AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THE PRAGMATICS OF REQUESTS IN LEBANESE ARABIC AND ENGLISH IN THE DISCOURSE OF LEBANESE STUDENTS

by
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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This thesis examined the politeness strategies involved in making requests in English and Lebanese Arabic. It investigated the influence of gender and interlocutor status on speakers' choice of strategy. Data were collected by means of a discourse completion task (DCT) that was administered to 137 students in 8 sections of English 202, Sophomore Rhetoric, at the Lebanese American University's Beirut campus. Only 51, however, were chosen that fit the inclusion criteria. DCTs contained six items where respondents had to answer as if they were in that particular situation. They were asked to respond in both English and Arabic. Data were coded and analyzed according to the coding scheme proposed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1989). They were first classified into direct/conventionally indirect/ non-conventionally indirect responses and then further subdivided into the 9 subcategories presented in the CCSARP coding manual.

The results revealed that the participants generally and overwhelmingly preferred conventionally indirect strategies, followed by direct strategies. Hints were not used in any of the groups, and this was explained by an aversion to ambiguity and a preference for pragmatic clarity. Gender of the speakers was an influential factor: as expected, females preferred to use conventionally indirect strategies in both languages. Male participants also used conventionally indirect strategies more frequently than the other categories, albeit far less than the females. In terms of the sub-strategies used, it was found that the query preparatory strategy (asking for permission/ability/willingness to perform the act in question) was the most preferred strategy by both males and females across the two language groups. However, a Chi-Square analysis showed that gender was not a statistically significant factor.

Another finding is that status was not as influential as initially thought. Social distance was more influential than status; generally, the more unfamiliar the hearer was to the speaker, the less direct the speaker tended to be, but this was not always the case. Chi-square analysis showed that status was statistically significant for the English data but not so for the Arabic data.There was, however, one more surprising finding. Instances of code-switching were detected in a lot of the Arabic responses. This was surprising because code-switching occurs in speech, not in writing. It was hypothesized that respondents code-switched to English due to either a lack of proficiency in Arabic or to a desire to mitigate the force of the request. In this case, code-switching was considered a face-saving strategy, in Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms, a positive politeness strategy.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the study of language in context has gained a lot of momentum. Specifically, the issue of politeness has aroused the interest of both researchers and language teachers. As Kasper (1990) notes, part of our socialization process is learning what constitutes acceptable behavior, linguistic or otherwise. Socially competent speakers are fully aware of the importance of creating and maintaining harmonious relationships, which is where the concept of linguistic politeness comes into play. Locher and Watts (2005) consider the phenomenon " a fundamental aspect of human socio-communicative verbal interaction…" (p.9). Its absence is usually commented on in interaction and its presence is usually noticed as well (Fraser 1990; Locher and Watts 2005). As a matter of fact, the study of politeness has grown to such an extent that it now interests researchers outside the field of linguistics; anthropologists, sociologists, social psychologists, among many others have taken an interest in politeness as an important component of human communicative ability.

The study of linguistic politeness has for a long time been associated with the study of speech acts which was taken up by conversation and discourse analysts. On the whole, different speech acts were studied and the various politeness strategies utilized in performing them were examined as well. The most well known of these speech acts are compliments, refusals, expressions of gratitude, greetings, advice-giving, requests, leave-taking and the like. On the other hand, studies on pragmatics and cross-cultural pragmatics in the Arab world have been few despite the contributions this field may make to the broad areas of intercultural communication theory and foreign language teaching and learning. The current

literature on cross-cultural pragmatics in the Arab world has examined a limited number of speech acts like apologies in Nuredeen (2008), Bataineh and Bataineh (2008), Al-Zumor (2011); compliments in Farghal and Khatib (2001), Farghal and Hassan (2010), Nelson et al. (1999); directives in Atawneh and Sridhari (1993). Research into realization of requesting strategies is quite scarce (Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily 2012, Al-Marranie and Sazalie 2010; Al-Fattah and Ravindranath 2009, among others)

The consensus among researchers is that the performance of such speech acts seems to be culture-specific, bound to the norms and values of certain cultures. Requests have received particular attention in the literature due to their perceived face-threatening nature.

However, as Wierzbicka (2003) astutely observed, all the work that is being done in the area of pragmatics, cross-cultural or intercultural, is largely ethnocentric, with most studies focusing on English-speaking societies. The pragmatics of Arabic has received far less attention from scholars. Specifically, and for the area of speech acts, very few studies currently exist that investigate the performance of speech acts in Arabic, a gap which this study aims to fill. Holmes (2012) highlights the importance of politeness for cross-cultural communication:

> Politeness could be considered the heart of successful inter-cultural communication. Getting one's message across effectively, and without causing unintended offence to interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds, entails familiarity with a range of communicative norms, and the ability to draw on them appropriately (p.206).

These communicative norms differ from culture to culture and so, are cause for many cultural misunderstandings between groups from different cultures. In the Lebanese context, but for two unpublished master's theses the investigator is aware of at AUB (El-Harake 2004; Zantout 2011), no such work has been done. Therefore, this study aims to fill a gap in existing knowledge of the pragmatics of Arabic.

This study set out to explore the politeness strategies used by speakers of Arabic as a native language and English as a first foreign language. It aimed at examining the contextual variables that affect speakers' choice of strategies as well as compare the similarities and differences in the realization of these strategies in English and Lebanese Arabic.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

Pragmatics: Looking at language in context

The study of meaning occupies an important place in language research. Within linguistics, two fields of study are concerned with meaning: semantics and pragmatics. Semanticists approach meaning from a strictly linguistic perspective, focusing on the denotative meanings of sentences whereas pragmaticians work outside what Mey (2001) terms the "grammatically encoded aspects of context" (p.6) to include all the contextual features of language use. The consensus among researchers is that pragmatics is first and foremost the study of the output of the language user (Thomas 1998 ;O'Keefe et al. 2011; LoCastro 2013).

More specifically, pragmatics is concerned with how speakers and hearers produce and interpret utterances contextually. Yule (1996) observes that "this type of study necessarily involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said."(p.3). As such, pragmatics encapsulates what is communicated verbally as well as what is hinted at, implied or communicated non-verbally. People are not always direct and explicit when they speak, and they do not always say exactly what they mean. Sometimes the hearer must make inferences based on the speaker's input and the context in which it is said in order to arrive at the intended meaning. In that

sense, pragmatics is "the study of how more gets communicated than what is said" (Yule 1996, p. 3).

Any pragmatic analysis of language use has to take into account variables such as power, distance, solidarity, formality and gender, which often significantly affect what linguistic forms speakers use. Cameron (2001) adds that "[…]*pragmatics* is a field of enquiry that deals with how language can be used to do things and mean things in real-world situations" (p.68). This area of pragmatics deals with speech acts, a term coined by the philosopher of language, J.L. Austin.

Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory emerged at a time when there was a deep dissatisfaction with the structure-focused approach to the study of language. In his seminal work *How to Do things with Words,* Austin (1962) argued against the notion that statements could only contain factual information which had truth value: they could say things about the world that were either true or false and which he termed constatives. Instead, he theorized that language could be used to perform actions in the real world and named these types of sentences performative utterances. For example, statements like "you're fired" and "I hereby name this ship the Queen Elizabeth" (Wardhaugh 2010) change something about the real world and thereby qualify as performative utterances. Another example of a performative utterance would be declarations of intent to divorce in Muslim societies; by saying 'you are (hereby) divorced' three times, the couple is actually divorced in real life. On another note, in order for an utterance to count as a performative, it must meet certain conditions that Austin (1962) terms felicity conditions. Levinson (1983) and Wardhaugh (2010) outline them as follows. First, there has to be a conventional procedure that specifies who does what and in what

circumstances; second, the interactants have to properly carry out the procedure to completion, and finally, the speakers have to have the intention to perform the act for it to have any force.

Searle (1969) analyzes three levels of speech acts: the locutionary act, the illocutionary act/force, and the perlocutionary act. The locutionary act is the utterance itself, or as Mey (2001) notes, "the activity we engage in when we say something" (p.95). Whereas the illocutionary act/force is the intended force that is associated with the utterance (be it a promise, an offer, a request). The perlocutionary act is the effect that the locutionary act has on the speaker. For example, if by uttering the statement 'it's hot in here', the listener gets up to open the door, he or she has understood that the utterance has the illocutionary force of a request (the perlocution) and acted accordingly. Speech acts, however, are almost always associated with illocutionary acts such that the latter are always referred to as speech acts.

Another of Searle's (1969) contributions to speech act theory is the taxonomy he proposed as a better substitute for Austin's (1962). Searle classified speech acts into five categories: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. Representatives get the speaker to commit to the truth of an utterance (stating, asserting). Directives are acts that get the hearer to do something for the speaker (like commands and requests). Commissives get the speaker to do something for the hearer (promise, threat). Expressives express the speaker's psychological state (thanking, apologizing..), and declaratives are acts that carry the weight of institutional authority (for instance, declaring war).

Searle also distinguished between direct and indirect speech acts. Direct speech acts are usually expressed explicitly whereas indirect speech acts are hedged and mitigated. In

this regard, Searle (1991) thought that "[i]n indirect speech acts, the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information…" (p.28). The speaker intends for the hearer to infer the message contained in the illocution. Very often people issue directives indirectly to lessen imposition and to be polite. According to Saddock (2004), in the case of directives like requests, "the direct imposition can be ameliorated by avoiding a direct demand and instead asking whether the addressee is willing to or capable of carrying out the act" (p. 71). In other words, directness of the speech act can be softened by either avoiding the act altogether or using certain linguistic devices. Indirect speech acts can pose a problem for interpretation. For instance, statements like 'it's cold in here' could be interpreted as a request to close the window. This problem is usually termed the problem of form and function, where the grammatical form of an utterance is incongruent with the function it is supposed to serve. As O'Keefe et al. (2011) observe, "… pragmatics does not assume a one-to-one relationship between language form and utterance function…" (p.2).

~~Brown and Levinson (1987):~~ Politeness ~~and Face-work~~

When we speak of politeness, it is usually associated with the layman's understanding of it as respectful, deferential behavior. However, politeness as a pragmatic concept is slightly different than what people understand it to be i.e. – opening the door for someone, or standing up when a superior enters a room. Linguistic politeness, Cutting (2006) observes, consists of "the choices that are made in language use, the linguistic expressions that give people space and show a friendly attitude to them" (p. 45). Scholars have acknowledged the difference between laypeople's understanding of politeness and politeness

as a technical concept. As such, the notions of first-order politeness and second-order politeness were introduced in Watts (2003). First-order politeness or Politeness1 as it is more formally called is the regular, everyday conception of politeness in the sense of consideration for others. On the other hand, second-order politeness, Politeness2 in the technical sense, is the theoretical conception of politeness commonly used in the theoretical literature, i.e. in Brown and Levinson's account, for instance. According to Locher and Watts (2005) as well as Terkourafi (2012), this distinction was put forward because "lay references to politeness, i.e. forms of verbal behavior that non-linguists would commonly label 'polite', 'courteous', 'refined' , 'polished', etc. , rarely corresponded to definitions of politeness in the canonical literature…" (p.15). In other words, such distinctions were needed in order to avoid a mismatch between popular perceptions of polite behavior and what scholars in the field were theorizing about.

