

Polite Request Strategies by Male Speakers of Yemeni Arabic in Male-Male Interaction and Male-Female Interaction

Yahya Mohammed Ali Al-Marrani, Azimah Binti Sazalie

*School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang,
Malaysia*

Abstract

This study investigates the linguistics strategies employed by monolingual native speakers (NSs) of Yemeni Arabic in making requests. 168 Yemeni male and 168 Yemeni female university students participated in this study. The data collected using a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The data were analyzed according to the models proposed by Blum-Kulka, et al (1989). Blum-Kulka, et al's (1989) analytical framework is classified request into three levels of directness: direct strategies, conventionally indirect strategies, and non-conventionally indirect strategies. Five strategies are considered direct (mood derivable, performative, obligation statement, want statement), two strategies are considered conventionally indirect (query preparatory, suggestory formulae), and two strategies are non-conventionally indirect strategies (strong hints and mild hints). The findings show that there is a general trend in Yemeni Arabic for higher levels of directness in male-male interactions. Male speakers of Yemeni Arabic in the male-male interactions employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing 'face'. This is not indicating the appropriateness of directness in 'close' social distance relationships, but probably the fact that it is the expected behavior in such situations. The use of direct strategy (imperative) by male speakers of Yemeni Arabic in male-male interactions could be attributed to the closeness and the solidarity between the interlocutors. Also it was found that there is a general trend in Yemeni Arabic for higher levels of indirectness in male-female interactions. The use of indirect strategy by male speakers of Yemeni Arabic in male-female interaction could be attributed to culture and religious values.

Key words: Request, Politeness, Request Strategies, direct, indirectness

Introduction

In the last two decades, there is a shift of emphasis in linguistic studies in second and foreign language teaching and learning theories from a grammatical or structural approach to a communicative or pragmatics studies (Widdowson, 1987; Canale, and Swain, 1980) cited in (Ghaleb,2003).

This is reflected in the growing literature on communication strategies associated with a considerable number of empirical studies on speech act behaviour. These studies have shown that non-native speakers may fail to communicate in a particular situation in spite of their reasonable command of grammar and vocabulary of the target language (Rintell, 1981, Blum-Kulka, 1983). Johnson and Johnson (1999) point out that pragmatic competence is an aspect of communicative competence and refers to the ability to communicate appropriately in a particular context of use. It contrasts with linguistics competence which refers to the mastery of the general rules of language abstracted from its use.

The shift of emphasis from grammatical competence to communicative competence pushes researchers who work on the English inter-language of Arabs have to follow the same direction to investigate the problem of appropriateness in the production of first and foreign language learners. This study is an attempt in this direction to examine this important aspect of their communicative competence in Yemeni Arabic through request as an important type of speech acts.

Politeness and the Speech Act of Request

Politeness is one of the most important impressions of human and human beings can not live with each other and communicate together if conventions of politeness are not observed in the society that they live in. It is a universal, interdisciplinary phenomenon. Every culture, every language, has its ways of displaying respect and deference, saving face, avoiding, or minimizing, imposition and exercising good manners verbally and non-verbally. Numerous studies have shown that the conventions of politeness are different from one culture to another.

Request on the other hand is a type of speech act where the speaker (requester) demands from the hearer (requestee) to perform an act which is for the benefit of the requester at the cost of the requestee. This act can be verbal or non-verbal. It belongs to the directive type of speech act (Reiter, 2000). Leech (1983) which is referred to as 'impositive'. This is to not confuse with the term 'directive' in relation to direct and indirect illocutions. A request is composed of two parts: head act and modifiers. Head act is the main utterance which conveys a complete request and can stand by itself without any modifiers in order to convey request. The head act is followed or preceded by modifiers that mitigate or aggravate the impact of the request on the addressee (Reiter, 2000). For example:

I forgot my wallet at home; could you lend me some money, please?

In this example, the head act of the request is 'could you lend me some money?' and it stands by itself without any modifiers and conveys request clearly. 'I forgot my wallet at home' and 'please' act in this example as modifiers to mitigate the request on the addressee.

In Arabic, a request also consists of two parts head act and modifiers as in English language. For example:

Law samaht ja:axi, mumkin tiftah □□□bak?

* Excuse me brother can open window.

Excuse me brother, can you open the window?

In this example, the head act is 'mumkin tiftah □□□bak?' and it can stand by itself as a complete and clear request. 'Law samaht ja:axi' on the other hand, acts as modifier to mitigate the request on the addressee.

In English, request can be linguistically realized with imperative, interrogatives and declaratives. However, Lyons (1968) states that direct imperatives are usually appropriate constructions for commands and instructions, but not for making request.

In performing a request, the speaker should always adhere to the principles of politeness and try to avoid direct request. Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that direct form appear to be impolite and face threatening act, but indirect form tend to be more polite and is a suitable strategy for avoiding threatening face. For example:

Clean the kitchen.

Excuse me, could you clean this table, please? My friends are coming soon.

The first example (3) in English would be considered as an order and it can be considered impolite. As a result, this strategy is the least preferred means of make a request in English. In example (4) an indirect form is used with modifiers in making request, and considered as more polite than direct form (Lyons, 1968; Leech, 1983; Brown and Levinson, 1987). This is because it mitigates the impact of request on addressee's face.

Scollon and Scollon (1995) state that the concept of face refers to the ways a cultural group organizes its social relationships and the politeness strategies depend on the culture differences. They state that the idea of self in western societies corresponds to highly individualistic and self-motivated ideology and open to ongoing negotiation, where as Asians societies concentrate on a more collectivistic self which is more connected to membership in basic group.

House and Kasper (1981) claim that when the relative face-threat increases, a redressive strategy will be selected by a speaker. Speakers prefer to choose negative politeness strategies over positive politeness when the relative face-threat is high because negative politeness strategies are more redressive than positive politeness strategies. On the other hand, when FTAs are unavoidable, speakers can

redress the threat with negative politeness that respects the hearer's negative face which is the need to be independent, have freedom of action, and not be imposed on by others. For example:

Sorry to bother you. I couldn't borrow RM 200, could I, if you don't need it right now?

In example (5) the speaker gives the hearer the option to refuse the request for money without losing face, by handing them excuse on a plate that he/she needed money. The extent of the option giving influences the degree of politeness. The speaker's negative question 'I couldn't borrow RM 200, could I?' which seems to anticipate a refusal follows the negative politeness strategy that Brown and Levinson call 'pessimistic' (1987, p.173).

Scollon and Scollon (1995) emphasize the fact that politeness is greatly influenced by such factors as "power, distance and the weight of the imposition."

On the other hand, speaker must determine the seriousness or the weightiness of a face threatening act in terms of three independent and culturally sensitive variables: (a) the social distance between the speaker and the addressee (b) the social power between the speaker and the addressee (c) the ranking of imposition of a specific face-threatening act.

