

Investigating Request between Iraqi Postgraduate Students and MAIN LIBRARY Employees in UPM

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the current study by highlighting the issue of request strategies. It begins with the background of the study followed by the statement of the problem. It will also shed the light on the objectives, research questions, and significance of the study.

KEYWORDS: Human Language, Pivotal Role, LIBRARY Employees In UPM,

1.2 BACKGROUND

Human language plays a pivotal role in our life. It is most natural means of communication through which we can both convey and comprehend different messages. It is claimed that our inability to understand the people's intentions is the result of our misunderstanding about them Thomas (1983). In our mother tongue and our culture, we face little or no difficulty in employing words because we have unconsciously learnt to follow the norms and conventions of our speech acts. The successful communication is when a speaker uses politeness expressions in performing requests. Politeness is defined by Brown and Levinson (1987; 65) as "saying and doing things in such a way as to take into account the other person's feeling". Besides, Lakoff (1975: 33) refers "to be polite is saying the socially correct things." Politeness is described by Leech (1983) in terms of costs and benefits for both speaker and hearer.

Furthermore, when politeness expressions are utilized in performing requests, hearer's positive face is maintained. For instance, "excuse me" or "would you mind", these phrases are used by a speaker to refer to polite speech before stating the request. In other words, hearer is treated in the manner which speaker wants him/herself to be treated. Brown and Levinson (1987) further came up with a term FTA which claims that every utterance is potentially face threatening. They particularly described the acts as "...run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker" (1987: 323).

The increase of politeness degree is possible as suggested by Leech (1983) when indirect illocutions are more used: "(a) because they increase the degree of optionality, and (b) because the more indirect illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be" (1983: 131-32). Besides, the higher levels of politeness may be produced by the higher levels of indirectness. Along with Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983), impolite and face-threatening may be produced or represented by direct requests because they intrude in the

addressee's territory as well as these authors claimed that the more using in directness seems to be politely in behavior. Hence, the reduction of the threat and the avoidance of danger of losing face come from using indirectness by speaker to smooth the conversation interaction. As Searle's observation (1975) shows that the relationship between indirectness and politeness is "politeness is the most prominent motivation for preferring indirectness in requests, and certain forms tend to become the conventionally polite ways of making indirect requests" (1975: 76).

The concept of directness, indirectness and politeness play an essential function in the negotiation of face during the realization of speech acts such as requests. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), "requests are intrinsically face threatening because they are intended to threaten the addressee's negative face (i.e., freedom of action and freedom from imposition)". Searle (1969) claims that illocutionary acts are classified into (i.e., representatives, directives, expressive, commissive, and declarations). A request is represented by the second category 'directives' as referred by Searle (1969) as "an attempt to get hearer to do an act which speaker wants hearer to do, and which it is not obvious that hearer will do in the normal course of events or of hearer's own accord" (1969: 66). Moreover, understanding the request is related with linguistic strategies, for instance, *on record* (most direct, e.g. 'shut up' when is said to a hearer directly), or *off record* (indirect, e.g. hints), the speaker might reach to the compromise by using an indirect request. Thus, politeness plays a crucial role in the negotiation of face during the realization of speech acts such as requests.

This study attempts to find out the request strategies which employed by Iraqi students, and to explore the reason behind of employing these strategies by them. The study makes use of natural data and semi-structured interview to answer the research questions. The participants are Iraqi students who study in University Putra Malaysia (UPM). The importance of the study is to give knowledge about strategies of request that used by Iraqi students to avoid misunderstanding when communication.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Performing request is one of the speech acts that is considered as potentially threatening to both hearer's and speaker's face. From hearer's view, the request could possibly create pressure on him/her either or not to act out the request and also failing to fulfill the request might embarrass or offend speaker. Politeness is expressed differently in diverse cultures and situations. According to Kim & Wee (1984) have said, a successful intercultural communication can be achieved by understanding the cultural backgrounds of the target language.

It is important to have knowledge about Arabs, especially Iraqi students in Malaysia. Iraqi students suffer from employing strategies of request when they make a request. This may be

through bad situations that they passed through, which are wars, and embargo for 13 years from 1990 to 2003. These formed a major obstacle to prevent Iraqi people to travel abroad Iraq since travelling is the main factor for using English with other people from different cultures. Because of English now considers a valid visa all over the world and the language of the world, which is a lingua franca. English now does not belong only to British or American people, but it belongs to everyone. Therefore, there is no opportunity for those students to communicate or practice in the English language, the only way to make a practice for this target language is through travelling to countries whose English is considered as a first or a second language. Through these difficulties, the knowledge, experience and practice are absent from Iraqi people about English language how to be used in an appropriate way for making request.

Besides, the influence of L1 and their cultural backgrounds on English language are the more important hindrance for Iraqi students to make their request politely. Arab students in general and Iraqi students in particular, are affected by using their mother tongue when they transfer to the target language, namely English, this might be misunderstood by others. According to Al-Eryani 2007, Arab speakers of English formulate their request strategies based on their cultural backgrounds, and this may cause misunderstanding for others.

The last obstacle, In Iraq schools, teachers focus mainly on the grammatical and technical part of the language rather than communication. However, the opportunity of communication and practice for those students in English language is nonexistence; the only focus is on the grammatical and sentence level. This causes an obvious obstacle for Iraqi students in the absence of English use among them.

This matter has been clearly appeared in the context of this study. The researcher tackles this issue to present politeness patterns, namely what strategies of request that are used by Iraqi students, to show why those strategies are employed whether they create misunderstanding when communication.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study tries to achieve the following objectives:

1. To find out the request strategies employed by Iraqi postgraduate students in an academic setting (MAIN LIBRARY).
2. To explore the reason behind of employing these strategies by Iraqi postgraduate students.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the request strategies employed by Iraqi postgraduate students in an academic setting (MAIN LIBRARY)?