The study of politeness has a long history and a vastly growing literature of theoretical as well as empirical research on various aspects of linguistic and non-linguistic politeness that find a home in the newly established Journal of Politeness Research. Beginning in the early 70s, Lakoff (1973) was the first to postulate a politeness principle that comprised two short maxims: 1- make yourself clear (equivalent to Grice's manner maxim) 2- be polite. She also formulated her rules of politeness that can be summarized as thus: 1- do not impose 2- give the addressee options 3- assume equality between oneself and the addressee (make him or her feel good). The development of the field hit a milestone in 1978 when Brown and Levinson (henceforth to be referred to as B&L) published the first edition of *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*, where they developed an account of politeness as a conflict-avoidance strategy , described by Fraser (1990) as a face-saving view

of politeness. ~~Since this theory is one of the most influential theories of politeness, having inspired a great deal of empirical, cross-cultural research on speech acts, it will be adopted as the analytical framework in this study.~~

Brown and Levinson (1987) based their theory on a model person who is thought to be a rational actor. They borrowed Goffman's (1967) concept of Face, which he defined as "the positive social value a person claims for himself… [f]ace is an image of self, delineated in terms of approved social attributes…" (p.5). In other words, face is the image one has of oneself that one presents to others that could be enhanced, kept or lost during a social encounter.

Preservation of face is a major goal for participants in any interaction. B & L (1987) identified two types of face: positive face and negative face. Positive face is the individual's desire to be admired and approved of whereas negative face is their desire to be independent and free from imposition. They contend that all interactants in a social encounter work to maintain each other's face; however, some acts are inherently face-threatening (FTAs). What's more, B & L (1987) have classified the FTAs into acts that threaten the speaker's positive and negative face and those that threaten the hearer's positive and negative face. To lessen the impact of the FTA and avoid the loss of face, speakers have a set of strategies from which to choose that Brown and Levinson (1987) outline as follows.

The speaker may proceed in any number of ways. First of all, he or she may avoid the FTA altogether. Second, if the speaker chooses to do the FTA, he or she may perform the act on record or off record; the former may be performed baldly, without redressive action – i.e. directly and without mitigation, and it may be performed with redressive action – i.e indirectly or using mitigating devices. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), there are

two types of redressive action: positive politeness and negative politeness. Positive politeness is related to the hearer's positive face and ensures that the speaker attends to the hearer's positive face wants. Negative politeness, on the other hand, is related to the hearer's negative face where the speaker attends to the hearer's negative face wants. In this regard, the speaker avoids acts that threaten or impose upon the addressee's desire not to be impeded.

B&L (1987) postulate that speakers select their strategies in accordance with three sociological variables: social distance between S and H, relative power of S and H, and the rank of imposition. The social distance between speaker and hearer depends on the relationship between the two be it formal or informal. The power variable describes an asymmetrical relationship between S and H that depends on their status. Lastly, the rank of imposition is a cultural variable that describes how an act is seen to "interfere with an agent's wants of self-determination or of approval" (Brown and Levinson 1987, p.77). Essentially, this variable simply conveys the weightiness of the FTA.

Despite its influential status in the field of politeness studies, B&L's model has not gone unchallenged. A good deal of criticism has been leveled at their claim to universal applicability of their politeness model, particularly from researchers in Asia. Scholars like Hill, Ide, Ikuta, Kawasaki and Ogino (1986), working on politeness in Japanese, have introduced the concepts of 'Wakimae' or Discernment and Volition. Discernment is when Japanese people tend to follow their society's prescribed norms of politeness without being very creative in their language use. On the other hand, volition depends more on speaker agency "resulting in politeness strategies chosen on the basis of individual speakers' views, rather than macro sociocultural factors" (LoCastro, 2012, p.145).

Additionally, Brown and Levinson's model was criticized for being too western-centric, emphasizing values of autonomy and individualism, whereas Asian cultures are collectivist in nature and value group solidarity. Their model has also been criticized for focusing exclusively on the speech act utterance. In fact, newer approaches to politeness (discussed in the next section) argue this point precisely. Watts (2003) notes that utterances in and of themselves do not have an intrinsic politeness value; rather, politeness is a judgment that people arrive at in dynamic conversation. In his words, " Brown and Levinson's model retains the dyadic structure of speaker-hearer utterances so common to speech act theory without considering the wider implications of the rest of the verbal interaction or even some of the significant aspects of the local context of discourse production" (Watts 2003, p. 97). Additionally, B&L's theory is considered by many researchers to be more of a theory of face-work than of politeness per se. However, it must be noted that despite all these criticisms leveled at Brown and Levinson's approach, theirs remains the predominant, as-yet uncontested theory of politeness. My approach to politeness in this study is definitely grounded in their approach. ~~(1987)~~

Even though Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness has had considerable influence since it was published, more recent approaches to the study of linguistic politeness have emerged since then that decidedly break away from what pragmaticists like Mey (2001) as well as LoCastro (2012) have called the traditional Gricean theories of politeness. By this is meant theories that base or expand their politeness maxims on the Gricean maxims. Moreover, the establishment of a Linguistic Politeness Research Group testifies to the popularity of the field and the surge of interest in politeness research, especially research that takes as its theoretical focal point these newer approaches.

Watts and Locher (2005) proposed a discursive – relational approach to politeness theorizing. According to the LPRG, the discursive or post-modern approach to politeness focuses on "what the language used means to the participants, including both speaker and hearer, whether the participants themselves classify the utterances as polite or impolite, how they come to make those judgments and what information and cues inform those decisions […]" (LPRG,2011, p.5). In this new theoretical perspective, articulated in the work of Watts (2003), Locher and Watts (2006), Mills (2011) and Terkourafi (2005), the concepts of face and politeness are achieved, maintained and negotiated within an interaction. As such, within this framework, Mills (2011) observes that "[r]ather than face being assigned to interactants, face is a constantly negotiated process" (p.39). Moreover, these scholars argue that politeness is not necessarily inherent in utterances, as Brown and Levinson (1987) contend; rather, they focus on how politeness and impoliteness are "jointly achieved" (Mills 2011, p.42).

Spencer-Oatey (2005, 2008) proposed another alternative approach to the study of politeness: the rapport management approach. Unlike Brown and Levinson's (1987) conception of politeness as the strategic use of language to avoid interpersonal conflict, the rapport management theory is concerned with maintaining rapport and harmony within social interaction. To this end, Spencer-Oatey (2008) redefines the scope of face management as rapport management which is interested in examining " the way that language is used to construct, maintain and/or threaten social relationships but,[….] it also includes the management of sociality rights and interactional goals" (p.12). One criticism of the concept of face, she noted, was that it was too narrow, focusing only on the self, whereas

the rapport management approach suggested a "greater balance between self and other" (p. 12).

Communication Styles Across Cultures

Politeness is usually explored through the lens of culture. As politeness norms differ across cultures, so do communication styles. Theodoropoulou (2015) defines communicative style as: "the choice of linguistic, paralinguistic and discursive resources with which we manage our everyday life, translating into negotiating ours and others' social identities, achieving our goals, sharing our ideas, problems and thoughts, and eventually constructing social meaning" (p. 13).In other words, it is the means by which individuals express themselves and which vary significantly from culture to culture. Theodoropoulou (2015) observes that communicative style consists of "… the resources available to speakers, which can be (socio)linguistic, including specific features, (lexico-grammatical and phonological systems) or whole dialects and speech varieties imbued with potential for social meaning, and communicative competence, namely linguistic awareness of social rules and norms of speaking" (p. 13).

Nelson et al. (2002) define the concept using the definition proposed by Gudykunst and Toomey (1988) as " the meta-message that contextualizes how individuals should accept and interpret a verbal message" (p.40).

Cultural values play a significant role in determining the politeness of utterances and in avoiding miscommunication in intercultural encounters. Several frameworks have been proposed in the literature to explain cross-cultural communication differences. Perhaps the best known of these frameworks is the one proposed by Hall that distinguishes between low and high context cultures (Nelson et al., 2002). In low-context cultures, messages are usually

communicated indirectly; speakers prefer vague and implicit language use. On the other hand, high-context cultures are those that value clear and direct communication; speakers unambiguously and explicitly express their wants and needs.

Other frameworks proposed dimensions along which different cultures could be classified. Among these dimensions are the values of individualism and collectivism, power and distance, masculinity vs femininity, and reduction of uncertainty (implicitness vs explicitness) developed in the work of Hofstede. According to House (2006), most cultures surveyed in the literature were classified into the collectivist/individualist dimension. Collectivist cultures tend to value the group over the individual whereas individualist cultures value autonomy and independence. The former also tend to prefer high-context communication styles as opposed to their individualist counterparts.

House (2006) put forward her own dimensions of communicative preferences across cultures; these consisted of five categories: directness and indirectness, orientation towards self or towards the other, orientation towards content and orientation towards addressee, explicitness/implicitness as well as ad-hoc formulation and verbal routines. In her study of the communication styles of German and English speakers, She found that Germans were perceived to be "more direct, explicit and verbose, more self-referenced and content-oriented..." than their English counterparts (p.251). The Anglophone speakers found the Germans excessively direct, which caused the Americans to perceive the Germans to be unfriendly. Different communicative styles then prove to be cause for cultural misunderstandings.

Literature on the communicative preferences of Arabic speakers is quite scarce. Only a few research studies tackled Arabic communicative styles: Zaharna (1995) in the context of

public relations and marketing, and Feghali (1997) who conducted a review of the literature available at the time. They found that speakers of Arabic tended to be indirect and vague, preferring elaborateness to conciseness. Feghali (1997) notes that Arabic communicative style is characterized by " repetition, indirectness, elaborateness, and effectiveness" (p. 357). However, more recent research into Arab communication style has emerged possibly due to the realization of the importance of intercultural communication in a globalized world. One such work is a critical review by Davies and Bentahila (2012) that compared Arabic and English communication styles. Their observations confirmed earlier findings but cautioned against making sweeping generalizations about culture that could serve to reinforce stereotypes.

Very recently, Raddawi (2015) published an edited volume entitled *Intercultural Communication with Arabs*: *Studies in Educational, Professional and Societal Contexts* in an attempt to fill a gap on Arab communication styles and to provide empirical data where before research was supplemented with anecdotes and personal observations. Theodoropoulou (2015) investigated the similarities and differences in communication styles between Greeks and Qataris. Her findings largely supported those of Zaharna (1995) and Feghali (1997) with regard to the Arab proclivity for directness, but she also found plenty of similarities between the two cultures, indicating that cultural differences may not always lead to clashes.

The Speech Act of Requesting

This section reviews research literature on the speech act of request and the variations in performing this act as well as differences in directness levels across cultures. To begin with, requests are one of the most common communicative acts in everyday life that occur in

most types of social interaction. A request may be defined as an utterance in which a speaker asks the hearer to perform an action that is usually for the speaker's benefit and at a cost to the hearer. In Searle's taxonomy of illocutionary acts, requests are categorized as directives. Brown and Levinson (1987) classify requests as "acts that predicate some future act A of H, and in so doing put some pressure on H to do (or refrain from doing) the act A" (p.65). Requests are very similar to orders and are sometimes indistinguishable from them. Leech (2014) observes that requests give people the option to comply or not. The opposite is true in the case of orders and commands. Being a face-threatening act, requests threaten both speaker's and hearer's face; however, the speaker's face is particularly compromised in the event of a refusal.

Requests are one type of speech acts that have been studied extensively in the western literature. One of the earliest and most wide-ranging, although somewhat dated, studies of speech acts, and a landmark study in the growing field of cross-cultural pragmatics, is Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984)'s Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns project (CCSARP). The project aimed to compare the realization patterns of two speech acts, namely requests and apologies across eight different languages. The authors administered a written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) to around 400 subjects for each language. However, before administering the instrument, the DCT was pilot-tested on a group of fifty native English Speakers at Hebrew University to check for comprehensibility of the situation prompts, and the version that underwent changes from this initial pilot study was given to an additional 35 native English speakers. Theirs was the final version of the DCT that was administered in the study.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) designed a coding scheme in order to analyze the data obtained from the DCT for each speech act elicited. The utterance sequence containing a request was broken down into its component parts: the address term, the head act, and the adjunct to the head act. Another level of analysis included a classification scheme for strategy types. First, they classified requests into three levels of directness: direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect. These strategies were later subdivided into 9 sub-strategies that form an indirectness scale. A final dimension of analysis was added that included internal and external modifications (syntactic downgraders, lexical downgraders, etc.). These examined the structure of the request, including pre-request sequences and supportive moves.