Scollon and Scollon (1995:48) derive the following general rule: "When two participants differ in their assessment of face strategies, it will tend to be perceived as difference in power". If a subordinate, for example, chose involvement strategies as a way of addressing his superior, the latter would almost certainly understand that he trying to exert power over him/her.

This study will investigate polite request strategies in a specific society that is as produced by Yemeni Arabic male speakers in the same gender and cross gender.

Theoretical background of the study

The primary theoretical framework adapt here is Scollon and Scollon's model of politeness or politeness systems (1995). The main idea of Scollon's model of politeness or politeness systems is that face relationships divided into three politeness systems (deference politeness system, solidarity politeness system and hierarchical politeness system). According to this model of politeness, in a deference politeness system, the speaker and hearer see themselves at the same social level with no interlocutor exerting power over the other (-Power), but with a distant relationship (+Distance). As a result, both interlocutors use independence strategies, including expressions that minimize threat to avoid the risk of losing face. In a solidarity politeness system, interlocutors see themselves as being of equal social position (-Power) and with a close relationship (-Distance); in this system, the interlocutors use involvement strategies to assume or express reciprocity or to claim a common point of view. Finally, in a hierarchical politeness system, one participant is in a superordinate position (+Power) and the other is in a subordinate position (-Power). In this asymmetrical system, where the relationship may be close or distant (-Distance or +Distance), Scollon and Scollon observed that the participant with power may use involvement strategies. The participant in a lower position may employ independence strategies to minimize threat or to show respect to the interlocutor. In particular, this independence aspect of face shows that "a person may act with some degree of autonomy and that he or she respects the rights of others to their own autonomy" (Scollon and Scollon, 1995: 37).

In addition, the current study uses Watts' (2003) concept of linguistic politeness as realized by means of formulaic, ritualized utterances and semi-formulaic utterances. Watts states that formulaic, ritualized utterances and semi-formulaic utterances are part of the politic behavior of different forms of linguistic practice. Watts (2003: 182) states "when they are missing, their absence is easily interpretable as impoliteness¹, and when they are in excess of what is required by the situation, they are easily interpretable as politeness¹".

Related Literature

Several research and many studies have been conducted in the area of speech acts of request. Blum-Kulka (1982, 1983) conducted a study on the request behaviour in Hebrew and compared it with the Canadian and American speakers of English. The findings of those studies show that the degree of social distance and power relationship between interlocutors are very important factors in making re-

quest. And also those studies confirm the view that each language provides the forms for its speakers to perform speech acts. However, the choice of the appropriate form for a speech act is not language specific, but culture specific. Also they confirm that politeness value is not determined by the language form, it is determined by the context of speech act, because what may be viewed as polite in some culture may not be viewed with the same degree of politeness in another culture. Therefore, misunderstanding and using inappropriate forms in cross cultural communication should be expected.

Reiter (2000) carried out across-cultural study of linguistic politeness in Britain and Uruguay based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987). In her study the collected linguistic data are analyzed by using a modified coding scheme from the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization project (CCSARP). This model is based on Cohen and Olshtain (1981, 1983) and further elaborated into the (CCSARP) coding manual (Blum-Kulka et al, 1989) in their coding model. The findings show that British English and Uruguayan Spanish speakers varying the way they frame their requests according to the social distance between the interlocutors. The Uruguayans employ higher levels of directness than the British. On the other hand, the British employed higher levels of non-conventional indirectness which had very low incidence in Uruguayan Spanish. Reiter (2000:180) concludes that "with the case of request it seems that speakers of Uruguayan Spanish don't consider 'negative' politeness as weighty as the British who show more of a need to redress the addressee's 'negative' face." Reiter's study suggests that Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is applicable to the British and Uruguayan community.

Maria Kogotsidis (2002) conducted a study to examine whether there are marked cross-cultural differences in the degree of requestive directness between the Greek native speakers (GNSS) and the British English native speakers (ENSS) in telephone business encounters. The subjects in this study were two hundred random callers were used as subjects, one hundred Greek callers (46 female, 54 male), and one hundred English callers (54 female, 46 male). Due to the nature of telephone data, no homogeneity in the callers used could be ensured (their age, educational background, social background, cultural background etc.). For this reason, only their gender was recorded. The method of data gathering followed the collection and comparison of telephone opening requests produced by callers at the call centre of a UK airline based in the South of England and semi-structured interviews were also carried out in relation to the telephone operators who received the calls. These interviews were conducted in order to gain some qualitative insights into how the callers' requests and telephone behaviour were perceived by the hearers (operators). The findings of the study show that there are marked cross cultural differences in the strategy selection and degree of directness employed between the GNSS and the ENSS as far as their requesting strategies are concerned, and reveal the tendency on the part of the Greek native speakers to employ greater directness in their requestive production more than ENSS.

Byon (2004) conducted a study to investigate and describe socio-pragmatic features of American Korean Foreign Language learners in the Korean communicative act of request. The subjects in this study were 150 female university students. Fifty female Korean native speakers provided the native Korean data, fifty female American English native speakers provided the native English data and fifty female American native speakers of English who were Korean Foreign Language learners provided the non-native data. The data of the study was collected through a written questionnaire in the form of the Discourse Completion Test. The findings of the study show that the American Korean foreign language learners as advanced learners appear to develop a greater sensitivity to the use of politeness strategies in requesting than is seen in native speakers. Also the study supports that the American Korean foreign language learners as advanced learners do not acquire fully native speakers-like ways of requesting and they tend to produce longer request than native speakers do. The KFL learners used a greater number of formulae are more varied in form than the Korean native speakers. Also the findings of the study suggest that the study can help the KFL teachers become aware of cultural differences in language usage, by emphasizing the importance of a curriculum that utilizes the act of request within its cultural contexts. Also KFL textbook dialogues should be constructed so as to reflect the Korean way of speaking and thinking.

Felix-Brasdefer (2005) conducted a study to examine the notions of indirectness and politeness in speech act of requests, including head acts and external modifications, among Mexican university students in role play situation. The subjects of the study were ten NSs of Mexican Spanish included four male and six females. The data of the study was collected through an open-ended role-play. The findings of the study show that NSs of Mexican Spanish prefer to use conventional indirectness strategies by means of 'query preparatory' when making request in situations which display + Power or +

Distance, whereas prefer to use directness strategies when the relationship between the interlocutors was closer (-Distance). Also the study proves that there is no relation between indirectness and politeness as observed by Brown and Levinson's (1987) and Leech's (1983). The findings of the study show that direct requests are situation-dependent and seem to be the expected behavior among Mexican subjects in a solidarity politeness system (-Power, - Distance). Also the findings of the study are consistent with other studies which found that directness in German and Polish cultures should not be considered impolite, but rather should be seen as a way of expressing closeness and affiliation.

