

Requesting strategies in English and Yemeni Arabic dialect A pragmatic contrastive analysis

استراتيجيات الطلب باللغة الإنجليزية واللهجة اليمنية
دراسة تحليلية مقارنة

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Abstract

This cross-cultural investigation aims to identify the ways in which English and Yemeni Arab speakers realize requests with special reference to politeness strategies as patterned by Blum-Kulka (1989). The main objective of this study is to make a pragmatic contrastive analysis of the strategies of requests and politeness phenomenon in the production of request speech act by Yemeni and English native speakers. It also attempts to explore and identify the nature of politeness strategies in both English and Yemeni dialect focusing on the request speech act as a measuring tool in the light of Brown and Levinson's theory (1987). It is based on the analysis of the elicited responses of 330 Yemeni Arab subjects and 20 native speakers of English. The data were collected by a Discourse Completion Test (DCT)

based on that of Blum-Kulka (1982). The data corpus was obtained with 1400 requestive speech acts and each of the valid responses was analyzed separately to identify the type of strategy used. Descriptive data such as frequencies, percentages and means were given. The prime findings of the study revealed that Yemeni Arab speakers intend to use the conventional direct strategies with constant tendency to use mood derivable request strategy accompanying with politeness markers; whereas, the native speakers of English favor the conventional indirect strategies at a high significant statistical level.

Keywords: Requesting strategies; native speakers of English; Yemeni Arab speakers.

استراتيجيات الطلب باللغة الإنجليزية واللهجة اليمنية: دراسة تحليلية مقارنة

ملخص البحث:

والإنجليزية. تم تحليل 1400 استجابة كلا على حدة لمعرفة نوع الطلب والاستراتيجية المستخدمة

استخدم الباحث الطريقة الوصفية لإجراء الدراسة الحالية. وقد كشفت النتائج أن اليمنيين الناطقين بالعربية يستخدمون استراتيجيات الطلب التقليدي المباشر والميل إلى استخدام استراتيجيات الطلب المشتق من الفعل مصحوبا بإشارات التهذيب اللغوي بينما يفضل الناطقون باللغة الإنجليزية استراتيجيات الحوار غير المباشر حيث ظهر ذلك في إجاباتهم بصورة إحصائية عالية .

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيات الطلب،

اللغة الإنجليزية، اللهجة العربية اليمنية

تهدف هذه الدراسة الاستقصائية عبر الثقافات إلى التعرف على أساليب تقديم الطلب كما يؤديها الناطقون باللغة الإنجليزية والمتحدثون باللهجة العربية اليمنية مع التركيز على استراتيجيات التهذيب اللغوي حسب نموذج بلم كولكا (1989). تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى إجراء دراسة تحليلية مقارنة لأساليب تقديم الطلب واستراتيجيات التهذيب اللغوي في اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية والتعرف على طبيعة هذه الاستراتيجيات في ضوء نظرية براون وليفنسون (1987). تعتمد هذه الدراسة على تحليل إجابات 330 من متحدثي اللهجة العربية في اليمن وكذا 20 من الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية في دول مختلفة، تم جمع البيانات خلال امتحان لمواقف حوارية أعطي لعينة الدراسة باللغتين العربية

1. Introduction

Request is one of the speech acts which attracts the attention of many researchers (Abdul Razak & Yassien, 2018). It is a powerful communication tool people use in their everyday talk (Liu & Wang, 2023). It is a directive act and a pre-event which initiates the negotiation of face during a conversational interaction. Following Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness, while a request may be realized by means of linguistic strategies such as on record (e.g., direct and unmitigated, or off record (e.g. hints, irony); a compromise may be reached by the speaker using indirect requests. According to Searle (1975, pp.60-61):

In indirect speech acts the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with rational powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer.

Requests are regarded as the most frequently speech acts (Sladkova & Valisova, 2022). They are among one of the many speech acts used quite frequently in every day human interaction. They have an intention of a speaker to attract the hearer since they place an imposition on the hearer. In Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms, requests are face-threatening acts (FTAs) which threaten the hearer's negative face. So those who perform a request need to reduce the level of imposition created by an act being requested in order to save the hearer's face and, at the same time get his/her compliance to a request. It is here that the notion of politeness comes into play (Suh, 1999). For Searle (1975) "the use of such 'requestive' sentences was a matter of 'politeness', for Leech (1983) it was a matter of 'tact' (cited in Wierzbicka, 2006 p.32).

Kitao (1987) thought of politeness in requests as a communication strategy used by the speaker to decrease imposition on the hearer thus maintaining a good relationship with him/her. Many researchers like Blum-Kulka, Olshtain and Meir (1987), found that a variety of standard factors such as age, social status, familiarity, or gender played important roles in the use of politeness strategies in requests.

Suh, (1999, p.196) argues :given that requests are face-threatening acts, and that the use of politeness strategies is affected by various factors, it would not be an easy task for language learners to perform requests in linguistically, socially and culturally appropriate manners. They should not only have sufficient linguistic resources to encode a request, but also know sociocultural rules that affect their choice of politeness strategies in a given situation with taking into account a variety of situational factors.

Further, he (1993, p.11) believes that:

Since the request is an unavoidable social act in human communication, there is a set of request strategies prescribed to the speakers of every language. Although these request strategies are often linguistically different in different languages, their main functions remain the same universally in demonstrating mutual and equally between human beings. (Cited in Hong, W.1996, p.139).