The literature on speech acts in the western world is quite extensive, with requests and apologies being the most widely studied. The CCSARP project spawned a large number of research projects investigating the production of requests in different cultures, among them Spanish (Garcia, 1993: Cenoz & Valencia, 1996), Turkish (Marti, 2006), Iranian Turkish (Tabar & Malek, 2012), Persian (Salmani-Nodoushan, 2008, Jalilifar 2009), English and Saudi Arabic (Tawalbeh &Al-Okaily, 2012), Hebrew and English (Blum-Kulka 1987, Blum-kulka and Olshtain 1989), Chinese (Cheng-Lee, 2011, Wei 2012). In one study on interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics, Cenoz and Valencia (1996) examined the requesting strategies of European and American native and non-native speakers of English and Spanish respectively. Data was collected through a DCT that was administered to a sample of 106 university students of various nationalities: 78 Europeans and 29 Americans. Findings indicated that American native speakers of English used more direct than conventionally indirect strategies as well as fewer mitigating supportives than their European

counterparts did for both English and Spanish. However, in the case of the Spanish speakers, the non-natives tended to use fewer conventionally indirect strategies and mitigating supportives than the native speakers.

Similarly, Wei (2012) studied the realization patterns of requests in Chinese and English. The researcher administered an oral discourse completion task (ODCT) to groups of English and Chinese native speakers 18-19 years of age. Results showed that both groups did not differ significantly in terms of the use of direct and indirect strategies; however, they differed in their use of internal and external modifications.

Studies dealing with pragmatics in the Arab world are quite scarce and only recently has there been interest in conducting pragmatic analyses of language use. Wierzbicka (2003) noted that pragmatics research suffers from ethnocentricity, with the bulk of the research focusing on Western cultures. As such, the existing literature reports only on the linguistic and politeness norms of English speakers. Research into studies of request strategies even more so, particularly studies that tackle the topic in a cross-cultural context. The emerging literature examines politeness in the different dialects of Arabic. For example, Manasrah and Delaimy (2008) examined the use of politeness strategies in making requests in Jordanian Arabic. They administered a 10-item discourse completion task to a sample of 30 university students, 15 males and 15 females. Examining the role of power, social distance, imposition and gender on participants' choice of requesting strategies, the researchers found that as power, distance and imposition increased, respondents used more politeness strategies to mitigate illocutionary force. Speakers resorted to indirectness when addressing a hearer of higher status and to being direct when speakers were of lower status. Gender was found not to have significantly affected selection of politeness strategies.

Al-Fattah and Ravindranath (2009) conducted a study on the politeness strategies in requests made by Yemeni EFL learners. They administered a written DCT to 314 subjects at two Yemeni universities. Their findings showed that participants preferred to use conventionally indirect strategies with the query preparatory move being the most preferred (71.8%) followed by want statements, mood derivables, declarative conditional clauses, hedged performatives, suggestive formulas and existential questions. Status was an important factor that influenced subjects' choice of strategy; high status between speaker and hearer indicated that speakers should be more indirect and thus more polite.

Alaoui (2011) conducted a comparative analysis of the expression of politeness in offers, thanks and requests in Moroccan Arabic and English. She found that for both languages, in all speech acts concerned, speakers and hearers tended to avoid threatening each other's face. Additionally, use of direct and indirect strategies depended largely on cultural preferences. She concluded that speakers of Moroccan Arabic tended to use more politeness markers, terms of address and lexical downgraders whereas speakers of English tended to use modals and syntactic downgraders. While the study does provide interesting insights into sociopragmatic norms of English and Moroccan Arabic, data based on anecdotal evidence does not suffice to make accurate generalizations about the speech patterns of these two distinct groups.

In a different context, Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily (2012) investigated the requesting strategies of native Saudi Arabic speakers and native American English speakers. They found that use of conventionally indirect strategies was prevalent among both the Saudi and American groups. However, the American English speakers tended to use direct strategies in

encounters where there was minimal social distance whereas the Saudis were more direct in situations that involved speakers of higher status addressing their subordinates.

More recently, Abuarrah et al. (2013) investigated the production of requests in British English (BE) and Palestinian Arabic (PA). Using a 9-item discourse completion task, the study aimed to examine the variables of status, distance and imposition on the expression of requests in both languages. The researchers found that the two languages differed significantly in their use of directness, with Palestinian Arabic being more direct than British English. Status, distance and imposition influenced both languages in similar ways: higher status speakers were more direct, indirectness was preferred when communicating with unfamiliar addressees and when situations were perceived to be imposing. The researchers ascribed these differences to cultural variation: speakers of PA use more positive politeness oriented strategies due to the collectivist nature of Arab society valuing group solidarity over individualism. Speakers of BE use more negative-politeness oriented strategies due to the individualistic nature of western society valuing autonomy over group solidarity.

On the other hand, current studies have begun to supplement the DCT with other rating scales or ethnographic data or move away from the use of the DCT entirely as a research instrument and to opt for more authentic sequences of discourse. For instance, Luca D'Anna (2014) examined codes of verbal politeness in Maghrebi- Arabic dialects using a corpus of data collected ethnographically. Findings showed that, similar to what Alaoui (2011), Tawalbeh and Al-Okaily (2012), Abu-Arrah et al. (2013) reported, speakers of Maghrebi Arabic relied heavily on strategies of positive politeness that allowed them to maintain and solidify social bonds. Redressive strategies also included using

formulaic/routinized language, especially religious terms like ‘allah ykhallik’, ‘allah yibarik fik’, and the like.

Examining strategies for requesting within the Jordanian context, Al-Natour et al. (2015) used a DCT as well as a rating scale. Their findings show that speakers demonstrated a remarkable preference for conventionally indirect strategies, which supports Blum-Kulka & Olshtain’s (1989) claim that these categories are universally valid, given all the studies reviewed here so far. On the other hand, Al-Shawesh & Hussin (2015), within the Malaysian context, using data collected through observation, report contradictory findings. Their results show that participants largely preferred directness over conventional indirectness. This finding can be explained by the fact that the student participants were addressing an employee, someone who is on the same level of social distance which justifies the use of directness.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose and Context of the study

The present study examined the politeness strategies employed in making requests by native speakers of Arabic and learners of English. More specifically, the study aimed at investigating the impact of gender and interlocutor status on the speakers' choice of strategy. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1984) define a request strategy as "the choice of a level of directness by which a request is realized" (p.278). That is, request strategies are linguistic resources available to speakers from which to select appropriate ways to formulate a request. Directness is defined as "the degree to which the speaker's illocutionary intent is apparent from the locution" (Olshtain and Blum-Kulka, 1984, p.278) – i.e. how explicit the utterance is. A request is a communicative act by which the speaker can ask something of the hearer, and according to the CCSARP scheme, it can be formulated in 3 levels of directness: direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect. Direct requests are the most explicit type of request, usually realized in the imperative form. Conventionally indirect requests are defined as requests that are conventionalized in the language, particularly those that ask for ability, possibility or willingness to perform the act, usually through indirect speech acts. Finally, non-conventionally indirect requests, consisting of strong and mild hints, are those that refer directly or not at all to the act being performed.

The study set out to answer the following research questions:

1- What are the politeness strategies employed in the formulation of a request in Lebanese Arabic and English?
2- How does gender affect the choice of strategy?
3- How does the interlocutor's status affect the choice of strategy?

Participants

Data collection for the study took place on the Beirut campus of the Lebanese American University, one of the top English medium universities in Lebanon. 137 participants in eight sections of English 202 aged 18-24 took part in the study. As such, 137 DCTs were filled out but only 51 were returned that met the inclusion criteria. The low response rate could be explained by the fact that students at most Lebanese or even Arab universities in general tend to adopt apathetic attitudes towards researchers and the research process in general. Such attitudes do not facilitate the process of data collection. However, in my case, after having administered the DCT in the pilot and faced no serious problems with response rates, the issue with response rates for the official study was unforeseen and thus completely unavoidable.

Incomplete responses, responses that showed a misunderstanding of the task as well as responses where subjects wrote explicitly what they would do (I would ask…) (reported requests) instead of providing the required request form were discarded from the dataset and excluded from analysis. The subjects were all native speakers of Arabic and fluent, non-native speakers of English. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses; DCTs were handed out and returned in sealed envelopes. The questionnaires were filled out in the absence of the instructors. English 202 is a writing course required of

all LAU students. It was chosen because it was most similar to the English 203 course offered by the communication skills program at AUB. Moreover, it was important to have a homogenous group of participants who were similar in age and English proficiency levels, factors that might have affected the study's results. Before administering the DCT, the researcher sought and obtained oral consent from the participants (see Appendix I for instrument and consent form).

Instrument and Procedure

A written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was administered in eight different, randomly chosen, sections of English 202 classes during the Fall 2014 semester at LAU Beirut campus. For the purposes of this study, the researcher wrote a version of the DCT that included a set of context-rich situations designed to elicit elaborate, more realistic responses from the participants. As Golato (2003) noted, the inadequacy of the situation prompts in the DCT is one of the many limitations of the instrument. Billmyer and Varghese (2000) also stated that writing more context-enriched prompts was one way to improve the instrument. Some examples of context-enriched prompts from my own DCT include:

> You're working on a term paper for your Literature class. The paper is due in two days, and you haven't finished writing it. This is the first time you've been late with an assignment. You know your professor doesn't accept late papers, but you would like to ask him in person for an urgent extension. What would you say?
>
> You're trying to study in your dorm room, but you can't concentrate because you hear loud music coming from the room next door. You don't know the person who lives in that room. You want to ask that person to turn the music down. What

would you say?

Detailed prompts allow for the inclusion of sufficient "social and situational information […], background of the event, information on the role relationship between the subject and the imaginary interlocutor, the frequency of their interaction, and details related to context and setting" (Billmyer and Varghese, 2000, p. 519). These enhancements to the DCT allow the subjects to produce responses that are realistic and elaborate and represent a good approximation of spoken discourse.

Prior to administering the DCT to the sample of students, the instrument was pilot tested on a smaller sample of about 60 students in randomly chosen English 202 classes during the second Summer module. Students were asked to tell the researcher out loud about any problems they faced when filling out the DCT. This exercise allowed the students to reflect on any difficulties they faced in the process of responding to the task at hand and on any problems with the instrument itself. Based on feedback from the pilot, the DCT was revised and officially administered to the participating sample. Students who participated in the pilot study were excluded from the actual study.

The post-pilot phase resulted in a six-item DCT eliciting requests in various social situations. The six items consisted of scenarios that were drawn from real life in order to make them more relatable to the participants; they include: asking for an extension on a paper, asking for help with a research paper, asking a fellow dorm resident to turn down the music, asking to borrow a CD from a friend, asking a neighbor to fix a leaking A/C, and asking a stranger for directions. During the initial pilot stage, participants complained that the previous 10-item DCT was too long as they were required to respond in both English and

Lebanese Arabic, and it was revised on this basis. In addition, the prompts were designed to account for relationships between speakers and hearers: the variables that were examined were gender of the hearer as well as social status. Situations varied where the speaker was in a position of power and at a considerable social distance from the hearer and vice versa.