Marti (2006) conducted a study to identify the realization and politeness perception of requests made by Turkish monolingual speakers and Turkish-German bilingual returnees and investigate the possibility that the Turkish-German bilingual returnees' pragmatic performance may have been affected by pragmatic transfer from German. The researcher used in his study (DCT) in order to collect data from Turkish monolinguals and Turkish-German bilingual returnees, in order to elicit requests in 10 different situation and to investigate the relationship between indirectness and politeness. The findings of the study are generally in accordance with Blum-Kulka (1987) there is no linear relation between indirectness and politeness. Indirectness and politeness are strongly connected concepts. Also the study shows the Turkish speakers adopt quite direct strategies whereas German speakers prefer indirect strategies.

Chen and Eileen Chen (2007) conducted a study to explore the use of request strategies and the effect of social variables on Taiwanese EFL learners and American native speakers. Fourteen native English speakers and fifty Taiwanese EFL learners participated in this study. The researchers used Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989) to collect data. The findings of the study show that conventionally indirect strategy is the most preferred choice for both groups and in term of the influence of social variables the analysis of the main request strategy types reveals when the interlocutors have equal social status, they prefer to use conventionally indirect strategy whereas the speaker's social status is higher than the addressee's social status, the choice of strategy tends to move towards directness. Therefore, the study show that cross cultural variations influenced by the factor of social status.

Lin (2009) compared the use of query preparatory modals in conventionally indirect requests made by native speakers of English (NS-Es), native speakers of Chinese (NS-Cs), and Chinese learners of English-as-a-Foreign Language (EFLs). A total of 3600 expressions of request were elicited from 180 college students (60 in each group—NS-E, NS-C and EFL) using the Discourse Completion Task (DCT). The findings of the study provide support for Blum-Kulak's (1989) generalizations on the conventionality of indirect request. First, although the same range and types of modals are used in Chinese and English, the preference orders and distributions of the sub-strategies vary cross-culturally, which results in inter-language deviations from what is observed in DCT-elicited NS English data. Second, the sub-strategies also vary in terms of form, function, and distribution.

This study is a socio-pragmatic study into the speech act of request. It investigates polite request strategies in Yemeni Arabic as used by male speakers of Yemeni Arabic in male-male interaction and male-female interaction and the effect of social distance, social power and ranking of imposition in the choice of request strategies in their daily conversation.

Method

Subjects

The data were collected from a group of Yemeni students from the Departments of English language, Arabic language, History, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, Islamic studies and Mathematics as their major specialization at Sana'a University, Yemen. The sample included 168 males and 168 females (mean age: 19-25). The respondents are relatively homogeneous in terms of their cultural background and academic/ linguistic experiences. All subjects were university students at Sana'a University.

Instrumentation and procedures

All respondents were asked to fill out a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). This test was originally designed by Blum-Kulka (1982) and has been widely used since then in collecting data on speech acts realization both within and cross language groups. The questionnaire used in this investigation involves six written situations. Respondents are then asked to complete each dialogue by writing a suit-

able request in Yemeni Arabic. Respondents were asked to put themselves in real situation and to assume that in each situation they would, in fact, say something they were asked to write down what they would say.

The situations vary according to a number of social variables: the social distance between the speakers, the relative social power of the respondents and the ranking of the request (see table 5.2). The situations depict in the role-play represents socially differentiated situations which reflect everyday occurrences of the type expect to be familiar to native speakers of Yemeni Arabic. The researcher administered the questionnaire in the second semester of the academic year 2008/2009.

Table 1: Combination of explanatory variables

Situation 1	S>H	-SD	Low
Situation 2	S>H	+SD	High
Situation 3	S< H	+SD	Low
Situation 4	S<H	-SD	Low
Situation 5	S=H	-SD	High
Situation 6	S=H	-SD	High

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data of the study is based on an adaptation of Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) CCSARP (Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project) coding scheme used to study the realization of speech acts in a number of languages. Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) coding scheme is classified request into three levels of directness: direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect. According to this scale, the researcher can identify request strategies types as produced by male native speakers of Yemeni Arabic in male-male interaction and male-female interaction. The researcher will use SPSS to analyze data in terms of frequency and percentage.

Results and discussion

For the purpose of discussion the instructions given to description of situations will be translated into English and the actual instruction in Arabic can be found in appendix (1).

Request strategies used by male-male and male-female interaction

The data analysis involves presenting the distribution of request strategies type in Yemeni Arabic across twelve situations in male-male interaction and male-female interaction.

Situation 1 and 2

Situation1: You want your younger brother to bring some vegetable from the near-by grocery. What would you say?

Situation2: You are a teacher in a college. One of your students has brought his new laptop. You want to ask him to use it for an hour. What would you say?

Table 2 and figure 1 show the use of request strategies by male-male and male-female interaction across situation 1 and 2 in Yemeni Arabic at each level of directness: direct, conventional indirectness, and non-conventional indirectness.

Table 2: Distribution of Frequency and Percentage of the Requests Strategies in Male-Male Interaction and Male- Female Interaction across Situation 1 and 2

situation	Direct strategies				Conventionally indirect strategies			
	Male-Male		Male-Female		Male-Male		Male-Female	
	Mood derivable	Want state-ments	Mood derivable	Want state-ments	Suggestory formulae	Query prepara-tory	Suggestory formulae	Query prepara-tory
S1	153 50.7%	9 45.0%	149 49.3%	11 55.0%	0	6 42.9%	0	8 57,1%
S2	60 51.3%	14 38.9%	57 48.7%	22 61.1%	11 64.7%	83 50.0%	6 35.3%	83 50.0%

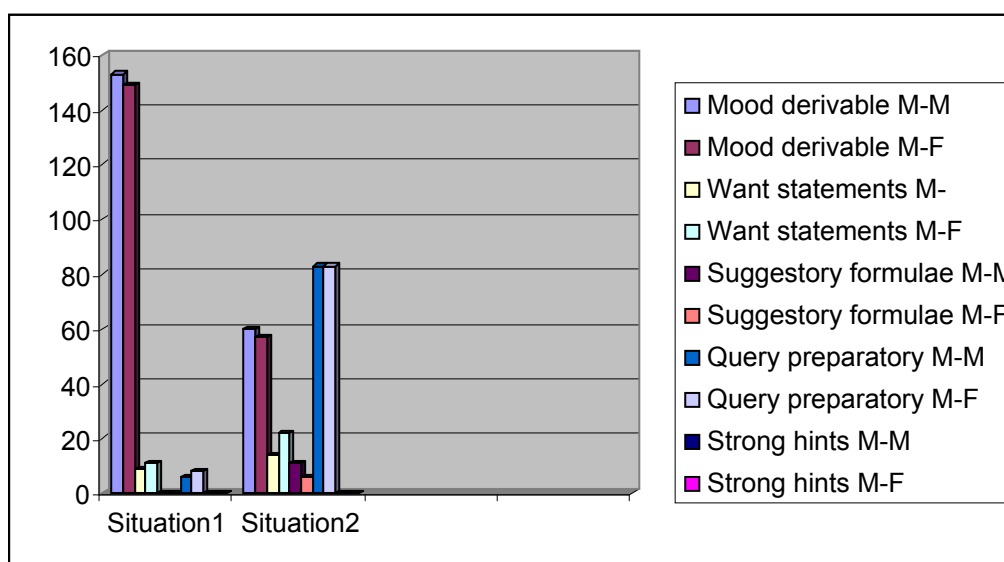


Figure1: Distribution of Request Strategies in Yemeni Arabic across Situation 1 and 2