The task here is to determine the types of utterances and politeness strategies that are conventionally used by Yemeni Arab and English speakers in requesting. It is also intended to identify the semantic strategies that each utterance reflects and to investigate the sociolinguistic or sociocultural reason behind their behavior. The data were analyzed according to a modified classification of request strategies originally

presented by Blum-Kulka (1989) and include strategies used as head acts and strategies used as external modification of the head act.

2. Statement of the problem

Previous studies of intercultural pragmatics have considerably shown that EFL learners find it difficult to produce speech acts competently and this can be challenging. These difficulties existed due to several reasons. The primary reason is the cross- cultural differences between the learners' L1 and L2, which causes miscommunication and perhaps misunderstanding. These challenges and difficulties may even be bigger problem because of the limitation of their English language skills. The present study is an attempt to investigate politeness strategies in requests by Yemeni Arabic Speakers and the native speakers of English, and make a pragmatic contrastive analysis of the requesting strategies produced by both communities.

Therefore, this study may help the learners to overcome such difficulties when realizing and producing politeness in request speech acts in their everyday talk. It may also help teachers to teach language functionally to answer the needs of the learners..

3. Objectives of the study

The present study aims to:

1. Identify the ways Yemeni Arabic speakers and English native speakers realize requests with special reference to politeness strategies.
2. To make a pragmatic contrastive analysis of the strategies of requests and politeness phenomenon in the production of request speech act by Yemeni and English native speakers.

4. Theoretical background

"Several linguistic structures can convey requests, which can be declarative, interrogatives or imperatives" Farrag, (2022). In examining the structure of speech acts, requests have been frequently analyzed in terms of discourse sequences: head acts and supportive moves. According to Blum-Kulka et. al. (1989), head acts refer to the request proper or the main strategy employed to make the request. Supportive moves are the peripheral elements and refer to the pre-or post-posed moves or strategies that accompany the head act. To account better for the structure of requests, request head acts are classified according to a directness continuum. Blum-Kulka et. al.'s (1989) classification of request head acts included three levels of

directness: direct strategies, conventionally indirect strategies, and non-conventionally indirect strategies. Of these head acts, five are considered direct (mood derivable, performative, obligation statement, need statement / want statement), two are considered conventionally indirect (query preparatory, suggestory formulae), and two are non-conventionally indirect strategies.

In addition to Blum-Kulka et. al.'s (1989) classification of request head acts, these were examined according to their internal and external modifications (Fraser and Kasper,1989). Internal modifications include mitigators which soften direct requests and comprise both lexical (diminutives, please, mental verb such as ethnic / believe) and syntactic (conditional, imperfect) mitigators. Those mitigators such as 'law samaht' (if you allow-excuse me), 'min fadhlak' (please),'law takarramt' (if you are generous) are employed heavily among Arabic speakers to soften the imperatives and redress the face-threatening happening to the hearer. Finally, external modifications include optional supportive moves that modify the head act. These peripheral elements commonly include: reasons, preparators or pregrounders (e.g., I am worried about my result, can I get my mid-term result/ and disarmers (e.g., I know that you are busy, can you please teacher let me know my mid-term result? (Brasdefer, 2005).

On the other hand, the foundation of making requests is Lakoff's basic order (1977) of imperative /declarative / interrogative mood. "That is, in making requests, imperatives are less polite than declaratives, which are in turn less polite than questions (Lakoff, 1977, p.100). Lakoff's scale is based on the claim that increasing freedom of the addressee to refuse the requests correlates with increasing politeness (1977, p.56-57). As she states "A question requires a response (verbal), a declarative requires the addressee's act of compliance" (1977, p.110). To this basic scale Carrell and Konneker (1981) have added modal verbs and their tense distinctions – "modals adding another level of conversational indirectness, and past tense of the modal conveying greater uncertainty than present tense" (Jespersen 1954, Qurik and Green Baam 1973).

Kasper (1989), following Blum-Kulka and House (1989) has distinguished three degrees of directness in requests, depending on the extent to which the illocution is transparent from the locution (1) direct requests, (2) conventionally indirect requests and 3) indirect requests. In direct requests, the illocutionary force of the utterance is indicated by grammatical, lexical or semantic means. Conventionally indirect statements express the illocution via fixed linguistic conventions established in the speech community. Non-conventionally indirect

requests (henceforth hints which are rarely employed in the present data) require the addressee to compute the illocution from the interaction of the locution with its contexts, (quoted in Ruzickova, 2007, p.11).

Leech (1983, p. 108) suggests that the use of indirect requests increases the degree of politeness, indirect illocutions tend to be more polite a) because the degree of optionality, and b) because the more indirect an illocution is, the diminished and tentative its force tends to be.

With particular regard to Blum-Kulka et. al.'s classification of request patterns (1989), Yemeni Arab and English native speakers use various strategies in their realizations of requests in different situations. It is found that the common patterns are: Query preparatory, mood derivable strategies, want / need statements, hedged performatives, declarative conditional clauses, suggestory formulae strategy and existential question strategies.

A. Query preparatory

In this strategy, the speakers use utterance contains reference to preparatory conditions (e.g. ability or willingness of the possibility of the act being performed) as conventionalized in any specific language. This strategy seems to be more frequent in the performance of the native speakers of English with special focus on the use of 'could' strategy in various situations. However, the native speakers of Yemeni Arabic tend to use this strategy but not as frequent as they use mood derivable strategy.

The native speakers of English, on the other hand give preference to the use of 'could' and 'would.' The use of 'can' seems to be rare in the native speakers of English speech act performance. However, when Yemeni Arab speakers make a request they use the formula 'mumkin teftah ashubak lawsamaht' / could / can / would / you open the window please? Or / hal bi emmkank teftah ashu bak law samaht / 'could you / can you / could you possibly open the window please? Where there is no difference between the modals pragmatically in Arabic and they have the same function in English but they are structurally different.

