

**A Semantic/Pragmatic Exploration of Requests:
Politeness Orientation in British English
and Syrian Arabic.**

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In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

DEDICATION
TO MY WONDERFUL LOVING HAUSBAND
MOUSTAFA

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First and foremost, I have to thank Allah for all His blessings and for the opportunity of doing a Ph.D. at the University of Leeds: "Praise to Allah, who has guided us to this; and we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us" (Q7: 43, Sahih International translation).

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ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with probing the realization patterns of requests in Syrian Arabic and British English to examine whether they follow a similar trend across a variety of social situations. Hence, the analysis focuses on the different patterns of requestive strategies and modification types speakers of the two languages use. It additionally tests the extent to which the social variables of power, familiarity and imposition can affect the choice of strategies and modification in the context of these two languages.

Data were collected by means of a mixed-methods approach of discourse completion test/task and interviews. A total of 2400 requests were elicited from 100 Syrian students and 100 British students. To gain qualitative insights, 20 follow-up interviews were conducted with a subset of these students. The methodological framework was based on a combination of Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) model for said requests and Marti (2006) for unsaid requests.

Results have shown that both Syrian and British speakers favour conventionally indirect strategies, thus confirming the findings of the Cross-Cultural Speech Acts Realization Project (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989) that the conventionally indirect strategy is the most frequently used strategy across cultures. However, the British and the Syrian cultures display differences in the way they encode linguistic politeness. Syrians were significantly more direct than the British, whereas the British were significantly more conventionally indirect than their Syrian peers. It has been argued that these differences stem from the different socio-cultural norms that control the social interaction in these languages as well as the different politeness orientation of the two cultures. This project aims to contribute to existing research in the field of politeness and cross-cultural linguistics. It provides insights into politeness in the un-researched Syrian culture.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SA	Syrian Arabic
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
S	Speaker
H	Hearer
A	Act
CP	Cooperative Principle
PP	Politeness Principle
IP	Irony Principle
DCT	Discourse completion test
P	Power
F	Familiarity (social distance)
CCSARP	Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project
FTA	Face Threatening Act
BR	British speakers
SY	Syrian speakers

TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

Arabic letter	Symbol in Transliteration	IPA symbol
ء	,	ʔ
ب	b	b
ت	t	t
ث	th in MSA, s in SA	θ
ج	j	ɟ
ح	H	ħ
خ	kh in MSA, x in SA	x
د	d	d
ذ	th in MSA, z in SA	ð
ر	r	r
ز	z	z
س	s	s
ش	š	ʃ
ص	S	s ^ʕ
ض	D	d ^ʕ
ط	T	t ^ʕ
ظ	Z	z ^ʕ
ع	c	ʕ
غ	gh in MSA, X in SA	ɣ
ف	f	f
ق	q in MSA, mostly ' and sometimes q in SA	q
ك	k	k
ل	l in MSA, either l (clear l) or L (dark L) in SA	l (clear l), /ɫ/ (dark l)
م	m	m
ن	n	n
هـ	h	h
و	w	w
ي	y	j

Vowels:

Arabic Vowels	Symbol in transliteration	IPA symbol
ـَ	a	a
ـِ	i	i
ـُ	u	u
ا	aa	a:
و	either uu or oo in SA	u: , o:
ي	either ii or ee in SA	i: , e:

Note:

1. It is important to mention that the letter is doubled in the case of *shaddah*.
2. In general, the transliteration system is applied according to the SA pronunciation and not to the standard written form of the Arabic word.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction:

Language is an important medium for communication. However, cultural and social rules play a key role in the selection of linguistic items as well as their literal meaning. Therefore, speakers in different cultures have different ways to convey meaning and express politeness. This fact creates a challenge for people to communicate across cultures, and particularly for language learners. This leads us to first discuss the notion of meaning between semantics and pragmatics and how semantics should be subsumed under pragmatics in order to account for meaning in cross-cultural communication. I, then, introduce the motivations behind this study, its aims of predicting such potential difficulties in cross-cultural communication between Syrian and British speakers through comparing and contrasting the language the British and Syrian speakers use in their requests.

In the current PhD project, I am trying to uncover what similarities and differences exist in linguistic politeness across the British and the Syrian cultures. An attempt of this kind, to pin down the main aspects of similarity and discrepancy in cultural and social beliefs as well as linguistic expressions between Syrian Arabic and British English, is essential for the aim of this research. Next, I briefly present the methodologies adopted and the scope of the current study. In the final section, I provide an overview of the thesis structure.