2. Why do Iraqi postgraduate students employ those strategies?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study derives its importance from the significant of politeness strategies in general and request strategies, in particular. Students when graduate will be in need to find a job or to resume their study as requirements of the social life. Merging in workplace or academic society needs to have knowledge how to communicate with others taking into consideration the status or position of the addressed person to prevent misunderstanding and to achieve an effective communication. Besides, the study gives a full image about the participants' responses, which shows an authentic reflection of what have been actually practiced by the students specially in manifesting the speech act of request in real life settings.

Moreover, the study provides knowledge about Arab students' strategies of request in general and those strategies are used by Iraqi students in particular. The aim of this knowledge is to be as background about Arabs interaction or communication in society as well as to avoid misunderstanding.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 POLITENESS THEORY

The sub heading outlines and details the relevant principles of politeness to the study. The elaboration of face concept, FTA and request strategies are closely looked into.

2.2 THE SPEECH ACT OF REQUEST

The present study solely focuses on the speech act of request which is one of the acts that is perceived as face threatening. Making requests is viewed as threatening as it could highly impose threat to both speaker's and hearer's face. From hearer's view, the request could be perceived as an intrusion to his/her freedom of action since there are the elements of demand and force. On the contrary, request could also threaten speaker's face in the sense that speaker is afraid of exposing a need, or the tendency of making hearer lose face (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). To mitigate or soften this speech act, certain politeness strategies are employed. In many cultures, (Hebrew, Canadian French, Spanish, English, and Japanese) being indirect is common in order to sound less imposing. Meanwhile, a direct strategy is frequently perceived as impolite and coercing. Cross-culturally, lacking the awareness of politeness in communication might lead to misunderstanding and ineffective communication.

Generally, there are many contributing factors that influence the choice and preference of politeness strategies. According to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), the factors generally are both situational and cultural. Situational factors generally comprise of social distance, power relation, as well as rank of imposition. For example, requests between friends would be more casual compared to request made between a superior and a subordinate. A big favor

usually comes with more indirect strategies which sounds more polite than a low-imposition request. The following examples are taken from Cutting (2002: 52) to show how different strategies are used with different size of imposition. (A) "I couldn't borrow \$30, could I, if you don't need it right now?" (B) "Give me 5 cents." In (A), speaker employs hedges and negative politeness strategy to borrow a large sum of money. On the contrary, speaker in (B) states the request directly since it requires only a small sum of money. Meanwhile, cultural factor is usually determined by what has usually been practiced and valued by that particular community. In addition, studies on cross-cultural communication would recognize this factor as a key contributing factor.

2.3 FACE THREATENING ACTS (FTA)

Some illocutionary acts produced by speaker are sometimes capable of damaging the reputation of others. Those acts are not seen as desirable and face threatening, in which Brown and Levinson (1987) further classify them as FTA. Although these acts are commonly perceived as verbal, it can also be in the form of non-verbal communications and speech characteristics such as tone, inflection etc. There are two types of FTA; one which could damage hearer's positive face and the other could threaten negative face. Utterances like requests, orders, and warnings can be considered as acts that potentially threaten hearer's negative-face wants but promise and thanks could infringe speaker's negative-face. Disagreements, criticisms and complaints could damage hearer's positive-face wants, meanwhile apologies and compliment acceptance might violate speaker's face wants. The degree of threat is described according to the social distance and power-relation between speaker and hearer, as well as the absolute ranking of impositions in the particular culture. Due to this, communication strategies which are called politeness strategies are developed in order to counter FTA which also aims to shape interpersonal relationship.

2.4 POLITENESS STRATEGIES

Based on FTA, Brown and Levinson further extend their work on five types of politeness strategies that aim to minimize the threat of FTA. These five strategies function to mitigate or soften the force of FTA, so that it would appear desirable to Hearer's face. The examples of utterances below are the strategies that are applicable for the speech act of request:

- i) Bald on record: this strategy is rather imperative and FTA is expressed frankly. There is no attempt to minimize threats to Hearer's face. It is typically practiced between interlocutors who share familiarity and have low social distance. (e.g. "Give me the book.")
- ii) Positive politeness: this strategy is rather appealing to Hearer's positive face, as it expresses friendliness and respect to Hearer. Speaker is concerned with Hearer's desire

(wants); therefore, Hearer is expected to show his/her reciprocation towards Speaker.
(e.g. "I know you are such a kind hearted and helpful person. I wish you could lend me the book just for a few days.")

- iii) Negative politeness: the strategy indicates that Speaker is aware that he/she is imposing on Hearer and interfering his/her territory. FTA is minimized through apologies, hedges and other softening mechanisms. These are used so that any FTA would sound less coercing to Hearer. (e.g. "I would really appreciate if you could lend me the book for a few days.")
- iv) Off-record/ indirect strategy: FTA is expressed indirectly, there is no imposition at all but hints are given. It could be in the form of statement, metaphors, etc. Speaker has more than one communicative intentions and the literal utterance expressed does not explicitly display that the person is doing FTA (e.g. "This book is really useful and I wish I could read it".)

Although the principle and strategies developed by Brown and Levinson (1987) have been popularly studied and applied in many researches, they are still open to criticisms. Thomas (1995) critics that classifying FTA, at some extent is an overgeneralization since certain speech acts are naturally face threatening, and on the contrary, the other speech acts are more polite in nature.

2.5 POLITENESS AND REQUEST STRATEGIES

The description above of the list of FTA strategies might be generally applied when any researcher aims to do an FTA. The application of these strategies is used to a FTA variety. In order to examine FTA of a request, in particular, it is vital to consult a more specific framework.