The head act strategy most often use in situation one and two by male-male interaction and male-female interaction is mood derivable strategy, query preparatory and want statements. In situation one in male-male interaction the percentage of mood derivable is 50.7%, want statements 45.0% and query preparatory 42.9%. In situation two in male-male interaction the percentage of mood derivable is 51.3%, want statements 38.9%, query preparatory 50.0% and suggestory formulae is 64.7%.

In situation one in male-female interaction the percentage of mood derivable is 49.3%, want statements 55.0% and query preparatory 57,1%. In situation two in male-female interaction the percentage of mood derivable is 48.7%, want statements 61.1%, query preparatory 50.0% and suggestory formulae is 35.3%.

According to Scollon and Scollon's (1995) politeness system, the findings of situation one and two come under hierarchical politeness system. In this asymmetrical, the relationship between the interlocutors is unequal social position. The speaker is in a higher position (+Power) and the hearer is in a lower position (-Power). In this situation, the speaker (requester) uses direct strategy or involvement politeness strategy because the speaker has in a higher position than the hearer (requestee). The preference for direct request in this situation seems to be an instance of solidarity politeness strate-

gies and shows that being direct in this situation expresses camaraderie and is consistent with cultural norms when the speaker has a high position. The native speakers of Yemeni Arabic employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing 'face' because the fact that it is the expected behavior in such situations.

Examples of direct strategies (mood derivable and want statements) by male-male interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

(1) ja:-m□hamad si:r □ila □lbaqa:lah w-□tari xǝrawa:t

* hey Mohammed go to grocery and-buy vegetable

Mohammed, go to grocery and buy vegetable.

(2) ja:-□abn-i □ana □□ti mennak □lmaħmu:l Im□dat sa:□ah

* Hey-son-my I want from you laptop for an hour

My son I want your laptop for an hour.

Examples of direct strategies (mood derivable and want statements) by male-female interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

(1) ja:-s□□ad si:ri □ila □lbaqa:lah w-□tari lana xǝrawa:t

* hey Suad go to grocery and-buy for us vegetable

Suad go to grocery and buy vegetables for us.

(2) ja:-bint-i □iran-i maħmulik Im□dat sa:□ah

* hey-daughter-my lend me laptop-your for an hour

My daughter, lend me your laptop for an hour.

Examples of indirect strategies (query preparatory and suggestory formulae) by male-male interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

(1) Law samaħt tiqdir tsi:r ti□tari xǝrawa:t min □lbaqa:lah

* If you allowed can-you go buy vegetable from grocery

Excuse me, can you go and buy vegetable from grocery

(2) Law samaħt mumkin □asta□i:r maħmulak Im□dat sa:□a

* If you allowed can borrow-I laptop-your for an hour

Excuse me, can I borrow your laptop for an hour?

(3) □i:□ ra□jak law nistaxdim maħmulak Im□dat sa:□ah

* What opinion if use laptop-your for an hour

How about using your laptop for an hour?

Examples of indirect strategies (query preparatory and suggestory formulae) by male-female interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

(1) Law samaħti mumkin tsi:ri ti□tari xǝrawa:t min □lbaqa:lah

* If you allowed can-you go buy vegetable from grocery

Excuse me, can you go and buy vegetable from grocery?

(2) li:□ ma: nist□a□mil maħmulik Im□dat sa:□ah

* Why not use laptop-your for an hour

Why don't we use your laptop for an hour?

As shown in the examples above, the speakers used formulaic utterances such as terms of address 'jamohamad' (Mohammed) and 'jasu□ad' (suad) to expressed involvement or camaraderie between interlocutors and to weaken the illocutionary force of the upcoming direct requests. Also the speaker used formulaic utterances such as apologizing 'Lawsama:ħt' (excuse me) for male, 'Lawsama:ħti'

(excuse me) for female and 'min faðlak' (please) to soften a direct request and make it more polite. In the Yemeni culture, the direct request or imperatives are classified as solidarity politeness strategies (involvement politeness strategies) and the Yemeni cultures permits a more direct level of interaction between close people such as brothers, sons, daughters, sisters and even close friends because they imply that the speaker assumes only a small social distance between him/herself and the interlocutor. The preference for direct request in this situation seems to be an instance of solidarity shows that, being direct among family member, expresses camaraderie and is consistent with cultural norms of Yemeni society. Also the speakers used formulaic expression 'ja:ax-i' (my brother) and 'ja:xt-i' (my sister) to express involvement or camaraderie, and used semi-formulaic expression 'mumkin'(can) and 'tiqdar' for male and 'tiqdari' (can) for female as a marker of indirect request independence politeness strategies because in male-female interaction the speaker preferred to use indirect strategies in Yemeni Arabic for cultural and religious values.

From Table 2 and figure 1, it is obvious that the native speakers of Yemeni Arabic in male-male interaction and male-female interaction showed a preference for direct request forms in the form of mood derivable and want statements more than indirect request in the form of query preparatory.

In situation one and two, the native speakers of Yemeni Arabic make greater use of the direct strategy (mood derivable) because in Yemeni culture direct strategies or imperatives are common and permitted between close people such as family member and close friends. The preference for direct request in this situation seems to be an instance of solidarity of politeness strategies or involvement politeness strategies and shows that being direct in this situation expresses camaraderie and is consistent with cultural norms when the speaker has a high position and the Yemeni culture permit for using more direct level of interaction when requesting people in lower position than requester. The native speakers of Yemeni Arabic employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing 'face' because the fact that it is the expected behaviour in such situations.

Situation 3 and 4

Situation3: You are a university student and you want to request your teacher to lend you his book to do your assignment. What would you say?

Situation4: You have got scholarship and you want to ask professor who taught you in the university to write you a recommendation letter. What would you say?

Table 3 and figure 2 show the use of request strategies by male-male and male-female interaction across situation 3 and 4 in Yemeni Arabic at each level of directness: direct, conventional indirectness, and non-conventional indirectness.

