm... No, it still says platform 2.

Police officer 2: All right, my mistake.

Police officer 1: Have a safe trip.

You:

### **Situation 6: At a café house**

**You are meeting your close friend Riley for some coffee at a local café house. You have a favor to ask him since you haven't been able to pay your rent. He enters and sits opposite to you.**

Riley: Hi! How's it going?

You:

Riley: Sorry that I haven't had the time to meet up lately. I'm drowning in schoolwork.

You:

Riley: How's work?

You: Well, I actually got fired from the last job. But I did get a new job at the movie theater. Bad news is I don't get to start until next month.

Riley: Oh no! But you'll be fine. At least you got a new job already! Everyone's not so lucky.

You:

Riley: So... you sounded kind of funny on the phone. You said you needed a favor?

You:

Riley: Okay... I get it. How much money would you need?

You: About 300 euros...

Riley: That's a lot. But I just got my salary so I think I can lend you the money.

You:

Riley: It's fine. Just remember to pay me back.

You:

Riley: And I'll pay for your coffee.

You:

Riley: What are friends for?

### **Situation 7: At school**

**You are at your school and an exam is about to begin. You approach a friend of yours and sit next to him.**

Friend: Hey, did you study for the test?

You:

Friend: Do you think the test will be hard? I didn't have much time to study...

You: Well, it's Mr. Miller's exam and they are never too hard. He's definitely my favorite teacher.

Friend: Yeah, and you seem to be his favorite student, so no need to worry about your grade.

You: I'm only his favorite because I actually listen in class.

Friend: Touché...

You: Great. I forgot my pen. Do you have an extra?

Friend: No. Ask the teacher. He always has extras.

### **You go to your teacher's table.**

Mr. Miller: Everything alright?

You:

Mr. Miller: Sure! Sure. Let me just find one for you... Ah, here you go.

You:

Mr. Miller: Did you study for the exam?

You: I did.

Mr. Miller: No need to be nervous then. Good luck!

You:

### **Situation 8: At a bus station**

**You walk to a bus stop. Your buss will take another 15 minutes to arrive, so you decide to smoke a cigarette while waiting. You can't find your lighter. Another person approaches the stop already smoking a lit cigarette.**

You:

Stranger: Sure. **\*hands a lighter to you\***

You:

Stranger: No biggie. Do you know if bus 47 already drove through?

You: Hmm... I don't think so.

Stranger: My phone died, so I can't check the timetable. Could you do it?

You:

Stranger: Thank you.

You: Your bus should be here in about two minutes.

Stranger: Alright. Thanks again.

You:

## Finnish data

### Situation 1

Hello! I have been sick for a while and haven't been able to do the essay. Can I have more time?

Hi, I forgot my essay

Hi sorry I forgot to do the essay that was supposed to be done today

Hi, I was sick and didn't know the essay was supposed to be done by today. Can I get some extra time?

Hi can I take back because that not ready yet

can I have more extra time on my work?

Hi, I forgot that essay was for today can I have some extra time?

Hey, So I kinda forgot to do the essay because I were sick and unable to do it

Excuse me sir, can I have extra time to finish my essay because I am not feeling well.

hey, I am sorry I forgot the essay can I get some extra time

can I have more time for this essay

Hi I didn't do the essay can I have some extra time?

Hi so I have been sick for a while now and I didn't know that we had to do essay so I was wondering if I could have some extra time?

hi professor sorry I didn't know that there was an essay for today so can I have extra time

I am so so so sorry, I forgot to do my essay. Can I please have little bit extra time?

sorry professor but can I have some extra time on the essay. I have been sick lately.

excuse me I've been sick for a long time and I couldn't attend last lesson. Is it possible to finish my essay later

I'm so sorry! I've been sick for a while and didn't know about the essay.

I forgot to do the essay, can I still do that?

I forgot about the essay. Can I get more time

## Situation 2

Can you borrow me some sugar?

Can I borrow some sugar

do you have sugar to lend

Can I have some sugar? I forgot to buy it.

Hi can I borrow some sugar. I forgot

I need sugar bruv

can I borrow some sugar, I forgot to buy it?