As an easy to use, open-ended, role-play type questionnaire, the DCT is a popular and widely used instrument in pragmatics research. Originally devised by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) for their Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns Project (CCSARP), the DCT consists of a set of situations meant to elicit a specific speech act that the respondent would have to fill in. The DCT has been praised for its ease of use and ability to easily capture cross-cultural variability (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984). O'Keefe et al. (2011) argue that DCTs are attractive for researchers because of their "discreteness" (p.22), that is, the researcher is able to control what utterances to elicit as well as the context of use. However, they also observe that "while DCTs are a time efficient instrument, they may not be the best way to obtain authentic data because subjects are writing, not speaking and have the opportunity to contemplate and change their responses..." (p.25). Elicitation tasks like the DCT have been criticized in the literature because the data they elicit is not authentic; however, the DCT is especially useful for capturing some speech acts that do not occur very often naturally.

Comparisons have been made between questionnaire and DCT data with data obtained by the use of ethnographic methods (see Kasper and Dahl, 1991; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1993; Billmyer &Varghese, 2000; Rose, 1992; Rose, 1994; Golato 2003; Felix-Brasdefer 2005, 2007, 2010; Parvaresh & Tavakoli 2009 among others). Researchers have found that there were significant differences between data collected using questionnaires and

that collected naturally. Generally speaking, questionnaire data involve fewer conversational turns, less negotiation, less repetition and overall less interaction than ethnographic data. However, despite these limitations, scholars, such as Yuan (2001) and Beebe and Cummings (2006), have continued to support the use of the DCT, citing its usefulness in collecting large amounts of data in short periods of time, its ability to provide researchers with insight into learners' sociopragmatic knowledge as well as the ease with which responses are tabulated and scored.

Coding and Data Analysis

Reponses from the DCT were coded using the manual provided by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1989). First, the head act, the sequence containing the request itself, is isolated. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1989) recommend disregarding the pre- and post-request sequences which they term alerters and supportive moves in order to focus the analysis on the request act itself. They define an alerter as the opening element that prefaces the request and a supportive move as a "unit external to the request, which modifies its impact by either aggravating or mitigating its force" (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1989, p. 276).

DCT responses resulted in 593 instances of request forms in both English and Lebanese Arabic. The data were coded using the coding scheme developed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) for their Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) and then tabulated before being subjected to statistical analysis. The basic unit of analysis is the head act, which is the utterance containing the request itself. On the directness scale, requests were classified according to three levels of directness: direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect. Arabic responses will be transliterated in Arabizi. (See

Appendix II for a transcription guide). Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) subdivide these levels into 9 directness strategy types that are outlined in the following table:

Table 1: Strategy types classification scheme

Strategy types – Blum-Kulka & Olshtain's (1989) classification scheme
Direct
Mood derivable
Explicit Performative
Hedged Performative
Want Statement
Conventionally Indirect
Locution Derivable
Suggestory Formulae
Preparatory
Non-conventionally Indirect
Strong Hints
Mild hints

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1989) group the strategies into a scale of directness ranging from most direct to least direct.

The first three strategy types (mood derivable, explicit performative and hedged performative) are the most direct means of expressing a request. Locution derivables, want statements, suggestory formulae and the preparatory strategies belong to the conventionally indirect group of strategies. The non-conventionally indirect category consists of the strong and mild hints. Each strategy is mutually exclusive and can occur only once per request sequence in both languages.

Mood derivables are grammatically marked as request utterances and typically stated in imperative form (examples drawn from the dataset):

1- English: *Hey neighbor, your A/C is leaking water over the laundry, so please find a solution ASAP.*

2- Lebanese: *Bonjour, A/C te3ak 3am yna2et may 3a 8asilate´so please shufe´shu baddek ta3mle´ "Good morning, your A/C is leaking water all over my laundry, so please see what you can do about it"*

In both utterances, speakers addressed an interlocutor they were unfamiliar with, in this situation a neighbor, asking her to fix a problem with the A/C. The question is blunt, and appears to be more of a command than a request. Except for the use of the politeness marker 'please', no attempt is made to redress the illocutionary force of the request.

Explicit performatives, as the name suggests, explicitly indicate the illocutionary intent by means of the performative verb, usually 'to ask'.

1- English: *Hello, I'm your neighbor and I came to ask you if you please can fix your A/C or move it to another place because it is leaking water over my laundry that makes me wash them twice and waste my time*.

2- Lebanese: *mar7aba, ana sekna 7adik w 3am edros lal emti7anet w betlob mennik enu twati sot l music please ta e2dar rakiz.*

In the first example, using the same laundry situation, the speaker addresses his interlocutor in a manner that is less direct than was warranted by the use of a mood derivable strategy, he/she uses the performative verb 'to ask' which makes the illocutionary intent very clear;

however, the force of the request is mitigated by using the conditional as well as the politeness marker ‘please’.

Hedged performatives also indicate illocutionary intent by means of using the performative along with modal verbs (could/would) which act as mitigators.

1- English: *Hello professor, I would like to ask you if there is any chance for postponing the deadline, because I still have a lot to write*.

2- Lebanese: *Istez, bas bade´is2alak iza fiye ajil tisleem l war2a cz (because) t2akharet fiya w ba3ed fi kteer ishya mesh ketiba.*

Then we have the hedged performatives. In both of these utterances, the request is still direct but the speaker employs hedging strategies (I would like to ask you, if there is any chance – bas bade´is2alak iza fiye..) in order to lessen the imposition of the request and to make it appear more polite.

Locution derivables are utterances where, also as the name suggests, the illocutionary intent is apparent from the meaning of the locution.

English: I am overloaded and I wasn’t able to finish on time.

Interestingly, this strategy does not occur at all in the Arabic data. Locution derivables require the hearer to make inferences about the speaker’s intent, as in the example above.

In want statements, the speaker expresses his desire for the hearer to do something.

1- English: *Dr. X, I was doing this paper and I found your article. It is very Interesting, but I couldn’t find the full text online. I would love to have a copy since I think it’s the best article for my paper.*

2- Lebanese: *Hi miss, please badde´wa2et aktar 3al war2a kirmal 3alemte´bil*

course ma tenzal cuz (because) ba3da ma kholsit.

Suggestory formulae are strategy types that include the hearer's perspective and where the request is formulated as a suggestion:

1- English: *Hey, your A/C is leaking on my laundry. What can we do about it*?

2- Lebanese: *l' A/C 3am b na2it 3al 8assil. Kif fina nsali7 l mawdou3?*

Illocutionary force is softened by phrasing the request as a suggestion, making it sound less like a command and more of a polite way to get the neighbor to take care of the situation at hand.

Preparatory strategies are the most frequent strategy types in both languages. This is a strategy where the speaker asks about the hearer's ability or willingness to do something for the speaker. They are usually expressed with modals (can you/ would you?):

English: *I saw your article online and I found it very interesting and since I am working on a paper, I would like to quote your article. So can you please let me have access to it?*

Lebanese: *3ande´research paper w ana 3am ba3mel research shefet l article te3ak online bas ma 2deret choufo kello. Fi majel tse3edne´w tkhaline´2e2ra?*

Though it should be noted that while the concept of modality is relatively straightforward in English, it is much less so in Arabic. Generally, modals, or modal auxiliaries, are usually lexical (or sometimes morphological) elements that are used to express possibility, likelihood, certainty, or necessity of an action taking place. There are two kinds of modality: epistemic and deontic (Cruse, 2006; Meziani, 1983). Epistemic modality has to do with knowledge – whether the speaker knows something is likely to be the case or not. In English,

the most frequently used epistemic modal is can/could which is used to express ability or willingness. On the other hand, deontic modals have to do with "obligation, permission and prohibition" (Cruse, 2006, p.110).

Modality in Arabic functions somewhat differently. Clive Holes (2004) writes of how modality works in the dialects that " modal meanings of ability, possibility, obligation, wanting, intending, etc., are, as in MSA [Modern Standard Arabic], for the most part carried by main clause verbs and other free standing lexical elements" (p.226). The most frequently used modals in the Arabic dataset were 'fik' (Can you/ Could you – asking for ability or willingness), mumkin / fi majel inno (is it possible for you to..?), badde´otlob (I would like to ask) – badde´(or bidde´) being considered a modal of volition or necessity by Holes (2004). However, it is important to remark that even though some of these Arabic modals are very similar to the ones in English, they are not exact translations and should not be taken as such.

Finally, the two subcategories of non-conventionally indirect strategies are strong and mild hints. However, it has to be noted that the differences between these two subcategories lie in the fact that one subcategory makes partial mention of the intention to make a request (the strong hint) while the other does not (the mild hint).

Strong hints involve an effort on the part of the speaker to infer from the utterance the illocutionary intent, which may be mentioned directly or only partially.

1- English: *Please, sir. I had a lot going on and I would appreciate it if you could help.* (here, the request for an extension is being hinted at very indirectly)

2- Lebanese: *ma te3tal ham! Bjeblak DVD jdeed*. (don't worry! I'll get you a new DVD)

Mild hints are the least frequent strategy used in the data in both languages. Speakers very indirectly hint at what they would like to request from the hearer.

1- English: *Hello, I'm your neighbor downstairs. I just wanted to inform you about the new A/C you installed. It is leaking water all over my balcony.*

2- Lebanese: *Ma ken fiyeh khalso, wallah kteer kenet madghouta.* (I wasn't able to finish it. I swear I was under a lot of stress)

Frequencies and percentages were first calculated for all strategies used by all the respondents. The data were further analyzed according to the two variables examined in the study: gender and interlocutor status. The strategies were then collapsed into the larger categories of direct, conventionally indirect and nonconventionally indirect. Cross-tabulations were constructed for each category by gender and then by status for each language group and descriptive statistics were calculated. Chi-square test for independence was conducted for each of the gender and status variables to determine if they were statistically significant factors.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the small size of the sample does not allow for generalizations about the larger population and limits the representativeness of the data. Additionally, the data is collected from the student population of one institution of higher education so their responses are not indicative of the linguistic behavior of all students at that institution. Another caveat has to do with the weaknesses of the instrument itself. DCT data are essentially self-reported data: respondents provide answers they think they would say in imaginary situations instead of what they would actually say in genuine settings (Locastro, 2006). Moreover, Kasper and Roever (2005) affirm that "all questionnaire types including DCTs probe into offline, self-reporting states of knowledge or beliefs" (p.327). As such, these types of questionnaires add a cognitive burden on the respondent.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of this empirical study, which was conducted for the purpose of examining the politeness strategies employed in the making of requests in English and Lebanese Arabic. Analysis of the results involved tabulating responses from the DCTs, coding and classifying them into the set of strategies proposed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1989) and then calculating the frequencies and percentages of the occurrences of these strategies. Results were first analyzed according to directness and indirectness levels for both the English and Arabic datasets. The strategies were then subdivided into specific categories that were most frequently used by both groups. Finally, the research questions addressing the influence of status and gender on response types were answered and statistical analyses presented. Chi-square tests were run to check whether there were any associations between gender, status and choice of strategy.

Analysis by Direct and Indirect Strategy Type

The first research question asked about what strategies the participants used to make requests in English and Lebanese Arabic. They were first classified into three major categories: Direct, Conventionally Indirect and Non-conventionally indirect strategies, and then were compared across the two language groups. In the English data, it appeared that direct strategies were used 26.68 percent of the time. Conventionally indirect strategies, by far the most frequent type of strategies in both languages, occurred approximately 67.9 percent of the time. Non-conventionally indirect strategies, or hints, occurred least frequently

in the data at 5.4 percent. The Arabic data presented some different trends. Direct strategies occurred 34.8 percent of the time. Conventionally Indirect strategies were the most frequent type of strategy, occurring at 57.3 percent of the time. Finally, non-conventionally indirect strategies occurred at 8.08 percent of the time. It was observed that the two languages seemed to favor indirectness as a politeness strategy.

For example, the following is a request to a professor for a deadline extension.