B. Mood derivable

The utterance is an order and the unmodified form is only supposed to be used by a speaker who has power over the hearer; otherwise, it can be considered very impolite. This strategy is the least preferred means of making a request in English. However, Yemeni Arab speakers seem to use this strategy frequently with or without modifying softeners considering it a prior and efficient way of expressing polite requests particularly with juniors or acquaintances. As it is observed by Ghalib (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, i.e. when the action desired to be performed by the addressee is a light favor.

The performance of Yemeni Arab speakers in the examined data shows that imperatives are mostly accompanied by softeners to maintain politeness. The frequent use of imperatives by Yemeni Arab speakers could be attributed to the closeness and the solidarity between the interlocutors (situation 2). It can also be attributed to the wide range of formulas which are functionally identical to the formulas 'min fadhlak' (please) and 'law samaht' (excuse me) which are used at the beginning of a request marking it as polite. Other forms which reflect the Islamic culture to which Arab speakers belong are also used as softeners may help to redress the imposition on the hearer and save his/her face such as / alla yerrda aleik / 'may God be pleased with you,' / alla yahfazak, 'may God preserve you,' / Alla Yikhaliek / 'may God keep you healthy can be like "please" since all of them are freely usable to any kind of interlocutor.

C. Want / desire / need statements

This category covers statements of speakers' needs, demands, wishes and desires. Blum-Kulka and Olshain (1984) refer to this type as 'scope stating.' In Arabic, this strategy is very common in every day face-to-face interaction. It is also used by English speakers but not as frequent as Arabic native speakers do. Different types of softeners are used to show deference, excuse me, modals, please, sir, teacher etc. It can be observed that Yemeni Arab speakers have their own devices for pragmalinguistic devices for socio pragmatic manifestations.

D. Declarative conditional clause

Utterances classified under this category consist of declarative sentences containing conditional clauses. The result is one of the forms of polite requests in English (Ghalib., 2003, p. 66).

This strategy is not "frequently used by Yemeni Arab speakers as the native speakers of English who use this strategy with high frequency, and this indicates to the highest degree of deference. This strategy represents a high level of indirectness. According to ALhamzi (1999), in Arabic, this strategy is used only in highly formal situations, e.g. / sa akun shakran wa mugadran law tegdiru teguddimu lana hathhi al xidma/ I will be thankful and I will appreciate it if you could do us this favor." / sa akun mumtan lakumitha tegdiru tigadumu lana hathihi al musaadah / I will be grateful if you could do this favor for us.

4.1 Related work

After a review of the relevant literature, as per the knowledge of the researcher, to date, no study compared Yemeni Arabic requests to English, but some studies have attempted to make contrastive analysis between English and some varieties of Arabic. For instance,

ALMujaiabel, Y. (2022) investigated requesting strategies in Kuwaiti Arabic and British English. She used the qualitative and quantitative approach to analyze the data. A Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and semi-structured interviews were used by the researcher to collect the data. The sample of the study consisted of five hundred participants from both groups. The analysis was based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) model. The results of the study revealed that Kuwaiti Arabic and British participants used the conventional indirect level in the form of query preparatory in most situations. Furthermore, the participants sometimes used direct request strategies when the power is high.

Dozie, C. et al. (2022) investigated requests and linguistic politeness of Igbo English speakers in Nigeria. The participants of the study consisted of 2748 undergraduate Igbo native speakers. Discourse Completion Test (DCT) was used to collect the data. The results of the study showed that the respondents adopted principally the directness strategy to perform request act. It was also noted that a linguistic transfer from native language to the target language existed.

ALsharaah, S. and Daradkeh, A. (2021) contrasting the request act by EFL Arabic native speakers in Arabic natural situations and to identify the request strategies used by EFL Arabic native speakers in English natural situations. They found that both EFL and ESL learners used conventional indirect request strategies more than direct request strategies.

ALQadi, M. (2020) investigated the use of polite requests among Jordanian children. The data corpus consisted of 336 student teachers. Discourse Completion Test (DCT) was used to collect the data. To analyze the data, the researcher used Blum – Kulka, et. al. (1989) models. The study findings showed that the native speakers of the Jordanian Arabic Language who used direct head verbs for requests were more from the listener's perspective. In either direct or conventional indirect methods, the respondents used a listening perspective to express solidarity and consideration for others.

Abdul Razak & Yassin (2018) conducted a study to compare request strategies of Yemeni EFL and Malay ESL secondary school students in Malaysia. The researchers used the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) to collect the data. They used both Blum-Kolka, et. al. (1989) Cross – Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP), and Scollon and Scollon's (1995) politeness system to analyze the data. The results of the study revealed that both groups often used non- conventionally indirect request strategies by means of query preparatory. The findings also revealed that both groups don't take into consideration the social power and the social distance between the interlocutors.

Tawalbeh and ALOqaily (2012) compared between American English and Saudi Arabic participants in using requesting and found that both groups used more conventionally requesting with slight differences between the two communities.

El-Shazly (1993) makes a comparison between English and Arabic requests. He studied the request strategies in American English, Egyptian Arabic and English as spoken by Egyptian second language learners. The results of this study showed that no differences are found with respect to use of “upgraders,” “downgraders,” however, are found to be more frequently used by native speakers of Arabic. He also found that the Arab speakers of English demonstrate a high tendency towards using conventional indirectness, which depends on the use of interrogatives.