One of the broadly utilized frameworks is the framework designed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) that could possibly extend the relevance and versatility of the politeness theory. The development of this framework was through a cross-cultural study, which is done from nine language groups under a Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP). The investigation of the speech act of request was carried out by the attempt of this study in terms of its universal pragmatic principles across cultures and languages.

Explicitness of this framework is very obvious as it categorizes nine sub strategies of politeness employed by speakers according to three scales of indirectness, which are Direct, Conventional Indirect and Nonconventional Indirect.

- i) Direct Strategy: this strategy indicates that the utterance is told to hearer as a

request such as imperatives; "Give me the salt"; "you have to clean up the kitchen" (can be in forms of mood derivable, performative, obligation statement, need/want statement).

- ii) Conventional Indirect: this strategy refers to requests, which contain the element of proposing and linguistics forms that are conventionalized in a language, and it signals an illocutionary force. For example, "why don't you pass me the salt"; "could you clean up this mess, please" (query preparatory and suggestory formulae).
- iii) Nonconventional Indirect: it indicates that the depending is partially on contextual clues, and hints to be given to make a request. For instance, "I couldn't reach the salt"; "you have left the kitchen in a right mess" (strong and mild hints).

2.6 PREVIOUS STUDIES

Umar (2004) has investigated socio-linguistic between advanced Arab learners of English and native speakers of English by conducting a comparison of request strategies used by both of them. 20 Arab students in graduate English courses of four Arabic universities and 20 British students perusing graduate programs of three British universities have been compared. The data of the request strategies used by each group was generated by the use of Discourse-Completion-Test. The two groups have utilized similar strategies when their request is addressed to equals or people in higher positions. However, when addressing requests to people in lower positions, Arab students tend to use more direct request strategies in performing their request than British students. It has been found that semantic and syntactic modifier has been more used by English native speakers than Arab advanced learners. Thus, the requests of English native speakers seem to be more polite and tactful. Finally, the study ends up with some theoretical and pedagogical implications, which those Arab students of English, even when they are in advanced level of English, perhaps their cultural backgrounds influence on them when they formulate their requests strategies. However, the current study will conduct the natural data as well as the use of Iraqi students as a sample.

Next study by Rue and Zhang (2008) which tackles request strategies and Cross-Cultural Speech Acts Realization Project (CCSARP, Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989) as an appropriate approach is used in this study. The data is collected through role-play and recorded conversations. The findings shows that Chinese and Korean mostly used indirect head acts (conventionally indirect + Hints). As well as, Chinese speakers usually has used conventional indirect head acts in the conversation with familiar superiors, whereas hints are mostly preferred and used by Korean in their conversation. The results show that both of Chinese and Korean employed and used non-indirect head acts in request strategies. This study

is close related to what the researcher of the current study is going to carry out but with another sample.

Besides, Jalilifar (2009) has investigated a cross-sectional between the request strategies used by Iranian learners of English as a Foreign Language and Australian native speakers of English. The participants of the study were 96 BA and MA Persian students and 10 native speakers of English. The data of the request strategies used by each group has been generated by a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). Selection of request situations in DCT has been based on two social factors of relative power and social distance. The pragmatic development was exposed by the results, especially when direct strategies moved to conventionally indirect strategies on the part of EFL learners, overuse of indirect type of requesting has been revealed by EFL learners with higher proficiency, whereas the more balanced use of this strategy is used by the native group. On the other hand, the direct strategy type is widely used by learners of the lower proficiency. The findings indicate that social power is concerned EFL learners display closer performance to native speakers in terms of the influence of the social variables. The current study will be different in the use of the instrument in addition to the sample; it uses natural data and semi-structured interview and Iraqi students as a sample.

Moreover, Al-Marrani & Sazalie (2010) discuss the linguistics strategies employed by monolingual native speakers (NSs) of Yemeni Arabic in making requests. The sample of the study was 168 Yemeni male and 168 Yemeni female university students. The Discourse Completion Test (DCT) was used to collect the data. The model of Blum-Kulka, et al (1989) is the conduct of the data. Through the findings of the study, there is an obvious tendency in Yemeni Arabic for using higher levels of directness in male-male interactions. The high levels of directness without the fear of losing 'face' were widely used by male speakers of Yemeni Arabic in the male-male interactions. The direct strategies (imperative) have been used by male speakers of Yemeni Arabic in male-male interactions could be attributed to the closeness and the solidarity between the interlocutors. As for male-female interactions, it is noticed that there are higher levels of indirectness, which is a marked tendency in Yemeni Arabic. The male-female interaction referred to the use of indirect strategy by male speakers of Yemeni Arabic might be attributed to culture and religious values.

Finally, Ahangari & Shoghli (2011) have investigated the request strategies used by Iranian learners of English as foreign language and Canadian native speakers of English. 27 MA Iranian students and 16 native speakers of Canada participated in this study. The data of the request strategies by each group was generated by Discourse Completion Test. Selection of request situation in discourse completion test which based on three social factors of relative social distance, power, and rank of imposition. The analysis of data has done by using the particular coding scheme, cross cultural speech act realization project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989). The overuse of indirect request on the part of EFL learners is shown through the results. Consequently, an interesting thing is that the use of Conventionally

Indirect strategy is mostly used by both Iranian EFL learners and Canadian speakers with subcategory of query-preparatory; however, Non-conventionally Indirect strategy is not used by both of the groups. The last two above mentioned previous studies have utilized the Discourse Completion Test, whereas the current study use another method and sample to achieve the research objectives.