Sir, I know you don't accept requests to postpone the deadline but I came with a very desperate and stressed reason. During the past couple of weeks I had family matters. Could you… [give me an extension]?

The speaker makes the request very indirectly and tentatively, using a conventionally indirect query preparatory strategy. The request is redressed with an urgent-sounding excuse, beginning with a marker of deference – the professor's title.

Responding to the same situation in Arabic, the same utterance is formulated as follows:

Estez, fina n2ajjel el term paper? Kein 3ande machekel 3ayle w ma la7a2et.

Estez = address term

Fina n2ajjel el term paper = head act

Kein 3ande´machekel 3ayle´w ma la7a2et = supportive move (the reason)

In this instance, the utterance is somewhat more direct despite the use of the query preparatory strategy characterized by using modals. To lessen the illocutionary force, the speaker resorts to what Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1989) term a speaker and hearer-oriented request, where the speaker includes the perspective of the interlocutor. This would appear to be more polite than bluntly saying "fik t2ajel el term paper?". Barely any attempt to redress

the request was made except for the explanation preceding the head act which does not sound as urgent as in the English version.

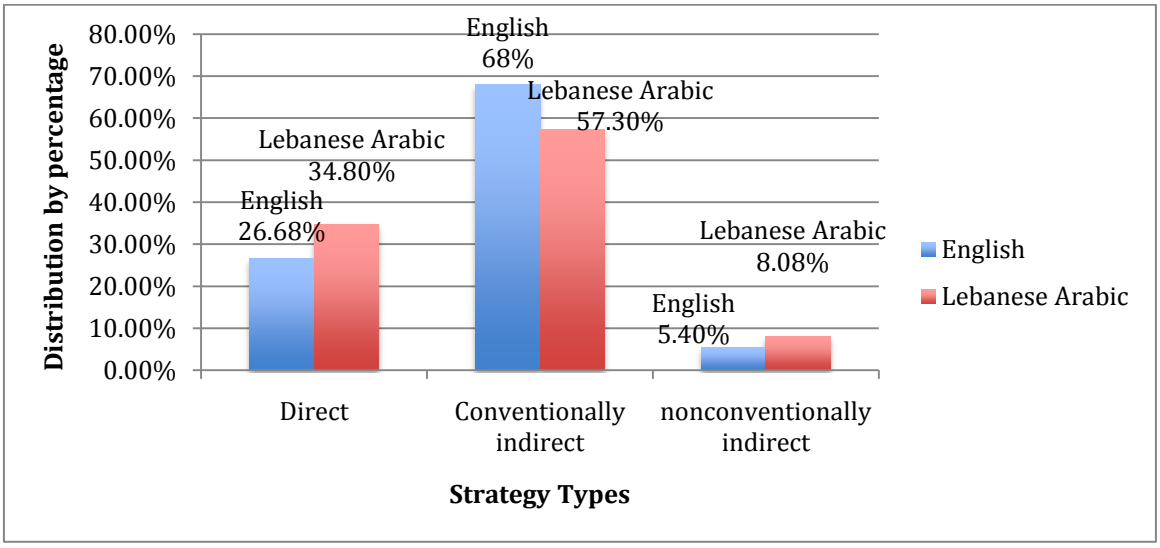

Figure 1: Distribution of Direct and Indirect Strategy types by language group

The graph above illustrates the distribution of direct and indirect strategies in percentages across the two language groups. While it is quite clear that conventionally indirect strategies are predominant, there are very slight differences between the strategies across the two languages, indicating that they share similar pragmalinguistic resources. Generally, direct strategies were primarily used in situations where the interactants were not familiar with or socially distant from one another. For example, in situation 5 where the speaker has to ask a neighbor to fix a leaking A/C:

> *Hey neighbor, your A/C is leaking water over my laundry, so please find a solution ASAP.*

Addressing an interlocutor he does not know, the speaker formulates his request rather bluntly, without any redressive action. Illocutionary force is softened only by the use of the politeness marker 'please'.

Given the same situation, the Arabic response can be presented as follows:

Bonjour, A/C te3ik 3am yna2et may 3a 8asilate´so plz shufe shu badek ta3mle´.

In the same vein as the English response, the speaker (S) addresses an unknown interlocutor so there is a social distance at stake. S is very direct in asking for a solution to the problem, employing only the politeness marker please as redress for the bluntness of the utterance. Interestingly, mixing words from English with the Arabic responses was observed frequently in the questionnaires. Perhaps code-mixing could itself be considered a politeness strategy S uses whenever the utterance appears to be very direct.

On the other hand, conventionally indirect strategies were frequently found in situations where there was a significant social distance between speaker and addressee. For example:

I really couldn't finish the paper. I was sick and also I had a lot of exams. It's the first time I'm late with an assignment. Can you please give me one more day?

The request utterance is fairly elaborate. S is asking a professor, someone who is at a considerable social distance from the hearer, for an extension on a paper. The pre-request sequence consists of a series of excuses that attempt to mitigate the force of the request and to sound more polite. There is strong evidence in the literature linking indirectness to politeness (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1989; Blum-Kulka, 1987; Koc, 2011; Felix-Brasdefer, 2005; Johns & Felix-Brasdefer, 2015).

Analysis by Strategy Type

The following section presents an analysis of the results into the 9 subcategories proposed in Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1989). The distribution of the strategies by percentage across the two languages is presented in the graph below.

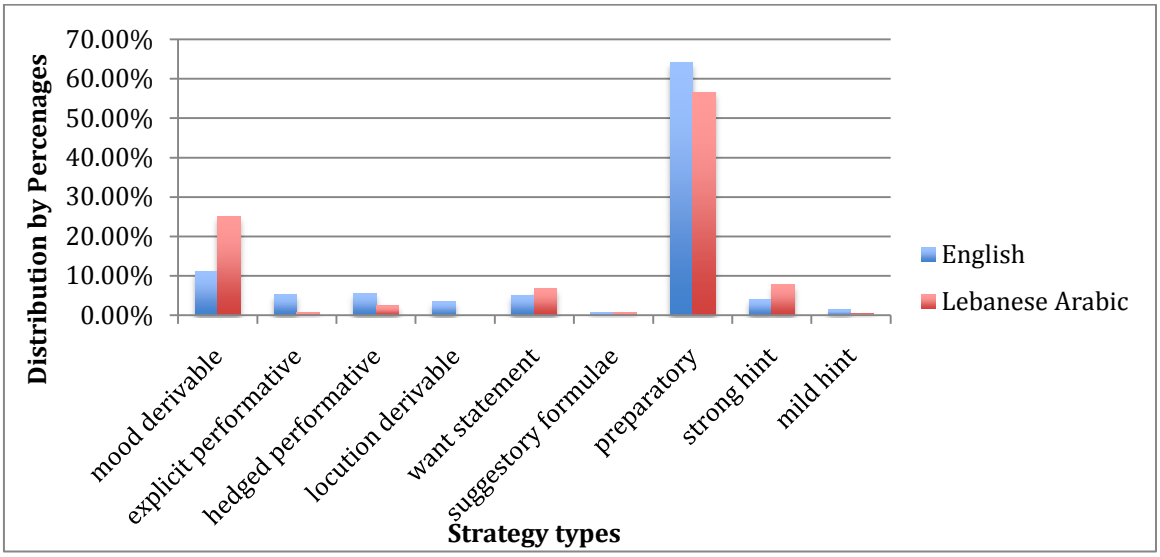

Figure 2: Distribution of strategy types in English and Lebanese Arabic

Strategy	Mood derivables	Explicit performatives	Hedged performatives	Locution derivables	Want statements	Suggestory formulae	Preparatory	Strong hint	Mild Hint
English	11.14%	5.1%	5.4%	3.4%	5.1%	0.68%	64%	4%	1.3%
Lebanese	25%	0.67%	2.36%	0%	6.7%	0.67%	56.56%	7.7%	0.34%

Table 2: Distribution of Strategy types by language group

Figure 2 (as well as Table 2) above displays the distribution of strategy types in English and Lebanese Arabic. Conventionally indirect strategies (query preparatory, strong

and mild hints) are the most frequent strategies in both languages. Query preparatory is the most favored at 63.85 percent in the English data and 56.5 percent in the Arabic data. Surprisingly, mood derivables, which are the most direct way of making a request, are the second most frequent strategy used with 11.14 percent for English and 25 percent for the Arabic responses. Third, and where the two languages differ, hedged performatives appeared at 5.4 percent whereas strong hints (7.7 percent) were favored in Arabic. Want statements appeared at 6.7% for Arabic and 5.1% for English. Suggestory formulae occurred least of all the strategies with 0.68% of the time in English and 0.67% in Arabic. Locution derivables did not occur at all in Arabic and only 3.4% of the time in English. Finally, explicit performatives occurred 5.1% of the time in English and 0.67% of the time in Arabic.

As mentioned earlier, both languages seem to show a marked preference for indirectness. The section that follows presents an analysis of the most common sub-strategies used.

Query Preparatory

Conventionally indirect strategies were the most commonly preferred type, being found in 73% of the requests in English and 63.97 % of the requests in Arabic. They were realized most frequently by means of the query preparatory strategy which contains references to "preparatory conditions (e.g. ability, willingness)…" (Felix-Brasdefer, 2007, p. 70).

A- *Hey person I don't know, I have an exam and I'm trying to study, <u>may you please turn down the music?</u>*

B –*Hi, bukra 3ande´exam w 3am jarreb edros. <u>Fik plz twate´sot l music?</u>*

This type of strategy primarily uses modals like can or could but may or might are used as well, albeit less frequently. Leech (2014) notes that may and might are usually used " to

make the directive relatively muted, depending on the context, but are rather more formal in tone" (p.151). In both utterances, the speaker is inquiring about the possibility of H doing something for S's benefit, and since H is someone socially distant from S, S uses the more formal 'may'. Similarly for the Arabic utterance, the speaker asks about the possibility of H complying, softening the request with the politeness marker 'please'.

Mood Derivables

Surprisingly, the second most frequently used type of strategy belongs to the direct category. Mood derivables are, according to Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1989), typically are very direct and are presented in the imperative form. They occur 11.14% of the time in the English data and approximately 25% of the time in the Arabic data. Illustrating with examples from the dataset:

a- *Please el A/C 3am bina2et may, le2ilo hal.*

b- *Please let me borrow it and I promise to return it tomorrow. And if I do lose it, I'll get you another one.*

In both utterances, the speaker S is addressing an unknown interlocutor, though not a status superior. The utterance in (a) appears to be more of a command than a request; it was formulated without any redressive action, save for the politeness marker 'please' that prefaces the request sequence and which also functions as an alerter that draws the hearer's attention to the problem at hand. Utterance (b), on the other hand, is addressed to an interlocutor who happens to have a close relationship (therefore very little social distance) with the speaker. To ensure the hearer's compliance, S follows up the main request sequence with a supportive move, namely a promise to return the DVD in question.

Studies have shown that mood derivables are not used only with unfamiliar interlocutors or with status inferiors. They are often used between relationship equals and close friends in order to signal in-group solidarity since there is no need to adhere to politeness norms among friends and equals.

Want/ Need Statements

Want/Need statements, or desire statements, belong to direct group of strategies. They are used to express a speaker's desire to have the hearer do something for him/her. They occurred in the data 5.1% of the time in English and 6.7% of the time in Arabic.

a- I really would love to borrow the DVD and I promise I won't lose it. But I understand if you don't want me to borrow it.

b- ktir 7abe´2est3ir l DVD wallah ma 7a day3o. bas befhamak iza ma baddak t3irne´ yeh.