So I heard you had a bag of sugar and because of the weirdo that I am, I want some of it

Do you have bag of sugar. Can I borrow some?

can I borrow some sugar

can I borrow som of your sugar

Can I borrow some sugar from you?

So I forgot to buy some sugar from the store, so I was wondering if I could use yours?

do you have any sugar

Oliver said that you could have sugar here?

you got some sugar here?

Emi, do you have sugar

Hi, do we have any sugar? If so, where is it

can I borrow sugar from you? I'm baking and forgot to buy that from store

can I borrow sugar from you

## Situation 3

I wish I would have a car

Can you give me a ride

You have a car? Lucky bastard. Can you give me a ride to school

Oh you do? Could you take me to school by any chance?

can I have a ride for you?

Yo bruv can you give me a lift?

Oh you have? Can I get a ride to school, please

Oh, well, uh, how about give me a lift



If you don't mind can I go with you  
 can I have a ride  
 can you give me dide to school  
 Can you give me a lift to school  
 Yeah, me too. Well I have to take a bus unless could you maybe give me a ride  
 can I have a ride  
 you have a car? OMG can you then give me a ride  
 could I somehow get a ride because of the weather.  
 Can you give me a ride  
 is it possible for me to have a ride to school  
 can you give me a ride for school if that's not a problem. It's not nice to walk in the rain.  
 Could I possibly get a ride to school

#### Situation 4

Can I have a few days off?  
 Can I get a couple days off next week?  
 I need a few days off next week  
 Could I get next weeks Thursday and Friday free?  
 I need a couple of days off from work next week  
 I need couple days off work.  
 I need a couple day off is it ok?  
 Mind if I take couple days off  
 Actually I need couple days off from work next week. If it's not a problem.  
 I was wondering can I get few days off?  
 I need couple day of next week  
 So could I have couple days off next week  
 So I was wondering if I could get couple days off next week  
 is it possible to get couple days off next week  
 I was thinking that could I have couple days off  
 I came to ask could I get couple days of work here  
 I would like to know is it possible that I have two days off from work next week

I really need a few days off next week

Is it possible to me to have a couple days off next week?

I would need to get couple days off next week

#### Situation 5

Excuse me, can you help me with my suitcase?

These are heavy

Hi excuse me but could you help me with these?

Excuse me officer, could you help me carry my luggage?

Hi can you help me

Yo fed I need help man

Excuse me, can you help me with these

Little help here?

Officer, can you help me with my suitcase?

could you guys help me

sorry! Can you help whit this please

Sorry officer could you help me with this suitcase

excuse me, could you two help me with my suitcase?

can you help me officer

Hey! Officer! Can you please help me with these?

sorry officer, could you help me with the bag

excuse me gentlemen, could you help me with this

excuse me! Can you help with my luggage?

sorry officers can you help me with this suitcase

could you help me with this suitcase

#### Situation 6

I have a problem because I got fired. I am not able to pa my rent.

I need some money because I don't have any

I haven't been able to pay rent could you help

Um so I don't have money to pay rent

Yeah, I need some money

yes I need cash bruv

Yea I need some money to the rent

Yeah, I need some money to pay my rent

Yeah... I am broke!

yeah, can I borrow some money

yea I need to borrow some money from you if its ok

So I haven't paid this month's rent

as I was telling I don't get paid until next month and I was wondering if you could borrow me money so I could pay the rent

because of the work thing I'm not able to pay my rent could you please help me

This is so embarrassing but I don't have enough money to pay my rent

I need some money

well I don't have money right now soooo....

about that, I wanted to ask if you could help with my rent

so this is kind of hard but I don't have enough money to pay my rent.

yeah, I would need to borrow some money

Situation 7

Can you borrow me a pen. I forgot my own to home.

I forgot my pen so can I borrow one

otherwise yes but I need a pen

I forgot my pen, could I have one?

Can I borrow to pen?

Yes man, I just need a pen

Yes, can I borrow a pen?

Yeah, just need a pen

Yes mam! I just need a pen.

can I take a pen

can I have a pen

No I forgot my pen could I borrow your's

yeah. Could I maybe borrow a pen?

yes I just need a pen

Could I borrow a pencil

I need a pen. Do you have any?

can you borrow me pen

I forgot to bring my pen. Can I borrow one?

yes but can I borrow a pen?