Al-Hamzi, (1999) investigated the performance of NNSs learner of English as L2. He studied the realization and production of the speech act of requesting strategies in both Arabic as L1 and L2 learners of English. . He found that the distribution of the request structures in Yemeni Arab native speakers to some extent were similar to English native speakers. These findings do not give any support to the findings of the present study where there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in the use of requesting strategies.

One of the earliest studies that dealt with the concept of politeness 'formulas' with reference to Arabic is that of Ferguson (1976). He points out that there is considerable variation between different cultures. Ferguson examines data from Syrian Arabic and American English.

Atawneh and Sridhar (1993) discussed in their study how politeness works in Arabic and in the English interlanguage of Arabic with special reference to directive request and invitations (They claimed that their study supports Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness determinants.

Davies (1987) has conducted a contrastive study between Moroccan Arabic and English in politeness formulas. This study illustrates the variety of levels at which formulas in two languages may contrast, and the ways in which a superficial similarity between these formulas may obscure quite complex differences. Davies argues that learners who are not conscious of these differences may get into many difficulties.

Another contrastive study in the same area in Arabic and English is conducted by El –Sayed (1989) with particular reference to Egyptian Arabic. The study is similar to that of Davies and produces similar results and reports on the major findings of observing euphemism, forms of address and nonverbal politeness in the UAE.

5. Methodology

5.1. Subjects

The participants were 330 Yemeni Arab speakers and 20 native speakers of English belonging to four English speaking countries: Britain, U.S.A, Australia and Canada. The Arab participants were university students, studying at the undergraduate level belonging to four colleges of two Yemeni public universities. The respondents are relatively homogenous in terms of their

cultural background (Yemeni Arabs), academic / linguistic experiences and age. They are between 22 to 23 years old from level four majoring in English.

5.2. Instrument

The data of this study was collected through a controlled elicitation method based on a questionnaire which is a modified version of 'Discourse completion Tests' (hereafter DCT) used in CCSARP (Blum-Kulka 1982). This type of questionnaire enables the researcher to reach large numbers of respondents and statistically control for variables and analyze the data accordingly. The researcher designed a questionnaire to analyze politeness strategies used by Yemeni Arab and English speakers. The questionnaire consisted of four hypothesized situations. For each situation, subjects were instructed to fill in with what they would say in each of the four contexts. The respondents were asked to put themselves in real situations and to assume that in each situation they would, in fact, write down what they would say. The researcher administered the questionnaire in the first semester of the academic year 2021/2022.

6.1 Data analysis

Responses to DCT were then tabulated and analyzed according to the analytic framework proposed by Blum-Kulka, et al. (1989) in terms of Politeness system and strategy used. The analysis of the data is based on two scales; the first scale is the strategy type used by Yemeni Arab and English speakers, the second scale is the politeness scale, in other words, the type of request strategy as patterned by Blum-Kulka et. al. (1989). The data obtained consist of 1400 valid responses. Each of the responses was analyzed separately to identify the type of strategy used. The data were then inputted into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS version 11.5) for analysis.

7. Results and discussion

The data consists of responses to four request situations presented in the questionnaire which are referred to S1, S2, S3 and S4 given to the subjects in two versions (English and Arabic).

The results for the distribution of main request strategy types, presented in Tables 1 to 8 and Figures 1 to 8. The frequency of the request patterns that occurred across the four situations introduced below has been summarized. This section starts by presenting a percentage distribution of the main request strategy types in English and Arabic. The analysis of the data was presented in terms of request strategies used by the subjects.

Table (1)

Arabic request Situation one

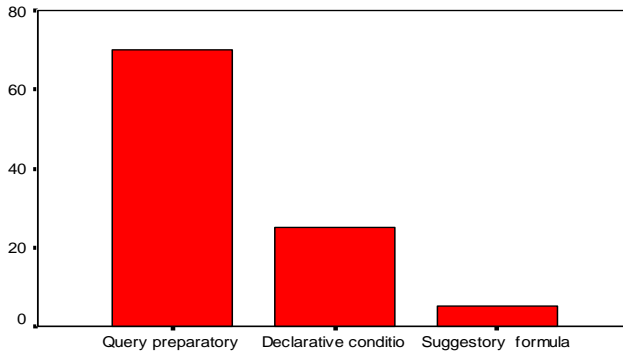
Strategy	Frequency	percentage
Query preparatory	138	41.8
Want/need statement	95	28.8
Mood derivable	81	24.5
Declarative conditional clauses	14	4.2
Opting out	2	.6
Total	330	100.0

Table (2)

English request Situation one

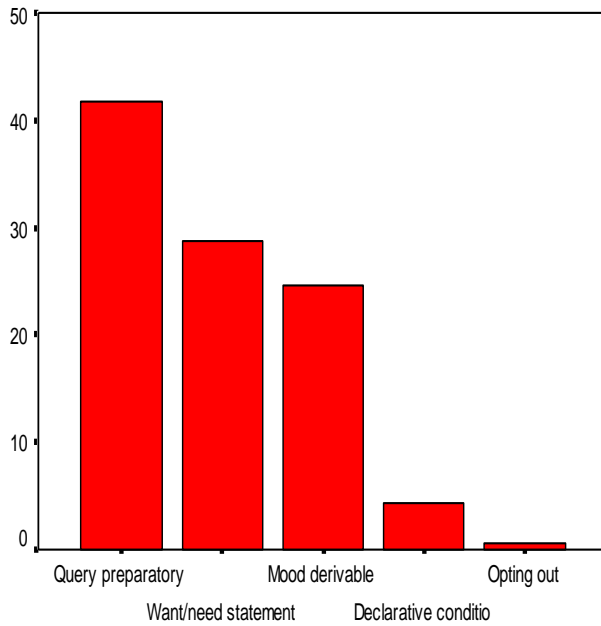
Strategy	Frequency	percentage
Query preparatory	17	85.0
Want/need statement	1	5.0
Declarative conditional clauses	1	5.0
Existential question	1	5.0
Total	20	100.0