Table 3: Distribution of Frequency and Percentage of the Requests Strategies in Male-Male Interaction and Male- Female Interaction across Situation 3 and 4

situation	Direct strategies				Conventionally indirect strategies			
	Male-Male		Male-Female		Male-Male		Male-Female	
	Mood derivable	Want statements	Mood derivable	Want statements	Suggestory formulae	Query preparatory	Suggestory formulae	Query preparatory
S3	51 56.7%	32 43.8%	39 43.3%	41 56.2%	10 62.5	75 47.8%	6 37.5 %	82 52.2%
S4	63 52.9%	59 52.2%	56 47.1%	54 47.8%	0	46 44.2%	0	58 55.8%

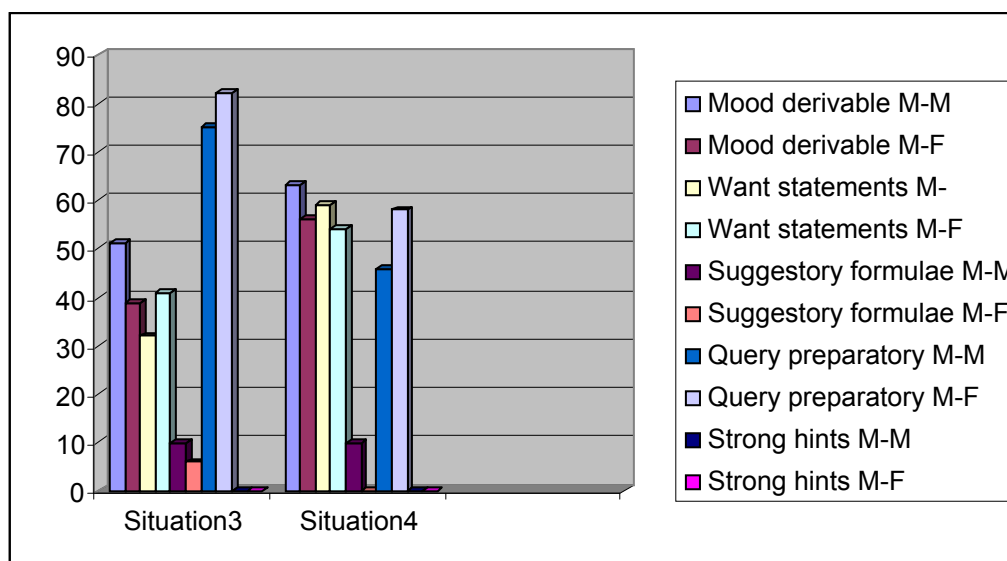


Figure2: Distribution of Request Strategies in Yemeni Arabic across Situation 3 and 4

In situation three in male-male interaction, the participants use different strategies with different percentage. They use direct strategies by means of mood derivable 56.7% and want statements 43.8% and they use indirect strategies by means of query preparatory 47.8% and suggestory formulae 62.5%. In situation four, the overall direct strategies by means of mood derivable in male-male interaction is 52.9% and want statements is 52.2% and the over all indirect strategies by means of query preparatory is 44.2%.

In situation three in male-male interaction, the most frequently used head act strategy is query preparatory. The next most frequently chosen strategies are mood derivable, want statements and suggestory formulae. In situation four in male-male interaction, the most frequently used head act strategy is mood derivable. The next most frequently chosen strategies are want statements and query preparatory.

In situation three in male-female interaction, the participants use different strategies with different percentage. They use direct strategies by means of mood derivable 43.3% and want statements 56.2% and they use indirect strategies by means of query preparatory 52.2% and suggestory formulae 37.5%. In situation four in male-female interaction, the over all direct strategy by means of mood derivable is 47.1% and want statements is 47.8%. The overall indirect strategy by means of query preparatory is 55.8%.

In situation three in male-female interaction the most frequently used head act strategy is query preparatory. The next most frequently chosen strategies are mood derivable, want statements and suggestory formulae. In situation four in male-female interaction, the most frequently used head act strategy is query preparatory. The next most frequently chosen strategies are want statements and mood derivable.

Examples of direct strategies (mood derivable and want statements) by male-male interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

(1) iðā sama:ħt ja□□st□að □adi-li kitab-ak □kt□b w□□ib-i

* If you allowed oh teacher give-me book-your write homework-my

Excuse me teacher, give me your book to do my homework.

(4) iðā takarramt ja:□□sta:ð □a□t-i t□kt□b li risalat tawsjah

* If you be generous enough hey teacher want write for-me letter recommendation

Excuse me my teacher, I want you to write for me recommendation letter.

Examples of direct strategies (mood derivable and want statements) by male-female interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

(2) ja□□st□aḏah min faḏlik □iran-i kitab-ik □a□ml w□□ib-i

* hey teacher please lend-me book-your do homework-my

Pleas my teacher, lend me your book to do my homework.

(4) □afwan ja□□sta:ḏah □a□t-i t□kt□bi li risalat tawsjah

* Sorry hey teacher want-I write for-me letter recommendation

I am sorry my teacher, I want you to write recommendation letter for me.

Examples of indirect strategies (query preparatory and suggestory formulae) by male-male interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

(2) ja□□st□aḏ Law sama:ḥt hal □astti□ □asta□i:r kitab-ak

* hey teacher If you allowed can able borrow book-your

Excuse me my teacher, can I borrow your book?

(2) □allah j□ba:rik fi:k ja:□□sta:ḏ tiqdar t□kt□bi li risalat tawsjah □lja□m

* Allah bless you hey teacher can-you write for me letter recommendation today

Allah bless you my teacher, can you write recommendation letter for me today?

Examples of indirect strategies (query preparatory and suggestory formulae) by male-female interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

(1) min faḏlik ja□□st□aḏah mumkin □asta□i:r kitab-ik

* Please hey teacher can borrow book-your

Please my teacher, can I borrow your book?

(2) □iḏa ma:fi: mani□ ja□□sta:ḏah tiqdari t□kt□bi li risalat tawsjah

* If no objection hey teacher can-you write for me letter recommendation

If there is no objection my teacher, can you write recommendation letter for me?

In male-female interaction, the participants use different strategies with different percentage. They use direct strategies by means of mood derivable 43.3% and want statements 56.2% and they use indirect strategies by means of query preparatory 52.2% and suggestory formulae 37.5%.

In male-female interaction the most frequently used head act strategy is query preparatory. The next most frequently chosen strategies are mood derivable, want statements and suggestory formulae. Examples of direct strategies (mood derivable and want statements) by male-female interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

The findings of situation three and four come under Scollon and Scollon's (1995) deference politeness system the speaker don't have a power (+ power) but there is a high distance (+D) between the speaker and hearer in this situation. The preference for indirect strategies and direct strategies with softeners in situation three and four seems to be the marker of respectable of the hearer and to help negotiation of request and to smooth the conversational interaction. So the Yemenis who participated in this study used various kinds of formulaic, ritualized expressions when accomplished request to soften their request and make it very polite when addressing their teacher.

