

Western Oregon University

Digital Commons@WOU

---

Academic Excellence Showcase Proceedings

Student Scholarship

---

2019-05-30

## A Comparison of Politeness Strategies Among Native and Non-Native English Speakers

Antonia Perez

Western Oregon University, [aperez14@mail.wou.edu](mailto:aperez14@mail.wou.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/aes>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), [Language Interpretation and Translation Commons](#), and the [Modern Languages Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Perez, Antonia, "A Comparison of Politeness Strategies Among Native and Non-Native English Speakers" (2019). *Academic Excellence Showcase Proceedings*. 175.

<https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/aes/175>

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at Digital Commons@WOU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Academic Excellence Showcase Proceedings by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@WOU. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@wou.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@wou.edu), [kundas@mail.wou.edu](mailto:kundas@mail.wou.edu), [bakersc@mail.wou.edu](mailto:bakersc@mail.wou.edu).

# A COMPARISON OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES AMONG NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Antonia Perez  
Academic Excellence 2019  
Western Oregon University

# CONSIDER...

You're at your local coffee shop and you are about to order a coffee.



Barista: "Hey, what I get started for you?"

You reply with:

- A. "I want a medium black coffee."
- B. "I would like a medium black coffee."
- C. "May I have a medium black coffee."
- D. "I was wondering if I could have a medium black coffee."

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. DO L2 LEARNERS AVOID USING VERBS OF INTENTION IN ENGLISH?
2. HAVE L2 LEARNERS OF ENGLISH BEEN TAUGHT POLITENESS STRATEGIES THAT MAY NOT BE TYPICALLY USED BY NATIVE SPEAKERS?

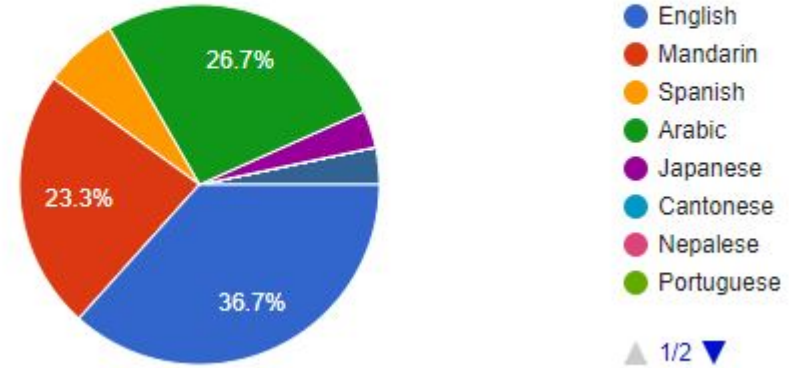
# BACKGROUND INFORMATION & WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

- **Communicative Understanding:** Understanding the appropriate forms of language when engaging in social situations
- “The ambiguity of modal expressions has become apparent in many of the semantic studies...: modal items, especially modal verbs, may express a multitude of meanings” (Karkkainen 1992).
- These different forms can be hard for L2 learners to use, even though they are what native speaker of English use daily

What is your first language?

responses

# METHODS



- 29 students participated

16 exchange students and 13 domestic students

-The survey included: **verbs of intention, modals, ‘may I’+question, and a direct question with no politeness strategies**

- The native English speakers were used as a baseline to compare the responses of the non-native English speakers.