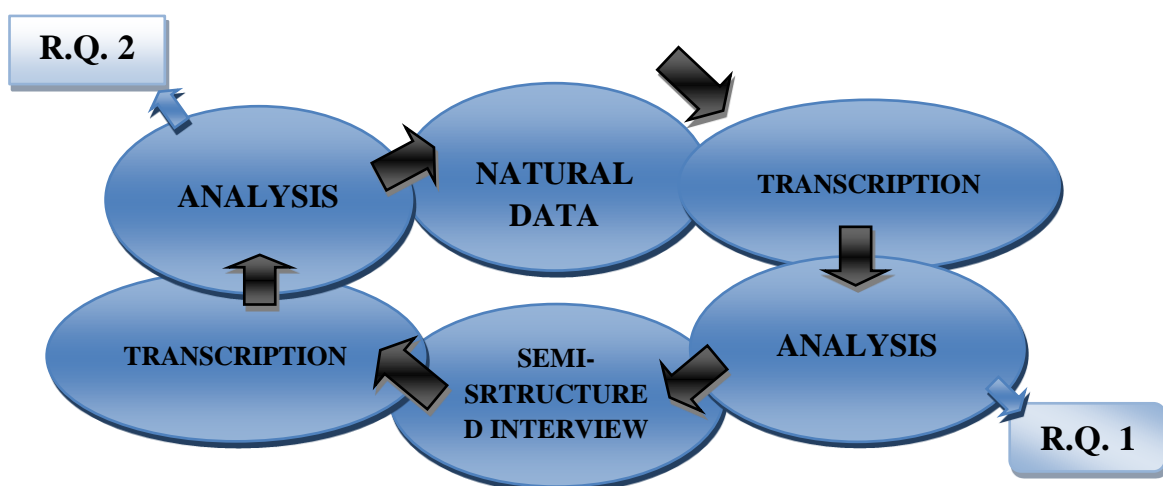
METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section gives a description of the research design in the study. It illustrates the samples of the study, the research design and the methods utilized to collect the data. Moreover, it reveals the research procedures or steps used in the study. The present research was based on qualitative approaches to investigate request strategies employed by Iraqi postgraduate students and likewise why do Iraqi postgraduate students employed those strategies.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This project is a qualitative research. Research is the procedure of collecting, analyzing and interpreting data in order to understand a phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod 2001). Consequently, to achieve the research objectives, the present study consists of one phase qualitative. Research design is defined as “the plan for the study, providing the overall framework for collecting the data, outlines the details steps in the study and provides guidelines for systematic data gathering” (Strauss & Corbin 1997: 17).



3.3 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is an important phase in the research procedure wherein no research can take

place without undergoing this aspect of data gathering. The process of data collection takes place at (MAIN LIBRARY) in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The participants consist of two Iraqi postgraduate students from different faculties at UPM, and one Malaysian female employee who works in the main library of UPM. Notifying that, the researcher got an ethical permission from employee to allow him to record the interactions. The researcher collected the data of the study. Firstly, natural data through audio recording, where there were two conversations between Iraqi postgraduate students and employee. Secondly, the data of the interview was through a semi-structured interview.

3.3.1 INSTRUMENT OF NATURAL DATA

The natural data was conversations between the Iraqi postgraduate students and Malaysian employee at the Main Library of UPM; the conversations have been made to find out the strategies used by Iraqi students and answer R. Q. 1 “What are the request strategies employed by Iraqi postgraduate students in an academic setting (MAIN LIBRARY)?”. It is recorded in mp3 recorder tool by the researcher to record the interactions between interlocutors. After that the researcher transcribed and analyzed the data by himself. Only two recorded conversations are in this study.

3.3.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Semi-structured interview is employed because of its features, and it is suitable to achieve objectives of the study and answer R.Q. 2 “Why do Iraqi postgraduate students employ those strategies?”. Based on the theoretical orientation of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), and also through the analysis of natural data, the questions of a semi-structured interview were constructed, developed and functioned as a guideline for the researcher to elicit responses from the participants. It allows the research to have control over the two interview sessions, thus, irrelevant responses from the interview can be avoided. Although the interview is controlled, the respondents still have freedom to express their thoughts. The purpose of the interview was to obtain the participants’ responses that could support the natural data. It could also provide some information on the participants’ perceptions and beliefs in regards to how they manifested requests and the reason that governed them to do so.

3.4 TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DATA

The process of transcription was through the listening to recorded interactions for more times and then started to transcribe it after recording the conversations and collecting data. The transcription was done according to Gail Jefferson's transcription symbols, which are a representation of different concepts such as brief pause and interruption. The transcription almost took two days to be written. The Jefferson's transcription is used widely in conversation analysis, and it has many transcription symbols, but in this study just some of the Jefferson's transcription symbols were applied.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Besides, the data were analyzed by the framework designed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). Participants of this study were three persons for two interactions between two Iraqi postgraduate students and the employee of MAIN LIBRARY.

This section provides detailed elaboration on how data from recording and interview were analyzed. In general, the aim of the data analysis was to recognize the pattern of request strategies employed by the participants, as well as why these particular strategies employed. Therefore, the data from both recording and interview were analyzed by qualitatively method.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section presents the findings of the study i.e. the analysis from audio recording and interview sessions. The first part of this section shows the request strategies used by the participants, it answers Question1: what are the request strategies employed by Iraqi postgraduate students in an academic setting (MAIN LIBRARY). These findings are supported by data from the two interviews. The next part discusses the findings in relation to the participants why these request strategies employed by them, which answers Research Question 2: why do Iraqi postgraduate students employ those strategies?

4.2 HEAD ACTS

Along with the analysis of the study that showed through data from audio recording and the two interview sessions that there is manifestation of head acts through three types of internal modifications (see Table 1 for further reference). It was found that the participants manifested Direct strategies through one type of sub-strategies. A frequent selection of **Want statement** was evident through the two interactions. Thus, Direct strategy was counted as 12 occurrences consisting of one type of sub strategies. Meanwhile, Conventional Indirect was conveyed mainly through also one sub strategy that was **query preparatory** as appeared in these two interactions. Finally, the participants manifested Nonconventional Indirect through **hints** that occurred in the interactions during this study.