As show in the examples above, the speakers used various kinds of formulaic, ritualized expressions such as terms of address 'ja:□□st□aḏ' (teacher) for male teacher and 'ja:□□st□aḏah' for female teacher to express their respectable for their teacher and to make their request more polite. Also the speakers used formulaic, ritualized expressions such as apologizing 'Law samaḥt' (excuse me) for male teacher and 'Law samaḥti' (excuse me) for female teacher, 'min faḏlak' (please) for male teacher and 'min faḏlik' (please) for female teacher, '□afwan ja□□st□aḏ' (sorry my teacher), '□iḏa takarramt' (If you be generous enough) for male teacher and '□iḏa takarramti' (If you be generous enough) for female teacher. Also the speakers used some Islamic expressions in situation three and four as formulaic, ritualized expressions such as '□allah jarḏa □ali:ki' (Allah be pleased with you) to make their request respectable.

Also the speakers used semi-formulaic expressions such as 'mumkin' (can), 'hal □astti□' (can able), 'b□ammkanakl' (can you) as a marker of indirect request or as independence politeness strategies. Also used suggestory forms such as 'ma: ra□jaki' (how about) and 'li:□ ma:' (why don't) to make their request indirect.

From Table 3 and figure 2 in male-male interaction and male-female interaction, differences is observed that the native speakers of Yemeni Arabic prefer to use indirect strategies by means of query preparatory and suggestory formulae more than direct strategies in situation three and four because the there is a high social distance between the speaker and the hearer so the speaker try to show his respectable and deference by making indirect request. Also the native speakers of Yemeni Arabic used direct strategies by means of mood derivable and want statements with various softeners which show that when the distant is very high between the interlocutors in Yemeni culture the speakers prefer to use indirect strategies or direct strategies with different kind of softeners which mitigate the direct request and to make their request acceptable and more polite.

Situation 5 and 6

Situation5: You want your neighbor to drive you to the market because your car has broken and you want to buy some fruit for your family. What would you say?

Situation6: You went with your friend to stationary to buy some books, but you forgot your wallet at your home, so you want to borrow some money from your friend. What would you say?

Table 4 and figure 3 show the use of request strategies by male-male and male-female interaction across situation 5 and 6 in Yemeni Arabic at each level of directness: direct, conventional indirectness, and non-conventional indirectness.

Table 4: Distribution of Frequency and Percentage of the Requests Strategies in Male-Male Interaction and Male- Female Interaction across Situation 5 and 6

situations	Direct strategies				Conventionally indirect strategies				Non-conventionally indirect strategies	
	Male-Male		Male-Female		Male-Male		Male-Female		Male-Male	Male-Female
	Mood derivable	Want state-ments	Mood derivable	Want state-ments	Suggestory formulae	Query prepara-tory	Suggestory formulae	Query prepara-tory	Strong hint	Strong hint
S5	86 56.6%	24 42.9%	66 43.4%	32 57.1%	10 58.8%	41 42.7%	7 41.2%	55 57.3%	7 46.7%	8 53.3%
S6	125 55.8%	14 42.4%	99 44.2%	19 57.6%	0	19 32.8%	0	39 67.2%	10 47.6%	11 52.4%

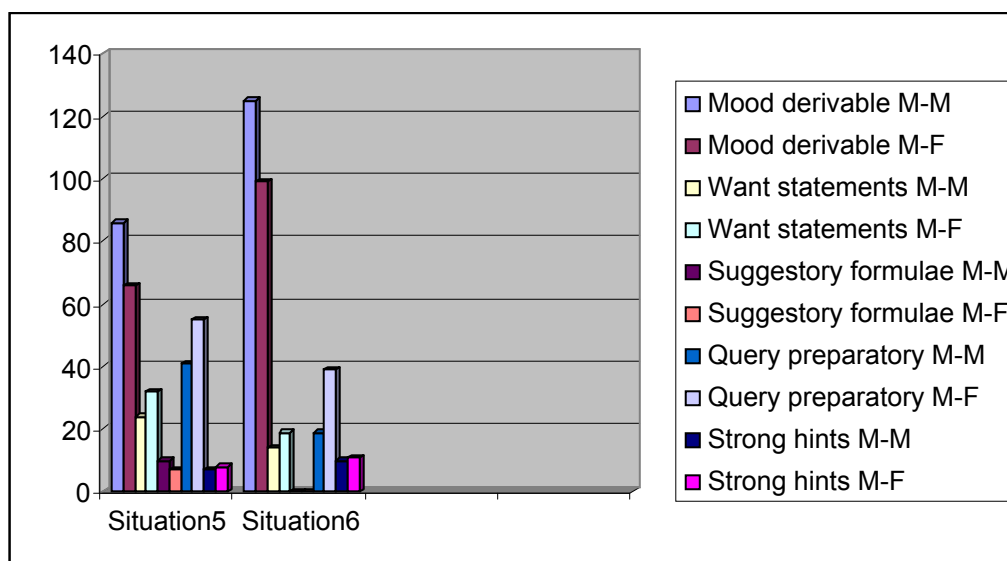


Figure3: Distribution of Request Strategies in Yemeni Arabic across Situation 5 and 6

In situation five and six the native speakers of Yemeni Arabic used various strategies with different frequency and percentage. They prefer to use direct strategies by means of mood derivable. In situation five in male-male interaction, the speakers use direct strategy by means of mood derivable with 56.6% and want statements with 42.9%. Also conventionally indirect strategies appear in male-male interaction by means of suggestory formulae with 58.8% and query preparatory with 42.7%. Also non-conventionally indirect strategies appear in male-female interaction by means of strong hints 46.7%. In situation six, the overall all direct strategies by means of mood derivable by male-male interaction is 55.8%, want statements is 42.4% and conventionally indirect strategies by means of query preparatory is 32.8%. Furthermore, the nonconventional indirect strategies strong hints are also observed in the data with 47.6%.

Also in situation five in male-female interaction, the speakers used direct strategy by means of mood derivable with 43.4% and want statements with 57.1%. Also conventionally indirect strategies appear in male-male interaction by means of suggestory formulae with 41.2% and query preparatory with 57.3%. Also non-conventionally indirect strategies appear in male-female interaction by means of strong hints 53.3%. In situation six in male-female interaction, the overall all direct strategies by means of mood derivable is 44.2%, want statements is 57.6% and conventionally indirect strategies by means of query preparatory is 67.2%. Furthermore, the nonconventional indirect strategies by means of strong hints are also observed in the data with 52.4%.

Examples of direct strategies by means of (mood derivable and want statements) by male-male interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

- (1) min faḍlak ilani ma-ak la-su:q
 * out of your bounty take-me with-you to-market
 Please, give me a ride to the market.
- (2) Law samaḥt ja:saḥab-i salifni f-lu:s
 * If you allowed me hey friend-my lend-me money
 Excuse me my friend, lend me money.