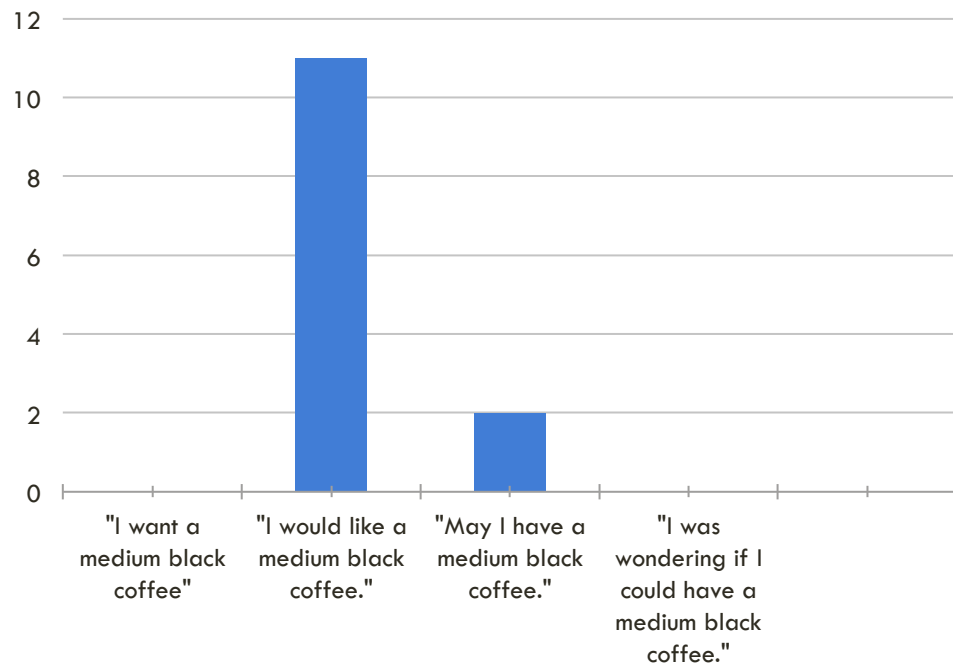
# RESULTS

## Scenarios in survey:

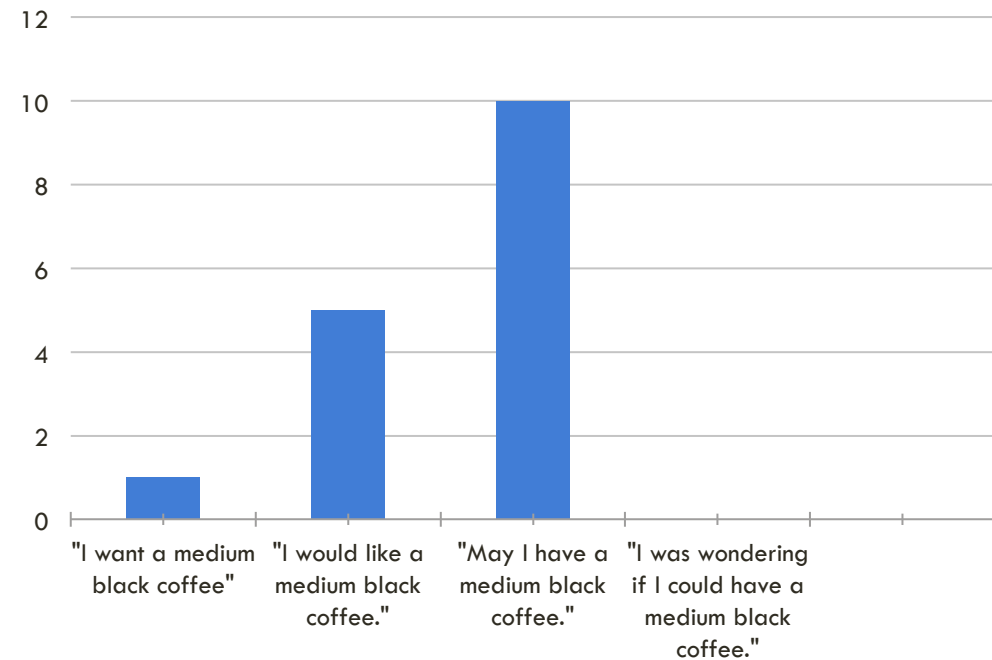
1. ordering a coffee
2. asking to talk to a manager
3. asking for help finding something in the grocery store
4. asking a friend to borrow a sweater
5. asking someone for a pen