English request Situation 1



English request Situation 1

Arabic request situation one



Arabic request situation one

In situation one (asking about mid-term results) the findings as shown in Tables (1) and (2) reveal that the native speakers of English tend to use query preparatory request strategy more frequently than the native speakers of Yemeni Arabic (85% VS. 41.8%). In this situation, the interaction is between teacher and student. According to Brown and Levinson(1987) the three social factors, the distance (D) between the speaker (S) and the hearer (H), the power of the hearer over the speaker (P) and the risk of imposition ® are high. These factors determined the performance of the native speakers of English in this situation, and that gives support for the claim of Brown and Levinson (1987). The subjects favored indirect strategies to be more formal and polite because the use of indirectness means a high degree of politeness according to Leech (1983). On the other hand, the native speakers of Yemeni Arabic use a variety of direct and indirect strategies (query preparatory 41.8%, want/need statement 28.8%, mood derivable 24.5% and declarative conditional strategies 4.2%). At the same time, direct strategy such as mood derivable were not observed in the English data. The interpretation of this is that indirect strategies were employed in a high frequency in English data because English native speakers do not prefer directness even in such situations. It is also important to note that indirect strategies were also employed in the Arabic data because the situation requires a high degree of politeness (the teacher in the Arabic culture is given high authority).

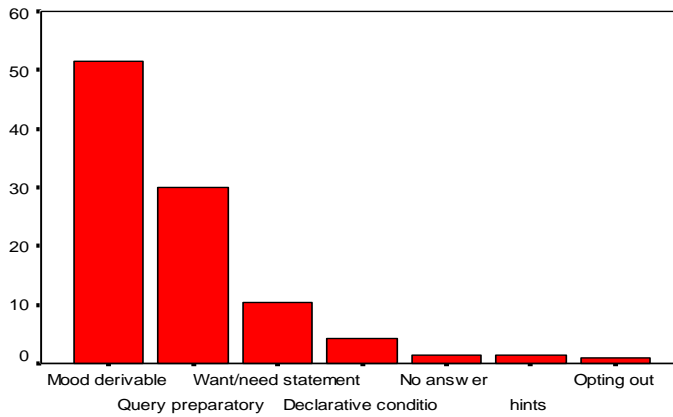
Table (3) Arabic request Situation two

Strategy	Frequency	percentage
Mood derivable	170	51.5
Query preparatory	99	30.0
Want/need statement	34	10.3
Declarative conditional clauses	14	4.2
No answer	5	1.5
hints	5	1.5
Opting out	3	.9
Total	330	100.0

Table (4) English request Situation two

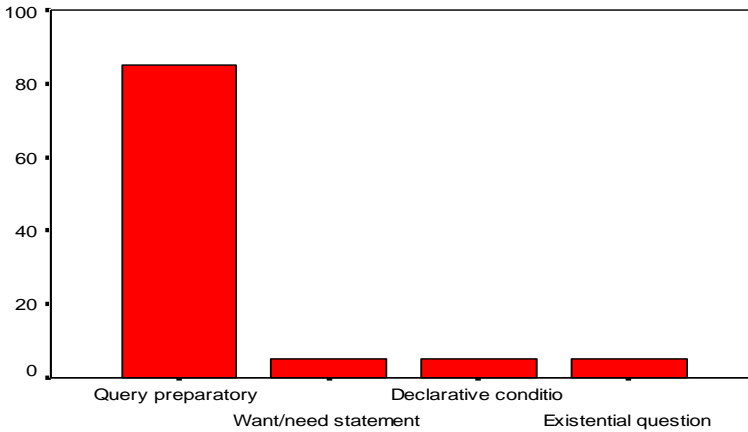
Strategy	Frequency	Means
Query preparatory	17	85.0
Want/need statement	1	5.0
Declarative conditional clauses	1	5.0
Existential question	1	5.0
Total	20	100.0

Arabic request Situation 2



Request Situation 2

English request Situation 2



English request Situation 2

In situation two (posting a letter), the native speakers of English again make a greater use of the indirect strategies (query preparatory) than do the native speakers of Yemeni Arabic. In the Arabic data, on the other hand, the direct strategies (mood derivable) appeared to be used frequently by the subjects; at the same time, this strategy is not observed in the English data. The explanation of this is that in Arabic, imperatives are common and favored among close interactants (friends) because using interrogative directives with friends can be offensive (Qassim, 2003). Imperatives are classified as solidarity politeness strategies because they imply the speaker assumes only a small social distance between him/herself and the interlocutor. It should be noted that direct requests are often internally modified by the lexical mitigators 'min fadhlak' (please), 'law samaht' (if you allow), 'law takarramt' (if you are generous), 'allah yahfazak' (may god keep you healthy) to soften the harshness of a direct request and are used as an indicator of positive politeness. The preference for direct request at posting a letter situation seems to be an instance of solidarity or positive politeness and shows that, being direct among friends, expresses camaraderie and is consistent with cultural norms of equal status. These results support the previous claims (e.g., Brown and Levinson, 1987; Lakoff, 1977). The indirect strategies (query preparatory 30% and declarative conditional clause 4.2%) were also observed in the Arabic data to show a high degree of politeness in such situation.