4.2.1 Direct Strategy

Overall, it was apparent that Iraqi students had higher preference for Direct strategy compared to other strategies. It was observed that (n=12) of this strategy employed by the Iraqi postgraduate students when doing their request from the two interactions with employee at the Main Library of UPM. All of the requests were conveyed through **want statement**.

Table 1: the proportion of types of request strategies used by Iraqi students

Categories of strategies	Sub-strategy	NO
Direct	Want statement	12
Conventional Indirect	Query preparatory	2
Nonconventional Indirect	Hints	3

The most frequently occurred sub strategy was **want statement** whereby speaker expressed his/her desire, intention or wish to hearer. Direct requests were manifested by Iraqi students with the use of helping verb ‘want’. The helping verb ‘want’ indicates intentions, commonly regarded as less polite as speaker seems to be inconsiderate about hearer’s condition, availability or consent. Besides, the helping verb ‘want’ when is used for making requests, it refers to be like an imperative request, so it indicates to be the least polite request as Leech (1983) in Umar (2004: 48) pointed to this case that “imperatives are the least polite constructions since they are tactless in that they jeopardize compliance by the addressee”. In other words, when the word ‘want’ is used in requests, there is an expectation from speaker to hearer that hearer would perform or accomplish speaker’s intention and expectation. The data below show how the request were made with the use of the verb ‘want’ which appeared in all requests belong to Direct strategy.

Student 1

- 03. S I want to ask you about the books in this library...
- 25. S can also make order or not?
- 37. S ok::, also I want to ask you about Endnote program
- 43. S =and what the advantage from Endnote?
- 57. S can I arrange from myself?
- 67. S can you speak advantage how to write papers how to write ...
- 73. S is there workshop every month?

Student 2

- 03. S I have couple of questions to get some information about them
- 05. S ... where can I find books about computer science?
- 31. S also I wanna ask you about level three I found journals...
- 38. S ok, so:: also I wanna ask you about thesis where can I find...
- 50. S ahh just I wanna ask you because sometimes ahh usually...

4.2.2 Conventional Indirect Strategy

There is a great difference in the number of occurrence between Direct and Conventional Indirect strategies. According to (Ellis, 1994; Trosborg; 1995) in Ahangari & Shoghli (2011: 176) pointed that “the conventionally indirect strategy might be a universal method of making request toward the addressees”. As stated that Direct strategy recorded as (n=12) occurrences happened in these two interactions whereas Conventional Indirect only (n=2) occurrences. As mentioned earlier in introduction section through Searle’s observation (1975) shows that the relationship between indirectness and politeness is “politeness is the most prominent motivation for preferring indirectness in requests, and certain forms tend to become the conventionally polite ways of making indirect requests” (1975: 76).

Conventional Indirect was manifested by the participants’ request through one type of sub strategy that was **Query preparatory**. When using this strategy, speaker initiates request with modal verb ‘can’, which appears at the beginning of the request. The following examples detail the description above:

Student 2:

- 32. S ... can I find those journals as soft copy please?
- 42. S ...can I borrow them please?

4.2.3 Nonconventional Indirect Strategy

Nonconventional Indirect was the second preferred strategy selected by the participants since this strategy was employed only three occurrences in the two interactions between Iraqi students and the Malaysian employee. The requests were manifested indirectly and they were implied through strong **hints** provided by speaker. The examples of Nonconventional Indirect strategies were found through the data below:

Student 1:

- 17. S ahh for the journal sometimes when I make search in Science-direct inter the
- 18. S library I cannot open some journals, I can make order?

Student 2:

- 72. S ok ahhh (.) those who wants to write thesis (.) or project (.) ahhh (.) what’s
- 73. S the:: emm what can say that what is the (.) the guide line for writing for (.) the
- 74. S size of writing how can I arrange my thesis?

- 79. S ok last question ahh (.) sometimes I found journals online (.) but it is not found
- 80. S in the library (.) how can I get them because it costs lot of money.

The participants (two Iraqi students) admitted that they did employ **hints** but it was occasionally used. Instead they preferred to do request directly. Although the participants

showed a significant preference in Direct Strategy, in certain occasions indirectness was still employed. According to Brown & Levinson's theory which claims that the higher power and distance, more indirectness used.

4.3 INTERVIEW:

This finding was confirmed with the responses from the interviews. The two Iraqi participants who took part in the interview sessions suggested that they preferred doing request directly. They claimed that they generally did direct request since the interference of the mother tongue as well as more effective due to messages could be easily conveyed.

The reason that participants 'Iraqi students' have tendency to request in direct way since the influence of the mother tongue on them. The participants indicated that they usually transfer their ideas from Arabic language to English because of the absence of knowledge how to make request and non-use of English at all in their country. According to Al-Eryani 2007, Arab speakers of English formulate their request strategies based on their cultural backgrounds.

Interview transcription:

Student 1

Yes, I used to return back to my mother tongue just because I think this way is the best way to convey my message.

Student 2

Yes, ahh I always transfer my ideas from Arabic ahh to English language. And you asked why. Ahh I think because we don't use English in my country at all or I think we don't know many things about English language. I think these reasons.

Moreover, the participants admitted that direct requests were more effective since interlocutors' communicative intentions could be transmitted directly. Both responses from student 1 and student 2 suggested that indirectness may not be effective if hearer does not understand the context because he/she might not understand the request in indirect way, thus the request might not be carried out. When the message does not get across, there might be miscommunication and misunderstanding between the two parties.

Interview transcription:

Student 1

Direct way because ahh it is easier and ahh I think it is understandable and effective way to convey my message to others rather than indirect way.