Examples of direct strategies by means of (mood derivable and want statements) by male-female interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

- (1) ja:xt-i ti tiwasilin-i la-su:q
 * hey sister want-I take-me to-market
 My sister, I want you to take me to the market

(2) Law samaḥti ja:□□xt-i salifni f□lu:s

* If you allowed me sister-my lend-me money

Excuse me my sister, lend me money.

Examples of conventionally indirect strategies by means of (query preparatory and suggestory formulae) by male-male interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

(1) □allah j□ba:rik fi:k ja:□ali tiqdar tiwasiln-i la-□su:q

* Allah bless you hey Ali you- able take-me to-market

Allah bless you Ali, can you give me a ride to the market?

(2) □iḍa ma:fi: □iz□□ ja:□bd□lah tiqdar tsalfni f□lu:s

* If no bother hey Abdullah you able lend- me money

If there is no bother Abdullah, can you lend me money?

Examples of conventionally indirect strategies by means of (query preparatory and suggestory formulae) by male-female interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

(1) ma: ra□jik law tiwasilin-i la-□su:q □□tari fawakh

* What opinion if take-me to-market to buy fruit

How about giving me a ride to the market to buy fruit?

(2) □iḍa ma:fi: □iz□□ ja:fatima tiqdar tsalfni f□lu:s

* If no bother hey Fatima you able lend- me money

If there is no bother Fatima, can you lend me money

Examples of non-conventionally indirect strategies by means of (strong hints) by male-male interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

(1) ta□-i ma□-i la-□su:q ni□tari fawakh

* come with-me to-market to-buy fruit

Join me to the market to buy fruit.

Examples of non-conventionally indirect strategies by means of (strong hints) by male-female interaction in Yemeni Arabic are shown below:

(1) nisi:t f□lu:si fi □lbeit ma: □dri □i:□ □a□mal

* forgot money-my at home not- know what do

I forgot my money at home. I don't know what I do?

The findings of situation five and six come under Scollon and Scollon's (1995) solidarity politeness system. The speaker and the hearer see themselves as being in equal social position. There is no feeling of either a power difference (- p) or distance (- D) between them. The participants in male-male interaction prefer to use direct strategies with softeners in order to mitigate and smooth the conversational interaction, whereas in male-female interaction, they prefer to use conventionally indirect strategies and non-conventionally indirect strategies. The Yemenis who participated in this study used various kinds of formulaic, ritualized expressions when accomplished request to soften their request and make it very polite when addressing their friends or neighbours.

As shown in the examples above, The speakers used various kinds of formulaic, ritualized expressions such as terms of address 'ja:□□xt-i' (my sister) to express their respect for their female neighbour or friend, terms of address including the first name such as 'ja:□ali' (Ali) name of male person and 'ja:fatima' (Fatima) name of female and also the speakers use the title 'ja:□ari' (my neighbour) for male and 'ja:□arati' (my neighbour) for female to make their request more polite. Also the speaker used formulaic, ritualized expressions such as apologizing 'Law samaḥt' (excuse me) for male and 'Law samaḥti' (excuse me) for female, 'min faḍlak' (please) for male and 'min faḍlik' (please) for female, 'law takarramt' (If you be generous enough) for male and 'law takarramti' (If you be generous enough) for female. Also the speakers use some Islamic expressions in this situation as formulaic,

ritualized expressions such as 'inshallah jaħfðak' (Allah preserves you) and 'inshallah jibbarik fi:k' (Allah bless you) to make their request respectable.

Also the speakers used semi-formulaic expressions such as 'mumkin' to express possibility (can), and 'tiqdar' to express ability (can). The speaker use semi-formulaic expressions as a marker of indirect request or as independence politeness strategies.

From Table 4 and figure 3, in male-male interaction and male-female interaction, differences are observed that the native speakers of Yemeni Arabic in male-male interaction prefer to use direct strategies more than indirect strategies because in Yemeni culture direct requests are common and favored among close friends. Direct requests are classified in Yemeni Arabic as solidarity politeness strategies because they imply that the speaker assumes only a small social distance between him/herself and the interlocutor. It should be noted that direct requests were often internally modified by the lexical mitigators 'min faðlak' (please), 'Law samaħt' (excuse me), 'iðā takarramt' (if you be generous), 'inshallah jaħfðak' (may Allah preserves you) to soften the direct request. The preference for direct request in this situation seems to be an instance of solidarity politeness and shows that, being direct among friends, expresses camaraderie and is consistent with cultural norms of equal status.

Also it is observed that in male-female interaction the speakers prefer to use conventionally indirect strategies by means of query preparatory more than direct strategies. The findings of situation ten as shown in Table 4 and figure 3 confirm that native speakers of Yemeni Arabic use a variety of strategy types. Direct strategies (mood derivable and want statements) are observed and at the same time, indirect strategies (query preparatory and suggestory formulae) are also used to show a tendency for indirectness. Furthermore, the nonconventional indirect strategies strong hints are also observed in the data in a low frequency.

Conclusion

In this study the researcher examined the notion of polite request strategies as used by male speakers of Yemeni Arabic in the same gender and cross gender. The analysis examined the request patterns of Yemeni Arabic speakers related to six situations. It attempted to organize the various strategies used for the purpose of making request from the pragmatic point of view. It was found that the directness was realized by means of mood derivable strategy and want statements strategy, conventional indirectness, mostly realized by means of query preparatory and suggestory formulae and non-conventionally indirectness was realized by means of strong hints. It is clear that conventional indirectness strategies are not dominant in all six situations, but it appeared as the first ranking strategy only in situation two and three in the data.

It was found that there is a general trend in Yemeni Arabic for higher levels of directness in male-male interactions. Male speakers of Yemeni Arabic in the same gender (male-male interaction) employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing 'face'. This is not indicating the appropriateness of directness in 'close' social distance relationships, but probably the fact that it is the expected behavior in such situations. Also in male-male interactions, the speaker use indirect strategies with low frequent in six situations. The use of direct strategy (imperative) by male speakers of Yemeni Arabic in the same gender could be attributed to the closeness and the solidarity between the interlocutors.

Also it was found that there is a general trend in Yemeni Arabic for higher levels of indirectness in male-female interactions. The use of indirect strategy by male speakers of Yemeni Arabic cross gender could be attributed to culture and religious values. Buda et al. (1998) have pointed out that there are special linguistic utterances that men use when addressing women, and vice versa in Arabic, because of cultural and religious values.

In general, the result of the present study shows that male speakers of Yemeni Arabic prefer to use direct strategies frequently with or without softener because they consider it as an efficient way of expressing polite request particularly with juniors or acquaintances.

Abdul Wahid (2003), imperatives with softeners are more frequently used by Arab speakers when addressing their juniors as well as their equals provided that the situation is not difficult, when the action desired to be performed by the addressee is a light favor. In short, the preference for direct requests in male-male interactions seems to be an instance of solidarity or positive politeness between interlocutors.