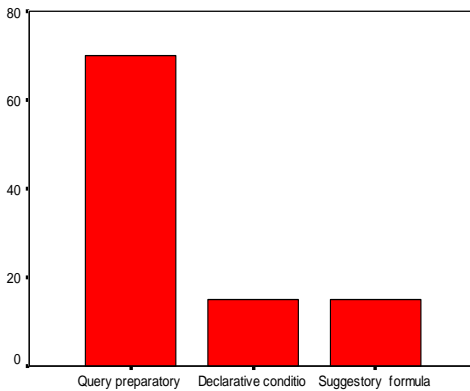
Table (5) Arabic request Situation three

Strategy	Frequency	percentage
Query preparatory	144	43.6
Mood derivable	109	33.0
Want/need statement	58	17.6
Declarative conditional clauses	9	2.7
No answer	4	1.2
Opting out	3	.9
hints	2	.6
Query preparatory	1	.3
Total	330	100.0

Table (6) English request Situation three

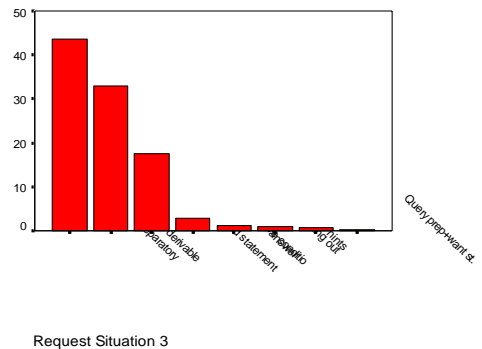
Strategy	Frequency	percentage
Query preparatory	14	70.0
Declarative conditional clauses	3	15.0
Suggestory formula	3	15.0
Total	20	100.0

English request Situation 3



English request Situation 3

Arabic request Situation 3

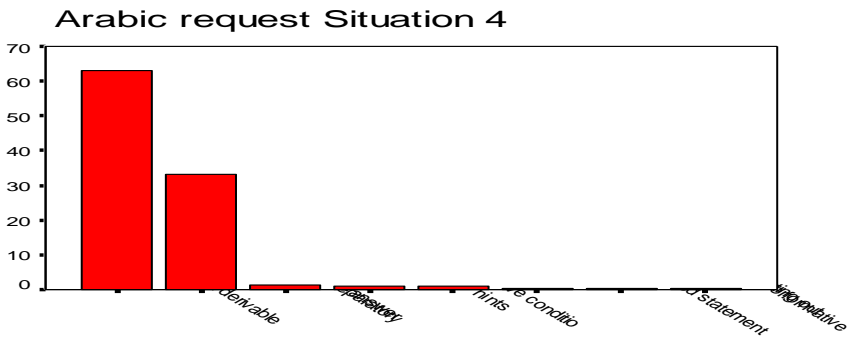


Request Situation 3

The results of situation three (borrowing a camera) reveal that there is a greater tendency by the native speakers of English to use indirect strategies (query preparatory) than the native speakers of Yemeni Arabic (70% VS 43.6%). Mood derivable and want/need statement strategies were observed obviously in the Arabic data whereas they were not employed in the English data at all. This can be attributed to the reasons mentioned above. Declarative conditional clause and suggestory formula strategies were also favored by the native speakers of English to give the addressee optionality and therefore politeness exists in such situations to save the addressee's negative face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the findings confirm that the three determinants, the social distance (D), the power the addressee has over the addressor (P), and the risk of the imposition @ influence the English respondents' performance. The preference for indirect request in borrowing a camera situation seems to be an instance of negative politeness and shows that in being indirect the speaker assumes a large social distance between him/herself and the interlocutor.

Table (7) Arabic request Situation four

Strategy	Frequency	percentage
Mood derivable	208	63.0
Query preparatory	109	33.0
No answer	4	1.2
Declarative conditional clauses	3	.9
hints	3	.9
Want/need statement	1	.3
Hedged performative	1	.3
Opting out	1	.3
Total	330	100.0



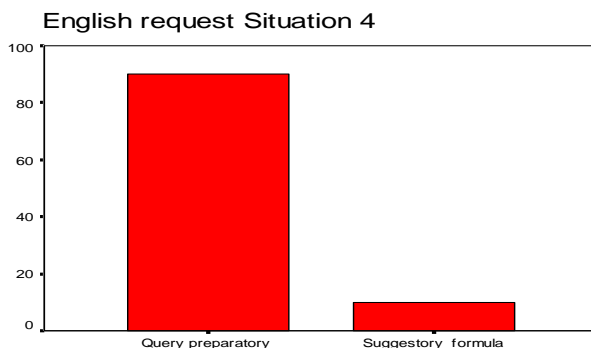
Request Situation4

Table (8)

English request Situation 4

Strategy	Frequency	percentage
Query preparatory	18	90.0
Suggestory formula	2	10.0
Total	20	100.0

The findings of situation four (opening the window) as shown in Tables (7) and (8) confirm the contrast and differentiate between English and Arabic in their realization of request strategies. Yemeni speakers used a variety of strategy types. Direct strategies (mood derivable 63%) were observed in a great significant statistical level in the Arabic data; at the same time, English speakers use only two strategy types.