Student 2

For me when doing a request from people, there's ahh no need to do it indirectly. It's better to say it direct to the point, because not everybody understand hints. So the message might not convey as for me direct is better than hints because people are different.

To conclude, the findings of the present study did conform to other previous studies done in Arabic requests (Umar 2004; and Al-Marrani & Sazalie 2010), which are comparative identical to the result of those studies done by (Umar 2004; and Al-Marrani & Sazalie 2010) whose participants demonstrated high preference on Direct strategy.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Generally, the findings of the study demonstrated that the participants employed all three super strategies from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) framework namely Direct, Conventional Indirect and Nonconventional Indirect strategies. These strategies were classified into three sub strategies; one from Direct “**want statement**” and one from Conventional Indirect “**query preparatory**” and the last one Nonconventional Indirect strategy “**hints**”.

The findings of the present study are anticipated to benefit both teacher and students in helping them to see the importance of pragmatic part of language learning. Because of as mentioned earlier in Iraqi schools, the only focus is on the grammatical and sentence level. Therefore, teacher should emphasize the important part of pragmatic competence to their students in terms of interpersonal communication in general and making request in particular. Students should also be able to distinguish the impact of having ineffective strategies when communication, thus avoiding unnecessary conflict.

Furthermore, at the school level, the pragmatic part of language should also be taught along with its technical aspect. The instruction in pragmatic teaching should be explicit instead of implied. For instance, when teaching social communication, teachers should not emphasize solely at the sentence level, focusing on the accuracy of grammatical and sentence structure. But students should be taught how responses are seen as socio-culturally accepted by speech community members. The vitality of having “desirable” interpersonal skills (where a speech act of a request is inclusive) should be emphasized since it would result in effective communication, specifically at a workplace such as with ‘boss’ or in an academic place such as with ‘teacher’, ‘supervisor’, ‘Dean’ and extra.

This study might not have a large number of samples but it can be considered as a valuable contribution. Also the findings of this study are not enough to make any generalizations on the nature of request strategies among Iraqi students and cannot represent the whole population of Iraqi students.

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APPENDIX A:

TRANSCRIBED DATA

This dialogue took place in the UPM (Universiti Putra Malaysia) particularly in the MAIN LIBRARY. The dialogue consists of short inquiring conversations between the female

employee and the Iraqi students who are explaining and asking about different matters. (S1), and (S2) represent a different student's character and the letter (E) represents the Employee character.

Transcription symbols:

- [Left - hand bracket indicates simultaneous utterance.
- [[Double Left - hand brackets indicate utterances that start at the same time.
- = Equal sign indicates latching.
- A single dash indicates utterances cut – off.
- Under underlined fragment: indicate speaker emphasis.
- (XXX) Single parentheses enclosing XXX indicate unknown utterance.
- ? A question mark indicates a question.
- (.) A dot enclosed in a bracket: indicates a pause of less than two tenths of a second.
- ↑ Arrow-up indicates rising pitch or intonation.
- ↓ Arrow-down indicates falling pitch or intonation.
- ::: Sequence of colons indicates prolongation of sound.
- , A coma indicates a temporary rise or fall in intonation.

Student 1:

- 01. **S1:** Salam alaikum wa rahmat allah
- 02. **E:** Wa alaikum salam
- 03. **S1:** I want to ask about the books in this library(.) you have English and Arabic
- 04. **S1:** books[where is the English(.) and Arabic where can find[both of them
- 05. **E:** [y::es [ok
- 06. **E:** we don't ahh we don't separate the Engl the books by language, but we
- 07. **E:** separate the books by subjects(.) ok↑ at for example, ahh any topic on
- 08. **E:** engineering(.) and: fortunately most ahh books in engineering is in English, so
- 09. **E:** it will be in level five, so we have another collection we call it ahhh the Arab
- 10. **E:** and civilization collection(.) ahhh it mostly in English,(.) in Arabic,(.) and
- 11. **E:** other languages but the subject is Arab and ahh(.) Islamic ahh section↓
- 12. **S1:** this is also for the thesis (.) same?
- 13. **E:** for the thesis we don't separate by language we sep we separate by format that
- 14. **E:** means (.) all thesis in level five
- 15. **S1:** all the thesis in level fiv[e?
- 16. **E:** [yes
- 17. **S1:** ahh for the:: journal sometimes when I make search in Science-direct(.) inter
- 18. **S1:** the library I cannot open[some journals, I can make order?
- 19. **E:** [ya
- 20. **E:** ok for Science-direct the ahh journals that you cannot get full-text is ninet
- 21. **E:** publication of 1996 and below(.) that is the journals or articles that you cannot
- 22. **E:** have the full-text or↑ you can have a full-text because we don't subscribe
- 23. **E:** that↑journals(.) there is two cases(.) ok↑
- 24. **S1:** for the books if I need books(.) from another University overseas or inside
- 25. **S1:** Malaysia, can also make order or not?=
=