I forgot my pencil, could I borrow one?

Situation 8

Excuse me, can you borrow me your lighter?

Can I borrow your lighter

Can you lend light

Hey could I lend your lighter

can I borrow a lighter?

Yo I need a lighter

Excuse me, can I borrow a lighter?

Sorry, could you light this for me?

I need a lighter

do you have a lighter

can I borrow your lighter

Could I use your lighter

excuse me, do you have a lighter

hi can I burou lighter

Can I borrow your lighter

sorry but do you have a lighter

excuse me man, do you have a lighter?

excuse me, you have some lit?

hey! Could you borrow your lighter? I can't find mine.

could I borrow your lighter

[Estonian data](#)

## Situation 1

hello! I apologize, but I havendone my essay due to being sick

Hello. I am so sorry, but I could not finish my essay, can I have some extra tim

I didn't do my essay for today.

Excuse me, I forgot about the essay that was due today.

I forgot to write my essay would it be alright if i bring it another day

Hello professor. I have a problem. I didnt finish the essay that was due today.

I forgot to do my essay, can i have more time?

I was sick for a while and didnt know that essay was due today.

Hi, I've been sick for a couple of days, could I get an extension on the essay?

I have been feeling sick and I forgot to do my homework.

Hello mister, I am sorry but I couldnt do the essay on time can I get extra time

I have a problem. I forgot to do my essay. Can I have some extra time?

I forgot to finish my essay. Is it possible to get some extra time?

Professor, may I have some extra time to finish my essay?

Professor? I forgot to do the essay. I am so sorry.

Hello, Im sorry I forgot about the essay for today. Could I get some extra time

Hello, is it possible for me to turn in my essay after the due date.

excuse me, I want you to know that I accidentally forgot to finish the essey.

Can I have some extra time to finish my essay?

Hello, I have been sick and havent been able to write the essay.

## Situation 2

Can I please borrow your sugar for my baking

Hey, can I borrow your sugar?

Can I borrow sugar from you?

Can I borrow some sugar?

Hey do you have any sugar i could borrow

Hi Emma. Can i borrow some of your sugar?

I need some sugar to bake

Can I use your sugar for baking?

Yo, could I get some sugar, I found out I didnt have any.

Do you have sugar? Oliver ja baking and he forgot to buy it

Do you have some sugar, I am baking and I forgot to buy

Do you have sugar? Can I borrow it?

Can I borrow a little bit of your sugar?

I forgot to buy sugar. Could I borrow some from you?

Hey, Emma! Can I borrow some sugar from you?

Can I borrow some of your sugar?

Hey, I am baking and I need some sugar. Can I take a little bit of it

Hi Emma. Can you borrow me some sugar..

Do you have some sugar?

Can I borrow your sugar? I am baking and I forgot to by some.

### Situation 3

Would you mind giving me a ride if youre going towards the school

Oh, could you please give me a ride to school?

Too bad I don't have a car. Maybe you can give me a lift?

Can you give me a lift?

Oh would you mind giving me a ride, if it's not too much trouble

Hey, could I maybe get a ride with you do the school.

Can you give me a lift

Could you give me a ride to school?

Could I come with?

Can I go with you?

I thought so too but yeah, maybe I can come with you

Can you give me a ride?

It would be nice if you could drive me to school.

You do? Think you could give me a ride to school?

You have a car? Can I come with you?

Maybe you can give me a ride to school?

Can't you give me a ride to school in any chance

But can you ride me to the school too?

Is it possible for you to give me a ride?

Oh, is it possibly that you can give me a ride?

#### Situation 4

Is it possible for me to get a few days off from work next week

If it is not a problem then I would like to get few days off next week

I need a couple of days off from work.

Can I take Wednesday and Thursday off next week?

I was wondering if i could get a couple of days off from work next week

I was wondering if I could get couple of days off work next week.

Can i have few days off

Could I get couple of days off next week?

I need a couple of days off from work next week.

I have to ask, If I could have a couple of day off?

I need couple of days off from work next week and I to ask it directly from you

Can I have couple of days off from work next week?

