

## **Language at work: native and non-native speech acts in Business English**

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This paper presents some of the findings of a corpus-based analysis of speech acts used in a workplace or business context by both native and non-native speakers of English. In particular, we focus on how speakers express requests, opinions, and give advice to others.

Data-driven analysis allows us to outline a model of these speech acts in native English, drawn from both spoken language (from the Cambridge and Nottingham Business English Corpus, CANBEC) and email data (from the Enron email corpus). The lexical and structural characteristics identified are then compared to those of the same speech acts in non-native English, as found in email data produced by students of Business English.

The combination of corpus analysis and natural language processing tools allows us to obtain a detailed description of the data, highlighting features ranging from the most common words and phrases to the verb tenses and syntactic structures typical of each speech act.

Where differences between native and non-natives speakers are identified, we consider whether these negatively affect comprehension and/or perceived politeness of the message. These insights can then be used to assist those having to use English in intercultural workplace contexts.