26. **E:** =ya you you can use inter library loan that means you ask the library to find
27. **E:** the books for you either in Malaysia or other ahh[library
28. **S1:** [takes time takes time?
29. **E:** ye::s the process on ahh usually one to three weeks(.) for one process(.) for
30. **E:** one title
31. **S1:** also for papers?
32. **E:** for journals articles yes[ahh
33. **S1:** [ahh for journals articles
34. **E:** the only thing that you cannot use inter library loan is thesis
35. **S1:** only(.) thesis cannot?=
36. **E:** =cannot because thesis you have to go each individual library to get it
37. **S1:** ok::, also I want to ask about:: Endnote program=
38. **E:** =ok
39. **S1:** I have to install it in my laptop or I have to use it here in the library?
40. **E:** ok:: for Endnote program you can install in your laptop(.) and you can take it
41. **E:** from the: (xxx) service or you can save to your pen-drive and you install
42. **E:** later=
43. **S1:** =and what the advantage from:: the Endnote?
44. **E:** the the endnote can::: arrange your reference list (.) bibliography list of your
45. **E:** assignment it can be your thesis can be your assignment(xxx)↓=
46. **S1:** =how I just mention the reference in the: sentence or[paragraph and
47. **E:** [no you have to(.) you
48. **E:** have to input in endnote and you download(.) two of word(.) to make the
49. **E:** reference list appear according to the style(.) that you choose↓
50. **S1:** of course Gaya UPM style Gaya[UPM
51. **E:** [you can choose any style you want to:::(.)fig
52. **E:** fix
53. **S1:** emm and endnote I have to update from first time?
54. **E:** according to the software so now if update la automatically(.) according to the
55. **E:** version that you take(.) because for for example, now they have a version
56. **E:** fifteen(.) so you can use version fifteen according to your assignments
57. **S1:** I have to use endnote or no need, can I arrange from myself?
58. **E:** actually, from word you can do it manually[
59. **S1:** [I can do it manua[lly
60. **E:** [yes if you know
61. **E:** or you use the endnote so you have the choice
62. **S1:** ok about ahh the journals (xxx) workshop about the Scopus ab ab about I I
63. **S1:** write=
64. **E:** =ok about the information to you[ok::
65. **S1:** [yes what else
66. **E:** emm[
67. **S1:** [can you speak advantage how to write papers how to write to choose the
68. **S1:** journals for our papers for our man[y script
69. **E:** [ye::s that means if if you attend the
70. **E:** classes for Scopus and general transition report then you know which journal

71. **E:** have the:: rank accordingly and which journal not accepted by UPM or
72. **E:** accepted by UPM↓=
73. **S1:** =is there workshop every month? ↑
74. **E:** yes(.) every month we have workshop ahh
75. **S1:** e::very month right? When exactly in the: beginning of of the month in the[
76. **E:** [we
77. **E:** we have it every ahh Wednesday for international students(.) and we bring we
78. **E:** have here in this division
79. **S1:** in this part[of library?
80. **E:** [ya

Student 2:

01. **S2:** Salam alaikum
02. **E:** Wa alaikum sala::m
03. **S2:** I have couple of questions t[o get some information about them
04. **E:** [ok
05. **S2:** ahh firstly(.) ahh where can I find books about computer science?=
06. **E:** =ok so for finding books in the library you have the in ahh the library
07. **E:** catalog(.) you you can do it ahh you can access it online so from library
08. **E:** catalog using title, then you will know the location of books(.) so all books be
09. **E:** borrowed, should be in level five
10. **S2:** level five?=
11. **E:** =ya (.) in all subjects
12. **S2:** how about other levels for example level four?
13. **E:** level four we we have the encyclopedia, dictionaries and the reference
14. **E:** materials that you can borrow but you can't refer(.) ok
15. **S2:** ok if I borrow books(.) and:: today for example is the expire day or deadline
16. **S2:** to:: to get back the book[to the library ahhh what should I do?
17. **E:** [ya to return the book
18. **E:** ok ahh that means when(.)the day is already overdue (.) is already overdue (.)
19. **E:** so you have to the::: let say today is the overdue you cannot renew↑
20. **E:** because (.) you:: is the day already ahhh expired you have to renew before the
21. **E:** overdue date
22. **S2:** ahha!=
23. **E:** =you can do it online (.)ok: (.) using our online catalog=
24. **S2:** =so what should I do if the date the line the time[
25. **E:** [deadline expire
26. **E:** so you have to return (.) ok and if after overdue date you have to pay fine (.)
27. **E:** if you want to borrow again (.) you you can borrow again ahh (.) unless there
28. **E:** is no body reserve your book[
29. **S2:** [ahha
30. **E:** if there some body reserve your book you cannot borrow or renew
31. **S2:** ok, also I wanna ask you about level three I found journals (.) related to my
32. **S2:** study(.) ah::: b:: which are (.) hard copy can I find those (.) journals ahh as
33. **S2:** soft copy please?

34. **E:** ok(.) usually we don't have two formats for one ahh particular journal we
35. **E:** either have a printed and it continues then the next issue in online(.) so we
36. **E:** don't have both ahh format for one title we either have the printed or we
37. **E:** have the online
38. **S2:** ok, so:: also I wanna ask you about thesis where can I find (.) ah::: thesis (.) I
39. **S2:** mean (.) which level?
40. **E:** ok thesis in all subjects be in level five in Southeast Asia Collection=
41. **S2:** =ok if I find some thesis that::: its it has some information related to my study
42. **S2:** can I borrow (.) [borrow them please?
43. **E:** [no, thesis is only for reference
44. **S2:** ohh only reference!
45. **E:** ya [reference at the collection=
46. **S2:** [so::
47. **S2:** =so it is not possible to borrow you bo[rrow (.) or make a copy?=
48. **E:** [ya this is
49. **E:** =no[↑] it is against the:: reg: regulation (xxx) thesis↓
50. **S2:** ahh just I wanna ask you because sometimes ahh usually I come (.) to library
51. **S2:** specially at Saturday because you know it is weekend there is nothing to do
52. **S2:** and I I find opened it always but sometimes two or three times I found it
53. **S2:** closed (.) why↓?
54. **E:** ok we usually close at the all first Saturday of every month (.) ok but during
55. **E:** at the time we will open it every ahh even Saturday but ahh (.) be beside the
56. **E:** exam week ok if exam week we open Monday to Sunday if if semester
57. **E:** break(.) and if public holiday of ahh week of Saturday of every month we
58. **E:** close
59. **S2:** how about the times is it(.) the same time for example, during ahhh (.) works
60. **S2:** workday during workdays is it the same time will be weekend for example
61. **S2:** from Monday to friday
[Friday ahh Monday to Friday is 8 to ahh(.) 11 or 10.30 if
62. **E:** it's exam time (.) ahh and Sunday and Saturday 10 to 5 in the afternoon
63. **S2:** ok one more question that (.) ahh (.) for example if for new students when they
64. **S2:** come here and they don't know anything about the library (.) ahh (.) for
65. **S2:** example, for me when I came when first I come here I didn't know anything
66. **S2:** and I needed someone to guide me to:: through this library (.) is there anyone?
67. **E:** so guided to work is only a organize for group ahh to: for group of students or
68. **E:** when you register with postgraduate students organize a day with library (.)
69. **E:** that we cooperate for one day all new students have the library to work (.) but
70. **E:** we don't have the just for one individual person
71. **S2:** ok ahhh (.) those who wants to write thesis (.) or project (.) ahhh (.) what's
72. **S2:** the:: emm what can say that what is the (.) the guide line for writing for (.) the
73. **S2:** size of writing how can I arrange my thesis?
74. **E:** ok, for thesis writing (.) we have one software that is call it endnote to
75. **E:** organize your bibliography but ahh how to write Gaya UPM what is the
76. **E:** margin what is the numbering pages that one ahhh we have to you have to
77. **E:** refer to ahh Postgraduate Centre they have the:: (.) homepage (.) ok