In male-female interactions, the requesters used independence politeness strategies to mitigate and soften the impact of request and to show their respect for women in Yemeni society according to Islamic values.

The findings show that there is general preference by native speakers of Yemeni Arabic to use conventionally indirectness strategies with high frequency and percentage in situations two and three because the speaker (requester) has lower power and distance than the hearer (requestee) whereas the requester has higher power and distance than requestee the preference strategies are directness. Native speakers of Yemeni Arabic employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing 'face' because the fact that it is the expected behavior in such situations and it refers to establish solidarity between interlocutors. In some situations, there is equal power and distance between interlocutors but the ranking of imposition is very high so native speakers of Yemeni Arabic employed indirectness strategies more than direct in order to mitigate and minimize the impact of the request and face threatening act.

Finally, the current study proves that polite request strategies differ from culture to culture. Native speakers of Yemeni Arabic used direct requests with softeners softeners in a high frequency to mitigate their requests. Also it proves that imperative form is not as impolite in Yemeni Arabic as it is in English or any other language. Direct requests are classified in Yemeni Arabic as solidarity politeness strategies because they imply that the speaker assumes only a small social distance between him/herself and the interlocutor.

References

- Blum-Kulka, S. (1982). Learning how to say what you mean in second language: a study of speech Act performance of learners of Hebrew as a second language. *Applied Linguistics*, 3, 29-59.
- Blum-Kulka, S. (1983). *Interpreting and performing speech acts in a second language: across cultural study of Hebrew and English socio-linguistics and language acquisition*. Rowley, A: Newbury House.
- Blum-Kulka, S. et al's (1989). *Cross cultural pragmatics: requests and apologies*. Norwood, New Jersey. Ablex.
- Brown, P. & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: some universals in language use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buda S. et al. (1998) 'Cultural differences between Arabs and Americans', *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology* 29 (3): 487-492
- Byon, A. (2004). Sociolinguistic analysis of Korean requests: pedagogical settings. *Journal of Pragmatics* 36: 1673-1704.
- Canale, M. & Swain, M. (1980) Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing, *Applied Linguistics*, 1, 1-47.
- Chen, S. & Chen, E. (2007). Inter-language requests: a cross-cultural study of English and Chinese, *the Linguistics Journal*, 2, 33-52.
- Economidou-Kogetsidis, M. (2002) Requesting strategies in English and Greek: observations from an airline's call centre, *Nottingham Linguistic Circular* 17. Available from: www.nottingham.ac.uk/english/nic/economidou.pdf.
- Félix-Brasdefer, J. César, 2003a Declining an invitation: a cross-cultural study of pragmatic strategies in Latin American Spanish and American English. *Multilingua* 22, 225-255.
- Félix-Brasdefer, J. (2005). Indirectness and politeness in Mexican requests. In *Selected Proceedings of the 7th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium*, ed. David Eddington, 66-78. Somerville, MA: Cascadia Proceedings Project.
- Ghalib, Q. Abdulwahid (2003). *A Pragmatic Analysis of Speech Acts as Produced by Native Speakers of Arabic*. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India 2003.
- House, J. & Kasper, G. (1981) Politeness Markers in English and German in Conversational Routine, The Hague: Mouton de Gruyter.

- Johnson, K. & Johnson, H. (1999) *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*, Blackwell Publishers.
- Kasper, G. 2000. Data collection in pragmatics research. In: Spencer-Oatey, H. (Ed.), *Culturally Speaking: Managing Rapport through Talk across Cultures*. Continuum, London, pp. 316–369.
- Lin, Y.-H., (in press). Query preparatory modals: cross-linguistic and cross-situational variations in request modification. *Journal of Pragmatics* (2009) doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2008.12.007
- Leech, G. (1983) *Principles of pragmatics*. Essex: Longman.
- Lyons, J. (1968) *Introduction to theoretical linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marti, L. (2006). Indirectness and politeness in Turkish–German bilingual and Turkish monolingual requests. *Journal of Pragmatics* 38:1836–1869.
- Olishtain, E. & Cohen, A. (1983) *Apology: a speech act sets in socio linguistics and language acquisition*. N. Wolfson and E. Judd (eds) 18–35. Mass: Olishtain, E. & Cohen, Andrew (1991)
- Olishtain, E. & Cohen, A. (1983) Developing a measure of sociocultural competence: the case of apology. *Language learning* 31(1):113–134.
- Reiter, R. M. (2000) *Linguistic politeness in Britain and Uruguay: contrastive study of requests and apologies*. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Rintell, E. (1981) *Getting Your Speech Act Together: The Pragmatic Ability of Second Language Learners*, A working paper on Bilingualism. The TESOL Convention: Washington D. C.
- Scarcella, R. 1979. On speaking politely in a second language. In: Yorio, C., Perkins, K., Schachter, J. (Eds.), *On TESOL '79: The Learner in Focus*. TESOL, Washington, DC, pp. 275–287.
- Scollon, R., Scollon, S. 2001. *Intercultural Communication*, second ed. Blackwell, Malden, MA.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1987) *Teaching Language as Communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Appendix 1

A discourse completion test

You want your younger brother to bring some vegetable from the near-by grocery. What would you say?

1. تريد من أخيك الأصغر أن يحضر بعض الخضروات من البقالة القريبة من منزلكم ما الذي تقوله ؟

You are a teacher in college. One of your students has brought his new laptop. You want to ask him to use it for an hour. What would you say?

2. انت مدرس في كلية وأحد من طلابك احضر معه كمبيوتره المحمول وأنت تريد أن تستخدمه لمدة ساعة ما الذي تقوله؟

3. You are a university student and you want to request your teacher to lend you his book to do your assignment. What would you say?

3 انت طالب جامعي وتريد أن تطلب من أستاذك الذي يدرسك مادة طرق التدريس أن يعيرك كتابه كي تعمل واجبك ما الذي تقوله؟

4. You have got scholarship and you want to ask your teacher who taught you in the university to write you a recommendation letter. What would you say?

4 لقد حصلت على منحة دراسية وتريد أن تطلب من أستاذك الذي يدرسك في الجامعة ان يكتب لك رسالة توصية ما الذي تقوله؟

5. You want your neighbor to drive you to the market because your car has broken and you want to buy some fruit for your family. What would you say?

5. تريد من جارك أن يوصلك إلى سوق المدينة لكي تشتري بعض الفواكه لأفراد أسرتك ما الذي تقوله ؟

6. You went with your friend to stationary to buy some books, but you forgot your wallet at your home, so you want to borrow some money from your friend. What would you say?

6. ذهبت مع زميلك إلى المكتبة لشراء بعض الكتب ولكنك نسيت محفظتك في المنزل لذلك أنت تريد أن تستلف بعض النقود من صديقك ما الذي تقوله؟