English request Situation 4

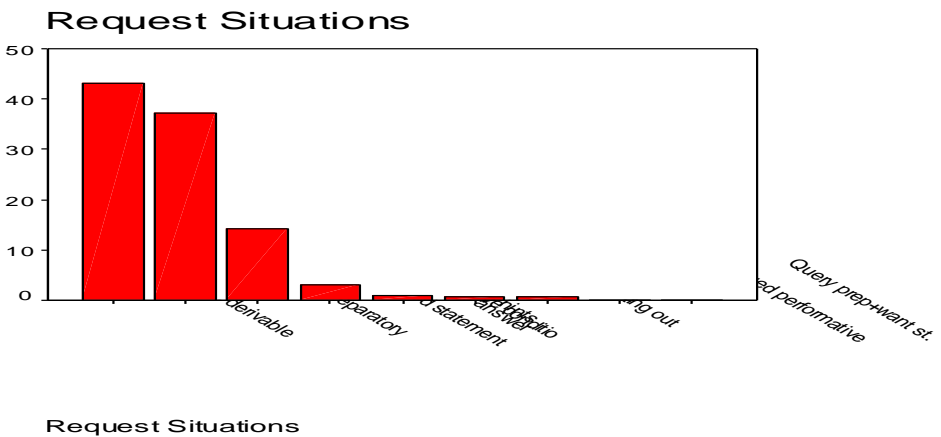
Indirect strategies (query preparatory 90%) were used the most. Suggestory formula 10%) is also employed as in the English data indicates to show a constant tendency for indirectness.

Furthermore, the, indirect strategies (query preparatory 33%) were also observed in the Arabic data. Declarative conditional clause, hints, and want/need statement strategies appeared in the Arabic data in a low statistical level, but they did not appear at all in the English data.

8. Conclusion

Summary of Arabic request Situations

Strategy	Frequency	percentage
Mood derivable	568	43.0
Query preparatory	490	37.1
Want/need statement	188	14.2
Declarative conditional clauses	40	3.0
No answer	13	1.0
Hints	10	.8
Opting out	9	.7
Hedged performative	1	.1
Query preparatory	1	.1
Total	1320	100.0



The present study examined the notion of politeness strategies in the speech act of request, among English and Arabic speakers. The foregoing analysis has examined the request patterns of English and Arabic speakers related to four situations. It attempted to systemize the various strategies used for the purpose of requesting from the pragmatic point of view. It was found that conventional indirectness, mostly realized by means of query preparatory and suggestory formula, and the directness was realized by means of mood derivable and want/need/desire statements.

It appeared that the purely statistical analysis conducted by the researcher in this study is too discriminating to reveal cross-cultural differences between English and Arabic. There is a need, therefore, to further understand when and why such request strategies are used and what variables influence their use. It is obvious in the data examined above that the choice of certain request strategies seems to be more closely tied to the use of politeness markers such as 'please' (min fadhlak) than the choice of others.

The analysis of the data showed that both English and Arabic vary the way they frame their request strategies. The findings showed that there is a general tend in Arabic for higher levels of directness and a general tend in English for higher levels of indirectness. The Arab speakers employed high levels of impositives without the fear of losing 'face' thus not indicating the appropriateness of directness in 'close' social distance relationships. However, probably this is the expected behavior in such situations; whereas, the English speakers employed higher levels of indirectness, which has low incidence in Arabic data.

As a matter of fact, conventional indirectness is dominant in all situations of English data; whereas, it appeared as the first ranking strategy only in two situations in Arabic data. According to Reiter (2000) the preference for the strategy could be explained by the fact that in uttering a conventionally indirect request, the speaker is balancing clarity and non-coerciveness hence ensuring that his/her utterance will have the correct interpretation and the right impact, thus leading to success. English speakers showed a marked preference for the strategy across all situations.

According to the definition of what is understood by a conventionally indirect request, one cannot differentiate between 'can you lend me your camera?', and 'could you lend me your camera?' since they all encode at the same level of indirectness due to the interplay between conventions of forms and meanings. However, it could be argued (Blum-Kulka et al.1989) that in uttering 'will' and 'would' the speaker is questioning the hearer's willingness to perform the act and in uttering 'can' and 'could' the hearer's ability. On the other hand,

it could be counter argued that in uttering the first modals the speaker could be questioning the hearer's wish to do so.

As a matter of fact, what is needed is a study of the speech acts continued in Searle's (1975) categories; a study of assertives, directives, expressives and declaratives in order to discover what combination of social variables, if any, is behind a particular speech act behavior, and how that particular behavior compares with that of other speech acts within the same category across different languages. Further research into the realization of speech acts belonging to the above categories would probably be very revealing not only in terms of realization of the acts themselves and how they compare with other speech acts in other languages, but also demonstrate which combination, if any, of social variables are at work and what type of value(s) orientation, 'positive' and 'negative' politeness, they reflect. Moreover, it would be interesting to put some of the theoretical conceptions employed in the field-conventional indirectness-to the test in order to find out if this conventionally defined and codified request strategy interpreted to be generally valid means the same across different cultures (Reiter, 2000).

There is an important theoretical conclusion to be drawn from this study, and that different language cultures can vary along two or more dimensions sociopragmatically.

First, different language cultures may differ in the sociopragmatic distinctions they make. Thus, whereas in English, colloquial domain-oriented utterances tend to be restricted to positive inverted forms like 'Do you have enough money?' Second, even when two language cultures make the same politeness distinctions, the form they use in a particular context may be quite different syntactically and semantically.