78. **S2:** ok last question ahh (.) sometimes I found journals online (.) but it is not found
79. **S2:** in the library (.) how can I get them because it costs lot of mone[y
80. **E:** [yes (xxx)
81. **E:** is very expensive so you can either go inter library loan or maybe that journal
82. **E:** is available in opened access, so ahh moving to our classes we also show how
83. **E:** to get to open access journal that you can access without be a member or
84. **E:** without having to pay
85. **S2:** how about books same?
86. **E:** ahhh there are:: not many books that is available online or (xxx) books is very
87. **E:** limited
88. **S2:** ok thank yo[u
89. **E:** [ok welcome

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Do you have any idea about politeness and request strategies in communication? If yes, Can you give an example?
2. Is status (position, age) of the individual influences on the way you questioning him/her?
3. According to what you get this way of request?
4. I have noticed that once you have used the direct request. e.i. "I want" then you have used the hints ahh for the:: journal sometimes when I make search in Science-direct(.) inter the library I cannot open[some journals, I can make order? why you change the way of request?
5. Have you already studied these ways of request?
6. Do you use to transfer your ideas or question from Arabic language to English literally? Why?
7. From your opinion, when you ask something from people, which way will be more effective indirect or direct way? Why?
8. Do you think the types of the general things that you request are different from the personal things such as money, mobile, etc.?

Student 1:

1. Do you have any idea about politeness and request strategies in communication? If yes, Can you give an example?

Yes, I have idea how to communicate by using, for example "I want..." and "I need..."

2. Is status (position, age) of the individual influences on the way you questioning him/her?

Yes, if the addressed person is a teacher, Dr. Prof. the way of request will be different from that when person is a friend of mine or person lower than as position.

3. According to what you get this way of request?

According to my previous study in my country.

4. I have noticed that once you have used the direct request. e.i. “I want” then you have used the hints *ahh for the: journal sometimes when I make search in Science-direct(.) inter the library I cannot open [some journals, I can make order? why you change the way of request?*

Well it is just occasionally to show that I can communicate with others

5. Have you already studied these ways of request?

No, I just used them by myself.

6. Do you use to transfer your ideas or question from Arabic language to English literally? Why?

Yes, I used to return back to my mother tongue just because I think this way is the best way to convey my message.

7. From your opinion, when you ask something from people, which way will be more effective indirect or direct way? Why?

Direct way because ahh it is easier and ahh I think it is understandable and effective way to convey my message to others rather than indirect way.

8. Do you think the types of the general things that you request are different from the personal things such as money, mobile, etc.?

It depends on the person you know ahh if my close friend ahh I can I ask him for money or mobile but if just friend no difficult to ask him for money or even mobile but I can ask him for general things.

Student 2:

1. Do you have any idea about politeness and request strategies in communication? If yes, Can you give an example?

Actually I don't know but I think I have some ideas about politeness. 'I want' or by using 'can' and like that.

2. Is status (position, age) of the individual influences on the way you questioning him/her?

Yes, of course influence on my way when I question him/her. Because ahh if talking to person who is ahh who has higher post it is different from a friend. If talking to boss, I have to talk in organized sentences. If with friends I talk informal speech.

3. According to what you get this way of request?

Actually I got this way from my study in my country

4. I have noticed that once you have used the direct request. e.i. "I want" then you have used the hints ""ok ahhh (.) those who wants to write thesis (.) or project (.) ahhh (.) what's the:: emm what can say that what is the (.) the guide line for writing for (.) the size of writing how can I arrange my thesis?" why you change the way of request?

Actually ahhh I don't know but I think ahh by chance I use this.

5. Have you already studied these ways of request before?

Actually no I didn't just I follow what I see suitable as I mentioned earlier.

6. Do you use to transfer your ideas or question from Arabic language to English literally? Why?

Yes, ahh I always transfer my ideas from Arabic ahh to English language. And you asked why. Ahh I think because we don't use English in my country at all or I think we don't know many things about English language. I think these reasons.

7. From your opinion, when you ask something from people, which way will be more effective indirect or direct way? Why?

For me when doing a request from people, there's ahh no need to do it indirectly. It's better to say it direct to the point, because not everybody understand hints. So the message might not convey as for me direct is better that hints because people are different.

8. Do you think the types of the general things that you request are different from the personal things such as money, mobile, etc.?

I think yes, or of course yes, things for personal use are much more difficult to be requested. But general things are easier to request.