In utterance (a), the speaker expresses a desire to borrow something from H, who happens to be a close friend. The head act is followed by a promise to H not to lose the object being sought. Given that the speaker having previously borrowed something from H and lost it, the request carries an imposition. S recognizes this by saying 'I understand if you don't want me to borrow it'. Similarly, for the Arabic response, S expresses a desire to borrow a DVD from H, followed by an oath (wallah ma 7a day3o [I swear to God I will not lose it]) which serves as an attempt to lessen the imposition and gain H's compliance.

Want/Need statements or desire statements can be realized in other ways. For instance, expressions like 'I'd really like it if you could' or 'I wish you would/could' or even the straightforward 'I want to ask you'.

a) Bonjour, sir. I want to ask you if you can give me a sample of your scholarly

Article if you don't mind since I couldn't get the full access from the library.

Performatives

Performatives occurred somewhat frequently in the dataset. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1989) divide the category into two types: explicit performatives and hedged performatives, both belonging to the direct class of strategies.

Explicit performatives are when "the illocutionary force of the utterance is explicitly named by the speakers" (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 202). These were found 5.1% of the time in English and a rare 0.67% of the time in Arabic. They are usually realized with the expression "I'm asking you" or "I request that you": expressions that make explicit mention of requestive intention.

a- *I have some questions to ask you personally since I don't have full access online.*

b- *Mar7aba, habbet es2alak kam so2al eza mafi ez3aj la2anno el article mano ktir wade7 online.*

Utterance (a) is addressed to a professor, seeking help with finding a library resource, seems fairly direct. No attempt to redress the request is made. In utterance (b), however, the request sequence is prefaced with a greeting and then followed by a supportive move 'eza mafi ez3aj'which serves as a politeness device S uses to play down the imposition of the request as well as the potential cost for H.

Hedged Performatives

Other types of performative that appeared in the data are called hedged performatives. As the name implies, they consist of using the performative ' to ask' modified by a modal verb 'would/could' or the expression 'I'd like to'. These strategies occurred 5.4% of the time in English and 2.36% of the time in Arabic.

a- *I would like to ask you if I can hand you my term paper next week because I had a lot of exams and assignments to do.*

b- *Ken 3endi kteer emti7anet w mas2ooliyet 3layeh l osboo3 l madi f kent 7abeh es2alik eza btesma7ileh a3tiki l term paper ba3d osboo3.*

Utterance (a) is the more direct response, the request sequence only hedged by the use of the modal 'would' and 'like to'. Felix-Brasdefer (2009) notes that hedges can be "used when speakers wish to avoid or soften the precise propositional content of what follows" (p.483). In the preceding utterance, the speaker is asking for a favor that is costly and face-threatening to himself. The request sequence is followed by an explanation as a supportive move. Similarly, in utterance (b) the speaker prefaces his request with a more elaborate explanation followed by the request sequence beginning with the hedging modal "kent 7abeh es2alik", which does not seem particularly appropriate when addressed to a professor.

Hints

Finally, hints were surprisingly frequent in the dataset, particularly in the Arabic responses, occurring about 8% of the time as opposed to only 5.3% of the time in English. Blum-kulka & Olshtain (1989) divide them into two subcategories: strong and mild hints. Hints usually require some inferencing on the part of the speaker. For example:

a- *I promise I'll pay you for it if I lose it.*

b- *Wallah iza dayya3to bredelak 7a22o*.

Both utterances (a) and (b) constitute examples of the strong hint sub-strategy. Both request sequences make no mention of the act of borrowing the DVD in question, so the speaker has to make an effort to interpret the utterance as a request.

Mild hints also require the speaker to make an inference about the illocutionary intent. Reference is usually not made to the requestive intent. According to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1989), mild hints are "utterances that make no references to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable through the context as requests (indirectly pragmatically implying the act)) (p. 202). Occurrences of these strategies were very rare in both languages: 1.35% for English and 0.33% for Lebanese Arabic.

a- *I am sorry but I can't hand in my term paper today. I know you don't accept late assignments but I hope you will understand my situation.*

b- *Enta a2rab el 2as7ab la 2ele w bewe3dak enno ma dayye3 el DVD metel 2awwal marra.*

Both utterances do not explicitly mention the illocutionary intent, but the context can supply requestive intent. Utterance (a) comprises an apology for not being able to submit the paper on time, followed by an acknowledgement of the cost of the request to the hearer and then amended with a plea for understanding. Utterance (b), on the other hand, employs the hinting strategy with a close friend. It starts off with an appeal, followed by a promise not to lose the item in question as a way to lessen the imposition of the request and subsequently the cost to H.

Influence of Gender on Choice of Strategy

The second research question was concerned with the role of gender in participants' selection of politeness strategy. In most of the empirical studies reported in the literature, gender proved to be a significant factor that affected how people make requests in different

social situations. The following table shows the distribution of politeness strategies according to gender.

Table 3: Distribution of Direct and Indirect Strategies by gender in English

		Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Nonconventionally Indirect	Total
male	Observed	**42**	**88**	**7**	137
	% of row	30.7%	64.2%	5.1%	100.0%
female	Observed	**37**	**113**	**9**	159
	% of row	23.3%	71.1%	5.7%	100.0%
Total	Observed	79	201	16	296
	% of row	26.7%	67.9%	5.4%	100.0%

Table 3 reveals some interesting trends with regard to male and female use of direct and indirect strategies in English. To test whether there were any associations between gender and choice of strategy type, the Chi-Square statistic was calculated. Alpha was set at .05. Results were not statistically significant with $p > .05$ ($p = .3584$, $\chi 2 = 2.052$, with 2 degrees of freedom). It was observed that the males tended to be indirect and use more elaborate requests, at least in English, when addressing an interlocutor of a higher social status or a greater social distance.

a- *Sir, I am really sorry. I know you don't accept late papers, but the point is I am really interested in doing it [writing the paper] and I can be creative in it, so please give me the chance.*

When asking a favor of a professor, S prefaces the request utterance with an apology and a lengthy explanation which is then followed by the head act itself. The pre-sequence, along

with the use of the politeness marker 'please', serves to mitigate the directness of the imperative S uses to make the request.

Sometimes male speakers were indirect with those they were expected to be direct with. Take the following example:

b- Can I have the DVD? I will return it to you tomorrow

Table 4 below shows the distribution of direct and indirect strategies by gender for the Arabic data.

Table 4: Distribution of direct and indirect strategies in Lebanese Arabic by gender

		Direct	CI Arabic	NCI Arabic	Total
M		**52**	**79**	**7**	138
		37.7%	57.2%	5.1%	100.0%
F		**51**	**91**	**17**	159
		32.1%	57.2%	10.7%	100.0%
Total		103	170	24	297
		34.7%	57.2%	8.1%	100.0%

Table 3 also reveals a preference for indirectness in both male and female participants. Both males and females did not show much preference for hinting strategies (Non-conventional indirectness). Again, differences between males and females within this category were not statistically significant with $p > .05$ ($p = .1689$, $\chi 2 = 3.556$, with 2 degrees of freedom).

Table 5: Distribution of Strategy types by Gender of English responses

	mood derivable	explicit performative	hedged performative	want statement	locution derivable	Preparatory	suggestory formula	strong hint	mild hint	Total
M	**21**	**7**	**9**	**5**	**4**	**83**	**1**	**6**	**1**	137
	15.3%	5.1%	6.6%	3.6%	2.9%	60.6%	0.7%	4.4%	0.7%	100.0%
F	**12**	**8**	**7**	**10**	**6**	**106**	**1**	**6**	**3**	159
	7.5%	5.0%	4.4%	6.3%	3.8%	66.7%	0.6%	3.8%	1.9%	100.0%
Total	33	15	16	15	10	189	2	12	4	296
	11.1%	5.1%	5.4%	5.1%	3.4%	63.9%	0.7%	4.1%	1.4%	100.0%

Table 5 shows the distribution of the 9 strategy types by gender of the English responses. In order to see whether an association between the 9 subcategories and gender existed for the English data, chi-square was calculated, with alpha set at .05. Locution derivables, Suggestory formulae and mild hints were excluded from the chi-square analysis due to having an expected frequency of less than 5 tokens in each cell per category. These differences proved not to be statistically significant with $p > .05$ ($p = .2961$, $\chi 2 = 6.105$, with 5 degrees of freedom).

Query Preparatory

Query preparatory strategies consist of the conditions regarding the possibility of the action within the request utterance to be performed. Specifically, these strategies are usually realized most frequently with the modal verbs can/could/would. May and might could also be used on occasion. Female participants used this strategy quite often in the English data. For example:

When addressing a professor asking for an extension:

a- *Would you give me the permission to submit my term paper a day late from the submission date?*

Addressing a professor asking for access to an article:

b- *May I use your article as a reference for my paper?*

Males also used this strategy, albeit less frequently. For instance, when asking a fellow dorm resident to turn down the music:

c- *Please I am trying to study and I know you like to hear music but it's really irritating me. Can you lower down the volume?*

When asking a local in a foreign country for directions:

c- *Hey, please can you lead me to the right direction*?

Mood Derivables

Unsurprisingly, males predominated in this category. Mood derivables typically appear as imperatives and are the most direct way of making a request.

a- *Fix your A/C, man. It's leaking water over my laundry*.

As in utterance (a) above, men were more likely to use mood derivables when addressing people at a lesser social distance and especially when what is being asked for is costly to the speaker.

b- *Hi, the water is falling down from your A/C, and my room turned into a mess. Plz try to fix that very soon.*

Utterance (b) presents the same situation as utterance (a) with another male speaker but this time the request sequence is prefaced with an explanation of the reason for the request, and the head act itself relies only on the politeness marker 'please' as a mitigating device. Female participants also used mood derivables but at a much lesser frequency than their male counterparts, and they tended to use politeness markers more than the males did.

a- Please turn down the music if you can because I need to study.

b- Listen, your new A/C is dripping water on my balcony, please take care of it.

Hedged performatives

This strategy was the third most frequently used by both males and females. It consists of using the verb 'ask' modified by a modal. Males used this strategy more than the females did in the English responses.

a- *Dear Dr., I would like to ask you for an urgent extension because I'm late in preparation due to an unusual situation. I hope you'll understand…*

b- *I would like to use the paper you've written while respecting your copyrights.*

Table 6: Distribution of Strategy Types by Gender of Arabic responses

	mood derivable	explicit performative	hedged performative	want statement	locution derivable	preparatory	suggetory	strong hint	mild hint	Total
M	**39**	**0**	**4**	**9**	**0**	**79**	**0**	**7**	**0**	138
	28.3%	0.0%	2.9%	6.5%	0.0%	57.2%	0.0%	5.1%	0.0%	100.0%
F	**35**	**2**	**3**	**11**	**0**	**89**	**2**	**16**	**1**	159
	22.0%	1.3%	1.9%	6.9%	0.0%	56.0%	1.3%	10.1%	0.6%	100.0%
Total	74	2	7	20	0	168	2	23	1	297
	24.9%	0.7%	2.4%	6.7%	0.0%	56.6%	0.7%	7.7%	0.3%	100.0%

Table 6 shows the distribution of the strategy types by gender in Lebanese Arabic. It appears that the query preparatory strategy is the most preferred strategy in Lebanese Arabic by both males and females. In order to calculate chi-square, the suggestory formula and mild hint categories were excluded from the analysis because expected frequencies in each cell for both categories was less than the required 5 per cell. Statistically speaking, these findings were not significant with $p > .05$ ($p = .3476$ $\chi 2 = 5.595$, with 5 degrees of freedom).