# SCENARIO 1: ORDERING A COFFEE

## Native Speakers



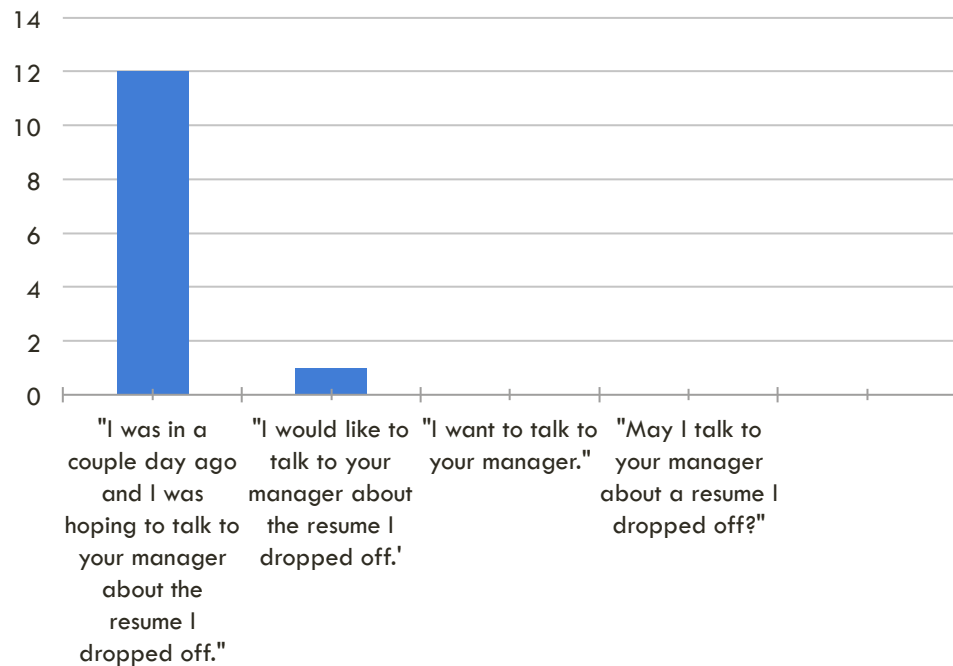
## Non- Native Speakers



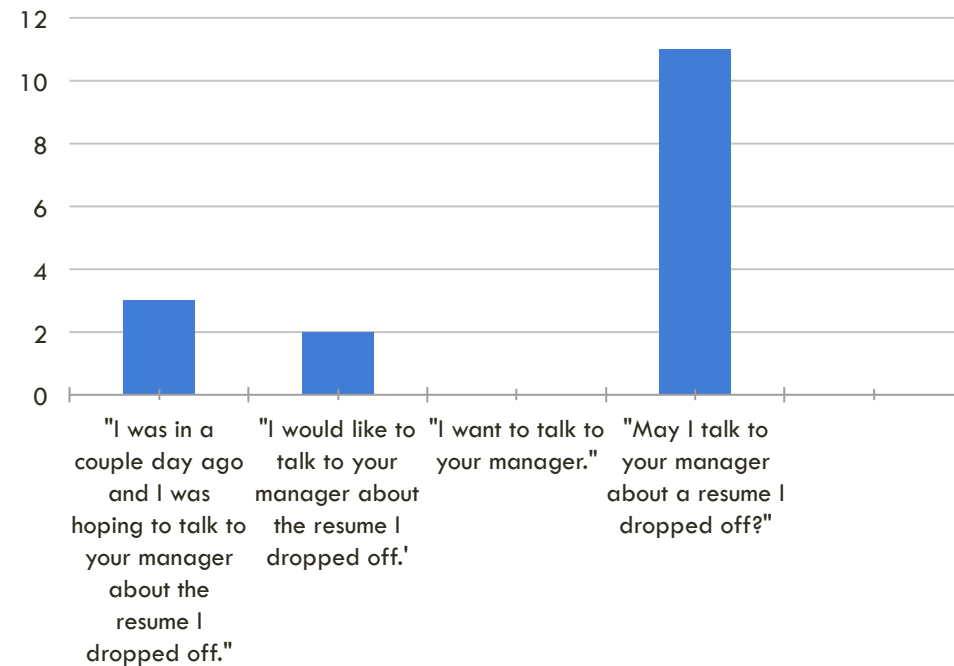


# SCENARIO 2: ASKING ABOUT RESUME

## Native Speakers



## Non- Native Speakers



# CONCLUSION:

- The majority of NNSs chose the “May I” form for 4 out of 5 scenarios
- Students learning English might not be being taught the forms that NS are using
- As TEFL teachers, it’s our responsibility to teach not only how to use words but when to use words effectively. This can contribute to student’s communicative understanding of English, which can in turn help with their confidence in using their L2.

# WORKS CITED

Brown, P. and Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Ellis, Rod. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 2012.

Karckainen, Elise. "Modality as a Strategy in Interaction: Epistemic Modality in the Language of Native and Non-Native Speakers of English." *Pragmatics and Language Learning*, vol. 3, 1 Jan. 1992, pp. 197–216. EBSCOhost, [ezproxy.wou.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED395530&login.asp&site=ehost-live](http://ezproxy.wou.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED395530&login.asp&site=ehost-live).

Khamyod, T. and P. Aksornjarung. (2011). "A Comparative Study of Pragmatic Competence of Learners with High and Low English Proficiency." 3rd International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences April 2, 2011.