Third, the imperative, in conjunction with the use of lexical softeners (law samaht if you allow', min fadhlak 'please', law takarramt 'if you are generous enough', etha ma endak manea 'if you don't mind' etc.) was of high frequency in Arabic requests and yet the English speakers eschewed the imperative form, perhaps because there is a taboo against using it in English in most circumstances. This suggests that the imperative form is not as impolite in Arabic as it is in English, at least in some informal contexts.

9. Pedagogical implication of the study

Because pragmatics engages the teacher and researcher in the everyday world of cross-cultural communication, teaching and learning languages, issues of empowerment in institutional settings, and more, we need to go beyond building theories to examine the role of pragmatics in larger issues to raise the learners' awareness in the classroom (Locastro, 2006).

A practical application of the theoretical research in cross-cultural realization of speech acts might then facilitate the writing of more accurately oriented target- culture materials by material designers and classroom teachers and a transition toward a trend in foreign language education in which the pragmatic aspects of language learning become a part of content of foreign language courses (Blum-Kulka et al.1989:27).

The research in contrastive pragmatics is probably expected to meet the needs of linguistics students at graduate or undergraduate levels. It may be used in introductory courses of pragmatics on both the undergraduate and the graduate levels, for students who are preparing to teach language as well as for those with teaching experience who want to update their knowledge in an area of linguistics important for second/foreign language educators. It is hoped that the present study will help them, starting from the basics and working toward a solid overview of speech acts in general and politeness in particular. Students in related fields, such as communication and bilingual education, will find knowledge of pragmatics very helpful for their future career.

For language educators, a solid knowledge of pragmatics is crucial in developing successful second and foreign language speakers and writers. As long as language education consisted mainly of learning the phonology, syntax, and vocabulary of the second/foreign language, demands on the teachers were relatively limited and those on the learners potentially attainable. However, with the advent of more modern approaches, which reflect research in second language acquisition, classroom practioners need to expand their knowledge about language and linguistics as well as their competencies as facilitators, in particular with the communicative language teaching approach. They now have to teach how to speak the second language (L2) and to train learners to use it in situationally appropriate ways.

Clearly, an understanding of pragmatics will benefit teachers, particularly, those teaching a language that is not their mother tongue or working with learners outside the target language community. Such circumstances stretch teachers' roles in developing the pragmatic competence of learners. In second language contexts, with an acquisition-rich environment outside the classroom, teachers and learners can anticipate exposure that supports classroom activities. The foreign language environment explicitly raises the need for a comprehensive understanding of pragmatics and its importance in developing language proficiency (Locastro, 2006).

It is also worth mentioning here that research in pragmatics including this paper may help to integrate the teaching of pragmatic competence in language programs and materials, to understand the problems learners have with comprehension of messages requiring cognitive processing beyond that of the spoken or written word, to evaluate textbooks and other teaching materials as well as assessment procedures of language proficiency, to assess the value of communicative language teaching practices, to help learners develop strategies to handle misunderstandings and other communication problems, and to enhance awareness of spoken and written text in mother tongue and second or foreign languages.

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Appendix A

DCT Questionnaire

Dear Respondents

I'm doing a research work entitled "**Requesting Strategies in English and Yemeni Arabic: A Pragmatic Contrastive Analysis**". The population of my study consists of the advanced Yemeni learners of English, and the native speakers of English and Arabic.

The research is data based and therefore, your kind help is required. You are kindly requested to complete this questionnaire, which contains situations in which you might find yourself. This discourse completion tasks (DCT) will help in analyzing Yemeni speakers' English, which is expected to yield fruitful results.

Your responses will be dealt with in purely academic manner and will never be used for any other purposes than for this research.

I would appreciate it if you could complete this questionnaire as soon as possible. Thanking you for your help and co-operation.

Dr. Mohammed Al-Fattah

(A Research Scholar)

Please read the following short descriptions of situations in which you may find yourself. Think of what you might say in response. Write your response in the space provided. Respond as if you were in a real situation.

Situation one

1. You want to request your teacher to give you your mid-term result. How would you ask him/her to do so?

.....
.....

Situation Two

2. You want your friend to post a letter for you because you are sick, how would you ask him/her to do so?

.....
.....

Situation Three

3. You want to go out for a trip and you need your classmate's camera. What would you say to ask him/her to do so?

.....
.....

Situation Four

4. You are in the bus and it is too hot. You want someone close to the window to open it, what would you say?

.....
.....

Thank you

Appendix B

استبيان لردود الفعل في مواقف الحياة اليومية

عزيزي الطالب..

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته، وبعد..

من فضلك اقرأ الأوصاف التالية لمواقف قد تحدث لك. فكر ماذا تقول رداً على كل موقف، واكتب الإجابة في الفراغ المخصص له، اكتب بنفس القدر الذي تقوله، لو مثلاً حدثت لك مثل هذه المواقف مستخدماً لهجتك وليس الفصحى.

الموقف الأول

1. تريد أن تطلب من أستاذك أن يعطيك نتيجة امتحان نصف الفصل، فكيف ستطلب منه ذلك؟

.....
.....

الموقف الثاني

2- تريد من صديقك أن يرسل لك خطاباً بالبريد لأنك مريض ولا تستطيع الخروج فكيف ستطلب منه ذلك؟

.....
.....

الموقف الثالث

3- تريد الخروج في رحلة وتحتاج كاميرا زميلك. فماذا ستقول لتطلب منه ذلك؟

.....
.....

الموقف الرابع

4. أنت في الباص وكان الجو حاراً جداً وتريد شخصاً ما يجلس بجوار النافذة أن يفتحها. فماذا ستقول؟

.....
.....

شاكرين تعاونكم

د. محمد حسن أحمد الفتاح