Query Preparatory

It was observed, throughout the dataset, that query preparatory strategies were the most frequently used. Lebanese Arabic has an interesting array of expressions that could be used to realize this strategy.

a- *Hello, ana jaretkon. 3ndi exam bokra bas ma 3am rakez l2n l sawt 3ali. Fiki plz twati. Thank you. (F).*

b- *3ande´emti7an w ma3am be2dar rakiz. Eza btrido wato sawtkon. (F)*

c- *3mol ma3rouf, ana mish min hon. Feek tdilne´3a mahal la2an deya3it? (M)*

d- *Bkoun mamnounak eza fik ta3tine´aktar wa2et*

Mood Derivables

In the Arabic data, males used this strategy slightly more than the females did, with the females using more politeness markers than the males.

a- *Rayess, wate´el sot. (M)*

b- *3mol ma3rouf, wate´sot el musi2a, 3ende´exam boukra. (M)*

c- *Estez, plz 3tine´chwey wa2et zyede, hay awal marra bet2a5ar. (F)*

d- *Plz wate´el sot la2an 3ande´dares ma3am be2dar rakiz. (F)*

Want Statements

Females used want statements in Arabic more than the males.

a- *Mar7aba estez please bede´your article 3ayzeto kermel my studies. (F)*

b- *Ana b 7ajet hayda el text kteer la2en 7a ishteghel 3leh w b5alle nes aktar ye3erfo w eno el article 3ajabne´. (F)*

c- *Hi miss, please bedde´wa2et aktar 3al war2a kirmel 3alemte´bil course ma tenzal cuz ba3da ma kholsit. (M)*

Influence of Interlocutor Status on Choice of Strategy

The third and final research question aimed to address the role of interlocutor status when choosing politeness strategies. Many studies have investigated status as one of the influential social variables involved in making requests. For the purposes of this study, status can be defined as the degree of authority a speaker has over the hearer. In this regard, it is very similar to the power variable in that relationships between speaker and hearer are asymmetrical and thus special efforts must be made so that face needs of both participants are preserved. Table 7 presents the distribution of direct and indirect strategies according to status in English.

Table 7: Distribution of direct and indirect strategies by status in English

	Direct	CI	NCI	Total
Higher	**41**	**58**	**3**	102
	40.2%	56.9%	2.9%	100.0%
Equal	**45**	**148**	**9**	202
	22.3%	73.3%	4.5%	100.0%
Total	86	206	12	304
	28.3%	67.8%	3.9%	100.0%

Status was shown to have some kind of influence on speakers' selection of requesting strategies. Table 7 reveals that conventionally indirect requests were the most preferred strategy for making requests in English and were predominantly used among status equals. It was hypothesized that the higher the interlocutor's status is, the more indirect speakers will make their requests. This finding proved to be statistically significant with $p < .05$ ($p = .0046$, $\chi 2 = 10.778$, with 2 df) . Therefore, we can conclude, at least for the English data, that there is an association between status and strategy types. Furthermore, speakers would make requests to status equals directly. The above table shows some surprising findings for the English responses, but the results lend support to the claim that the more indirect the request

is, the more polite it appears to be. Leech (2014) observes that English "exhibits a tendency to favor indirectness of requests more than most other languages" (p.134). He ascribes this fact to a general tendency of English speakers to favor strategies that bolster negative politeness, avoid imposing on the hearer's wishes and give them the option to comply or refuse (Leech, 2014, p.134).

Table 8 below presents the distribution of direct and indirect strategies by status in Lebanese Arabic.

Table 8: Distribution of Direct and Indirect Strategies by Status in Lebanese Arabic

	Direct	CI	NCI	Total
Higher	**34**	**55**	**5**	94
	36.2%	58.5%	5.3%	100.0%
Equal	**73**	**108**	**13**	194
	37.6%	55.7%	6.7%	100.0%
Total	107	163	18	288
	37.2%	56.6%	6.3%	100.0%

The table above shows that Lebanese Arabic also displays a marked preference for conventional indirectness, especially when speakers are addressing someone of equal status. It was also expected that speakers would make requests directly to an interlocutor of equal status and indirectly to interlocutors of higher social status. Directness was used less frequently with higher status interlocutors and more frequently with lower status interlocutors. However, it was a preferred strategy choice in situations were cost to the speaker was high. Non-conventional indirectness was seldom used in both languages: speakers only used it more with equal status interlocutors, which suggests that both languages value pragmatic clarity. The findings were not statistically significant with $p > .05$

(p =.8521, $\chi 2$ = .320, at 2 df). Therefore, there is no association, in the Arabic data, between status and choice of strategy types. In order to illustrate the points made:

a- *Istez, fik ta3tine´ wa2et aktar kermal ma 2deret khalesa. (Sir, Could you give me some more time because I was unable to finish the assignment*)

In utterance (a) above, S is speaking to a professor and resorts to conventional indirectness by asking about the possibility of the professor granting him an extension on a paper. S prefaces the request sequence with an address term 'istez' which is usually a title reserved for school teachers and not quite appropriate for a university professor. S uses the modal 'fik' which is equivalent to the English 'could you', which is one way of asking about ability or willingness to do something for one's interlocutor. Expressing this request more politely, another speaker would say:

b- *Doctor, 3am ba3mol ba7es w la2et makal 2elak bil maktabe´bas ken na2es. Fik Te3tini l makal kamel? (Dr., I'm working on a research paper and came across a paper you wrote in the online library databases but could not get full access. Could you send me the full article?)*

c- *Bkoun mamnounak eza fik ta3tine´access 3ala kel el article. (I would be grateful if you could give me access to the full article)*

d- *Ya jar, ba3d amrak, mumkin inno tzabbet el mukayyif la2anno na22at may 3a kil l ghasilet. (dear neighbor, could you please fix your A/C? water is leaking all over my laundry)*

e- *Iza fi majel tjeble copy men el article bkoun mamnountak. 3anna bel jem3a ma 3am ne2dar nefta7o. (If it is possible for you to bring me a copy of the article, I would be very grateful. We could not access it from university).*

Such routinized expressions like 'bkoun mamnounak', '3mol ma3rouf', 'men ba3d amrak' are very common in Lebanese Arabic but using them when addressing higher-status individuals. Directness was expected with equal status individuals; for instance, in the following utterance:

a- *Rayess, wate´el sot. (Yo, turn down the music!)*

b- *Bonjour, A/C te3ak 3am yna2et may 3a 8asilate´so plz shufe´shu badek ta3mle´.*

In summary, the findings reveal that status, as well as social distance, play a role in choosing strategies of requesting in both English and Lebanese Arabic. However, the findings were statistically significant only for the English data. It was observed that both languages show an overwhelming preference for conventionalized indirectness, more so English than Arabic. Additionally, different situational factors must also be taken into account; participants responded differently depending on formality/ informality of the situation, the relationship between speaker and hearer and the degree of imposition of the request being made. Gender proved also to be an influential factor whereby females far outnumbered the males in their use of conventionalized indirect strategies. Male respondents, though they also used conventionally indirect strategies quite frequently, generally tended to be more direct than their female counterparts, particularly in situations where the interlocutor was of equal status and low social distance. Neither showed any inclination towards using non-conventionalized indirect strategies (hint) which could be ascribed to a preference for pragmatic clarity over ambiguity.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The previous chapter presented the results of an empirical investigation into the requesting strategies of native speakers of Arabic and learners of English. The study examined the role of gender and interlocutor status on choice of strategy. Three research questions were investigated by means of an open-ended survey, and the results were coded and analyzed quantitatively. Findings will be summarized briefly and discussed in light of other findings in the literature. Implications as well as recommendations for future research will be presented.

Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), in the Cross-cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns Project (CCSARP), have claimed that their classification scheme could be universally applicable. This study's findings largely confirmed this claim; 8 languages were compared in the CCSARP data, among them Hebrew, British English, Australian English, American English, Canadian French, Danish, German and Russian, and responses in those languages were observed to fit into those categorizations to a certain extent. Data from Lebanese Arabic showed that these classifications do apply very well cross-linguistically. Conventionally Indirect strategies were found to be the most frequently used in both languages at 68% for English and 57.3% for Arabic. This finding corroborates the work of Felix-Brasdefer (2005), Johns and Felix-Brasdefer (2015), Marquez-Reiter (2000), Koc (2011), Rattanapitak (2013), Abuarrah et al. (2013) who all report a high occurrence of conventional indirectness in their research. It was also observed that directness was much preferred in the Arabic responses, with direct strategies occurring at around 35% and 26.6%

for the English responses. Non-conventionally indirect responses were seldom used in both languages, occurring at 5.4% for English and 8.08% for Arabic. Manasrah and Delaimy (2008) attribute this finding to "the fact that the hearer could have difficulty in deciphering the intent correctly because the interpretation of the message has to depend on contextual knowledge" (p.181). Yu (2011), who obtained similar results, also asserts that pragmatic clarity is much preferred over ambiguity.

In terms of sub-strategies, results of this study revealed that the preparatory strategy was most frequently used in both English and Arabic, at 64% for English and 56.5% for Arabic. This finding confirms the work done by Manasrah and Delaimy (2008), Felix-Brasdefer (2005), Abuarrah et al. (2013), Ogiermann (2009). This strategy type consists of asking about the hearer's willingness or ability to perform a certain action for the speaker, so it can be both speaker-based (Is it possible for me to..?) and hearer-based (Could you possible do…?). Responses in both languages showed that that the hearer-based query preparatory strategy was overwhelmingly preferred. Additionally, and what was a surprising find, conventionally indirect strategies, especially the query preparatory sub-strategy, were used not only with higher-status interlocutors, but they were also used with familiars and equal status individuals. Marquez-Reiter (2000) attributes this to the speaker's desire to avoid sounding coercive. However, the finding may also be explained by the fact that the particular request has a high degree of imposition, so speakers resort to this strategy in order to make the request less imposing and therefore less costly to the other party. Query preparatory strategies usually utilize modals like can/could or would, which proved also to be highly preferred in the English responses. Arabic responses, on the other hand, tended to use 'fik' (could you) or 'fi majel inno' (is it possible for you to..).

Mood derivables, also known as imperatives, were the second most frequently used strategy type in both languages, occurring 25% of the time in Arabic and 11.14% of the time in English. Usually, mood derivables are correlated with lesser degrees of politeness as it is not considered polite to issue orders especially to people of higher status or those at a greater social distance than us. Arabic responses showed an unexpected tendency for bluntness, especially in situations where the speaker asked the hearer to turn down the music, borrow a DVD from a close friend, or ask a neighbor to fix a broken A/C. In instances where speakers asked to borrow from a close friend, directness is usually expected (Nodoushan, 2008; Marquez-Reiter, 2000; Atawneh and Sridhar, 1993, Abuarrah et al., 2013). Besides, directness does not always imply rudeness; rather, it can be used as a means to convey solidarity and familiarity. Citing Taha (2006, p.359), Abuarrah et al. writes that "requests in the imperative forms are perfectly acceptable in Arabic as long as there is something in the tone of the expression that reduces the imperative force" (p.1123).

Want/ Need Statements were also one of the most frequently used strategies in the dataset, occurring 5.1% of the time in English and 6.7% of the time in Arabic. Being also a fairly direct strategy, it was noted that Arabic seemed to show a preference for directness. Want statements were used in both formal and informal situations. Abuarrah et al. (2013) write that want statements can be used often to convey the urgency for compliance.

The second research question asked about the role of gender in choosing a politeness strategy. It has always been a popular contention that politeness was the woman's domain, a stereotype that first arose with the work of Robin Lakoff and then enforced and propagated in the popular culture. In her seminal work "Language and Woman's Place", the crux of her argument is that women's speech is tentative and powerless, indicative of their inferior social

position. On the other hand, she claims that men speak more assertively due to their dominant social positions. Gender differences, Lakoff noted, could be explained by the different roles men and women hold in society. The findings of my study largely confirm the notion that women tend to be more polite than men. Moreover, I found that women preferred indirectness far more than the men did, utilizing conventional indirectness 71.1% of the time in the English responses and 57.24% in the Arabic responses. This finding supports the work of Al-Sazalie (2010) and Marquez-Reiter (2000) who, in addition to analyzing same-gender interactions, also looked at cross-gender interactions and found similar results, with some slight variations.