I need a couple of days of from work next week. Is it possible?

Could I get a few days off for next week. Im planning to visit my family.

Can I get a couple of days off?

I though maybe I could take next weekend off?

I just wanted to ask if I can take some days off next week

I need couple of days off from work next week.

I would need a couple off days next week.

Yes, I would like to have few days off in next week, is it possible?

#### Situation 5

Excuse me, Hello, could you give me a hand please

I'm sorry, could you please help me?

Can you help me with my luggage?

Excuse me, would you mind helping me with this suitcase?

Excuse me, could you help me carry my suitcase up the stairs. It's really heavy

Hi police officers. Could you please help me get my suitcase up the stairs?

Yo cops, can i have some help with mu suitcase

Hey kind officer! Could you give me a hand?

Hi, could you help me with this, please?

Sorry, can you help me?

Hello dzentelmen can i ask for your help

Hi officers! Can you help me with my suitcase.

Excuse me, sir! Can I get some help?

Hey officers! Could you help me with my suitcase?

Officers, I need some help carrying my suitcase. Can you help?

Hello Im sorry could you please help me carry my suitcase. Its reallt heavy.

Hello, if you don't mind, can you help me get my suitcases up the stairs

Excuse me. Can you help me with my luggage? Its too heavy.

Hi, can you help me with the suitcase please?

Sorry for bothering you! But I am needing a little help with my suitcase

#### Situation 6

Yeah, um because i start my next job in a month, I need money to pay for rent

Yes, the thing is.. I need some money to borrow from you. If you don't mind

Yeah. I need to borrow some money.

Yes, I don't really have enough for rent this month.

I don't have enough money to pay the rent right now

Yeah, I was actually wondering if you could lend me some money?

I need money to pay my rent

Well, I dont have money to pay this months rent.

Yes, actually I need some money

I couldnt pay my rent so i thought i can ask money for you,no is answer to

Yeah. I dont have money to pay my rent.

Yes, I'm so sorry but I need to pay my rent, can you borrow me money?

Yeah, Im really struggling to pay my rent and I kind of need a loan.

Yes, so I have to pay my rent but the problem is that I have no money.



Yes I kind of need to borrow some money.

I really don't want to ask you that, but can you lend me some money for my rent

Yes. I need money to pay for my apartamenr.

As i dont have a job right now I would need help paying the rent.

I need your help to pay my rent until I can go to work.

I need help to pay my rent, since I dont get to start until next month.

#### Situation 7

Yes, can I borrow a pen

Yeah, can I please borrow a pen.

No, I forgot my pen. Can you borrow me one?

Could I borrow a pen? I forgot mine home.

Yea, i just forgot to take my pen with me, could i borrow one of yours

I forgot my pen. Could I borrow one from you?

I need a pen

I forgot my pen home.

I forgot my pen at home, could I borrow one?

I forgot my pen, can I have one?

Capn you lend me a pen please

Yes, but can you lend me a pen please.

Yes but can I borrow your pen for the test.

Yeah, but could I borrow a pencil, I forgot mine at home,

Yes. Can you lend me a pen? I forgot mine.

Can i borrow a pen? I forgot mine.

I forgot by ben, don't you have a pen to borrow by any chance

Yes. But I dont have a pen. Can I lend it?

Yea, do you happen to have an extra pen by any chance?

Yes, but I happened to forgot my pen. Is it possible that you can lend my one?

#### Situation 8

Hey um can you light mine as well, I forgot my lighter

Hey, can I borrow a lighter please?

Can you light my cigarette?

Could I borrow a lighter?

Excuse me, may i borrow your lighter

Hi! Do you happen do have a lighter?

Can i borrow your lighter?

Hey, can you give me a light?

Hey, have you got a lighter on you?

Can I use your lighter for a second

Hey can u give me a lighter

Hey. Do you have a lighter?

Hi, can you borrom me for a second your lighter?

Hey, mind borrowing your lighter?

Hey! Do you have a lighter?

Can i borrow a lighter?

Hey, do you have an lighter I can borrow

Excuse me. Can you give me a lighter to light up the cigarette?

Can I borrow the lighter for a second?

Excuse me! Do you have a lighter?