Directness was not observed frequently in either language; however, it did occur more frequently in the Arabic responses and with male respondents more than females. Males tended to use direct strategies 37.7% of the time as opposed to females who used them 32.1% of the time. The differences are very slight, but they do demonstrate that Arabic does show some penchant for directness especially in high status, high social distance situations.

The third and final research question was concerned with the role of status in influencing speakers' choice of politeness strategy. As expected, participants preferred to use conventionally indirect strategies when addressing a higher status interlocutor; however, social distance proved to be the most important factor here. Conventionally indirect strategies addressed to individuals of equal status accounted for 73.3% of the total whereas those addressed to persons of higher status accounted for 56.9% of the total strategies used in the English data. Direct strategies were addressed to high status interlocutors 40.2% of the time and 22.3% of the time for equal status interlocutors. The findings were statistically significant for English with $p > .05$, indicating that perhaps the English speakers were more

status-conscious than their Arabic counterparts. For the Arabic data, a slightly different picture emerges. Conventionally indirect strategies addressed to persons of equal status accounted for 55.7% of the total whereas the same strategies addressed to persons of higher status accounted for 58.5% of total strategy use. Direct strategies were used but at a much lower rate: 36.2% for higher status addressees and 37.6% for equal status addressees. For Arabic, the findings were shown not to be statistically significant with $p > .05$. This finding corroborates the work of Al-Natour et al. (2015) and Al-Shawesh & Hussin (2015) who investigated requesting strategies in Jordanian Arabic.

These findings are best explained by Scollon & Scollon's (2001) Deference, Solidarity and Hierarchical Politeness systems. A deference politeness system is one where "participants are considered to be equals or near equals but treat each other at a distance" (Scollon & Scollon, 2001, p. 54). Interactants in this framework consider themselves on the same power dimension but on a more socially distant level. In my data, this best applies to the scenario where a speaker has to tell an unknown neighbor to fix their broken A/C where the two are on the same power dimension, but they are socially distant from each other which explains the predominance of conventionally indirect strategies.

Scollon & Scollon (2001) also describe a solidarity politeness system where "the system is egalitarian and participants feel or express closeness to each other" (p.55). Interactants in this framework are or consider themselves to be on the same power dimension and are close. In other words, it is when "there is no feeling of either a power difference (-P) or distance (-D) between them" (p.55). In my data, this was best exemplified in the scenario where the speaker asks to borrow a DVD from a close friend. Directness was called for much of the time in this situation, which, usually among equals, signals solidarity and closeness

(Nodoushan, 2008; Tawalbeh & Al-Okaily, 2012; Felix-Brasdefer 2005; Felix-Brasdefer 2009).

The final part of their model is the hierarchical politeness system. As the name implies, this framework presupposes that interactants are at a sufficient social distance from one another; there is a clear asymmetrical relationship between the two, so the participants have to be careful about attending to each other's face needs. In my data, this was exemplified in the scenarios where a speaker was asking something of a professor. In these scenarios, indirectness was the expected course of action as the more polite way of asking for something from a powerful interlocutor.

One more finding that was unexpected was the use of code-switching as a politeness strategy. It appeared a few times in the dataset but not enough to warrant statistical analysis. What is surprising is that as a mostly spoken phenomenon, instances of code-switching clearly occurred in the written responses of the participants and especially in the Arabic responses. In the Arabic dataset, speakers sometimes code-switched to English in order to mitigate the force of a request; they were observed in scenarios involving high status interlocutors. Very few studies, among them Gardner-Chloros (2003), Sato (2009) and Pradina and Heriyanto (2013), have directly examined this pragmatic function of code-switching, the majority focusing on its grammatical and social functions. It has been shown that choosing a particular linguistic variety is contingent upon many factors; one of those factors is cooperation and saving face. Sato (2009), for example, investigated code-switching and intercultural communication in a Chinese language classroom using conversation analysis. Her findings showed that code-switching may be used to avoid conflict and maintain harmonious relationships, essentially a positive politeness strategy. Similarly Wei

(1995) investigated the phenomenon of code-switching among members of the Chinese community in Tyneside, England. Drawing on extracts from the speech of these community members, Wei uses Conversation Analysis (CA) to analyze occurrences of code-switching. With regard to the issue of politeness, Wei finds that speakers tended to code-switch as a kind of repair strategy – a mechanism for self-correction, once face has been lost. She writes "competent conversation participants often look for ways which can minimize the threat to face in one way or another" (Wei, 1995, p. 208). Indeed, this is in line with my own findings where code-switching was observed as a strategy used to lessen or avoid major threats to the speakers' face.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study examined the politeness strategies used in making requests in English and Lebanese Arabic. A Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was administered to students who were aged 18-24 at the Lebanese American University – Beirut campus. English 202 classes were chosen because they would allow for a homogenous group of people and control for the effect of proficiency levels. The DCT consisted of six situations where participants had to make requests to interlocutors of varying status and social distance levels; these included asking a professor for an extension on a term paper, asking a professor for access to his or her work, asking a fellow dorm resident to turn down the music, asking to borrow a DVD from a close friend, asking a neighbor to fix a broken A/C and as a tourist asking for directions.

Results of the study showed that politeness is a highly context-dependent social phenomenon. Participants varied their use of strategies depending on what situation they were in and who they were talking to: conventional indirectness was by far the most preferred strategy in both languages. As Marquez-Reiter (2000) noted, conventional indirectness may be used to lessen the coerciveness of the request. Neither language group showed much preference for hinting strategies, which can be explained by a general aversion to ambiguity in both languages despite Leech's (2014) observation that English tended to favor indirectness and had a vast array of linguistic resources by which to realize it.

Gender differences were observed in both languages, as expected. Females overwhelmingly preferred to be indirect especially with status unequals and socially distant

individuals. Males were also indirect but in lesser proportions than females. In terms of sub-strategies used, query preparatory (questions that ask about ability or willingness to perform the act in question) was the most used sub-strategy, particularly by females. This confirmed the notion that women are more polite than men and that they tended to be more co-operative in their linguistic behavior. Additionally, female participants were more likely to use politeness markers such as 'please' than their male counterparts.

Status proved to be less important than social distance in how the participants chose to make their requests in both languages. Results showed that participants chose to be more indirect with status equals but socially distant individuals – a finding that can be explained in light of Scollon & Scollon's (2001) model deference, solidarity and hierarchical politeness systems. Directness was the second most preferred strategy, and it occurred more with status equals, a result also supported in the literature.

Finally, and somewhat unexpectedly, it was also found that code-switching was used as a positive politeness strategy. What was surprising about the finding was that, as a primarily spoken phenomenon, code-switching occurred in written responses of the participants. Though the nature of the DCT which allows respondents to take time to think of answers may have been an influential factor, nevertheless, it was still an unexpected find. Participants code-switched more in the Arabic responses as a way of potentially avoiding or redressing a face-threatening speech act. It could also be indicative of some deficiencies in their knowledge of Arabic, which would require further investigation beyond the scope of this study. The following section will present some recommendations for future research, examining further avenues of exploration of the topic.

Recommendations for future research

This research project examined the realization of the speech act of request in English and Lebanese Arabic using an elicitation method called the Discourse Completion Task. Newer approaches to the study of linguistic politeness seem to breaking away from the use of inauthentic data and leaning more towards employing ethnographic methods of data collection. Since this is one of a few projects done on pragmatics in the Arab world, future studies could look at speech acts within larger interactional turns in conversation using naturally occurring data. Moreover, there is an emerging research paradigm that examines politeness phenomena from a prosodic perspective. Future studies could look into the role of prosodic elements like intonation and pitch in expressing politeness. Additionally, the teaching and learning of politeness is another area worthy of investigation where there have been many complaints of impoliteness and unacceptable behavior in the classroom on the part of students (see Bacha, Bahous & Diab, 2012 as a sample study).

APPENDIX I

DISCOURSE COMPLETION TASK

Consent Document Short Form

Hello, my name is Darim Khouja. I am an AUB student. As part of my research for my Master's thesis in the Linguistics graduate program, I am conducting a research study about politeness strategies in English and Lebanese Arabic. I have a brief survey that would take about 15 minutes to complete. The study will be conducted at the Lebanese American University Beirut Campus during English 202 classes. This informed consent is applicable to this site only. Your participation is voluntary; you may skip any questions that you don't want to answer, and you may withdraw your participation at any time without any penalties or loss of benefits. Please fill out the survey and return it in the sealed envelopes provided. No personally identifying information is being collected. After completion of the project, the data will be turned over to my advisor and destroyed after the requisite period of three years to meet AUB archive requirements. Participants must also be aged 18 and/or above.

You will receive no direct benefits from participating in the study, and you will face no more risks than the minimal risks of everyday life.

The study aims at investigating the politeness strategies people use in making requests, focusing on the influence of gender and interlocutor (addressee) status.

After the instructor leaves, you will be given the DCTs to fill out. The DCT is a short, written role-play survey that contains 6 items including some generic demographic information (age, sex, class, language background). You will have approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey and return it in the sealed envelopes provided.

Do you have any questions about the research study?

Are you ready to begin? Thank you for your participation in this research study. If you have any questions later on you may reach me by email at dak16@mail.aub.edu or by phone at +96170642355.

You may also contact the Principal Investigator of the study Dr. Kassim Shaaban by email at shaaban@aub.edu.lb or by phone at: 01-350000 extension:

Or if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or you want to talk to someone outside the research, please contact the:
The Institutional Review Board
American University of Beirut Gefinor Block B, 5th floor.

Tel: 00961 1 374374, ext: 5445
Fax: 00961 1 374374, ext: 5444
Email: irb@aub.edu.lb

Office of the Committee on Human Subjects in Research,
Lebanese American University
3rd Floor, Dorm A, Byblos Campus
Tel: 00 961 1 786456 ext. (2332)

Discourse Completion Task

I- Background Information:

Age: _____

Class: _____ Freshman _____ Sophomore _____ Junior _____ Senior

Sex: _____

First Language: _____

First Foreign Language: _____

Any other Language You Speak: _____ (Specify)

II- Instructions: Please read the following scenarios and write what you are likely to say in each situation. Please write your responses in both English and Lebanese Arabic.

1- You're working on a term paper for your Literature class. The paper is due in two days, and you haven't finished writing it. This is the first time you've been late with an assignment. You know your professor doesn't accept late papers but you would like to ask him in person for an urgent extension.
What would you say?

2- You're a graduate student working on a paper and there's a scholarly article you found online that you really need but could not get full access to through your university library so you decide to meet the professor who wrote it and ask him for it.
What would you say?

3- You're trying to study in your dorm room but you can't concentrate because you hear loud music coming from the room next door. You don't know the person who lives in that room. You want to ask that person to turn the music down.
What would you say?

4- A very close friend of yours has a DVD that you like and want to borrow. But the last time you borrowed a favorite book from him/her and you ended up losing it. What would you say?

5- One of your neighbors who lives right above you just installed an air conditioner on their balcony. You notice that their new A/C is leaking water all over your laundry on your balcony. You don't know him/her very well and want to ask her to get the situation resolved. What would you say?

6- You are a tourist in an Arab country you have never visited before. You are taking a walk in the streets of the capital but suddenly find yourself lost. You see locals nearby and approach them to ask for directions. What would you say?

APPENDIX II

ARABIC TRANSCRIPTION GUIDE

Here is a brief guide to the Arabizi transliteration of the Arabic data:

2 = glottal stop [?]

3 = voiced pharyngeal fricative ع

7 = voiceless pharyngeal fricative ح

8= voiced velar fricative غ

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