1.2. Meaning in language between semantics and pragmatics:

Meaning has always been a puzzle that many philosophers and linguists have tried to account for. However, researchers in linguistics, in their attempt to uncover meaning have distinguished between two major approaches through which they handle meaning, namely semantics and pragmatics. Therefore, they define both semantics and pragmatics in relation to each other despite the considerable overlap between the scopes of both fields. (See Leech, 1981; 1983; Lyons, 1981; 1987; Levinson, 1983; Blakemore, 1989; 1992; Blass, 1986;

1990; Bach, 1999; Peccei, 1999; Gutt, 1986; 1991; Mey, 2001; Griffiths, 2006; Huang, 2007; amongst others). They tried to demonstrate the distinction between semantics and pragmatics in terms of meaning versus use, competence versus performance, context independence versus context dependence, literal versus non-literal, referential versus inferential, sentence versus utterance, locutions versus illocutions, what is said versus what is implied, sense versus force, "rule-governed" domain versus "principle-governed" domain, and finally linguistic code reliance and extra-linguistic code reliance.

In cross-cultural communication, semantics should be subsumed under pragmatics for the study of meaning or understanding the communicator's intentions because "pragmatic theory" according to Wilson and Sperber (1987: 5) describes and explains the differences between literal and non-literal interpretation. It also describes "stylistic effects" and explains how they are achieved. Sperber and Wilson (1995: 172) argue that even "semantically explained well formed formulas" are by no means enough for successful cross-cultural communication. Thus, one needs to take pragmatic parameters into account. In this thesis, semantics is limited to the study of "the meanings of linguistic expressions and constructions" (Blakemore, 1992: 43). On the other hand, pragmatic interpretation is "the use of contextual information and pragmatic principles" (Blakemore, 1992: 59).

The distinction between semantics and pragmatics is similar to that distinction between sentence meaning and utterance interpretation. Sperber and Wilson (1995: 9) state that an utterance has a variety of properties both linguistic and non-linguistic, whereas the sentence is only a semantically well formed formula that takes no account of such non-linguistic properties such as the time and place of utterance, identity of the speaker, the speaker's intentions and so on. Generally, a sentence's linguistic meaning does not decide what is said in its utterance. The gap between linguistic meaning and what is said can only be filled by understanding the context of that utterance. For example, the speaker can express different meanings even when using his/her words in a literal way. Therefore, what determines the meaning of what is said is not restricted to facts about the words used but also includes facts about the circumstances in which one is using them, i.e. the context of utterance. The context provides hearers with all the information they need to take into account in order to gain an understanding of the speaker's communicative intention. Carston (2008: 339) clarifies that humans do employ some "paralinguistic" signs in their communication including "intonation, some conventionalised hands and face gestures, and

certain 'natural' behaviours, which have a signalling function like smiles, frowns, cries". Such paralinguistic signs when employed in communication, similar to linguistic expressions and together with them, offer "important clues or evidence which constrains the pragmatic process of deriving the communicator's meaning". Blakemore (1992: 40) explains that "our actual linguistic performance" or the way we use language is the overall result of "the interaction of a number of different systems, and ... the acceptability of an utterance may be affected by factors other than its ... well-formedness".

The basic assumption here is that meaning in cross-cultural communication cannot be accounted for without resort to pragmatics, i.e. the study of language in use. Leech (1981: 319) distinguishes between "three distinct positions" in the debate of the relationship between semantics and pragmatics:

- 1) *Pragmatics should be subsumed under Semantics.*
- 2) *Semantics should be subsumed under Pragmatics.*
- 3) *Semantics and Pragmatics are two distinct and complementary fields of study.*

Leech (1981, 1983), as a semanticist, is in favour of the third position which he calls "complementarism". However, Leech himself states that the view that semantics and pragmatics are distinct though complementary and interrelated fields of study is "easy to appreciate subjectively, but is more difficult to justify in an objective way. It is best supported negatively, by pointing out the failures or weaknesses of alternative views" (Leech, 1983: 6). Accordingly, we are left with two clear alternatives: Semanticism and Pragmaticism. The former was adopted by generative semanticists in the earlier 1970s, particularly by arguing in support of the Performative Hypothesis (Ross, 1970). Ross claims that a sentence in its deep structure or semantic representation is a performative sentence. The following sentences are clear examples of performative sentences: e.g. *I state to you that X, I order you to Y*. In such cases the illocutionary or pragmatic force of an utterance was argued to be condensed in its semantic structure. However, later on, Ross himself proposed an alternative to the performative analysis, which he called 'pragmatic' analysis. He explains that the subject and the performative verb and indirect object belong to the extra-linguistic context of the utterance rather than to its actual structure. Moreover, many philosophers of language such as Austin and Searle have been sceptical of the traditional semantic approach to meaning in terms of abstract mental entities like concepts; instead they

adopted the 'Pragmaticism' approach and assimilated semantics to pragmatics. Searle (1969: 17), for example, argues in favour of the pragmatic approach which regards the theory of meaning as a sub-part of a theory of action. In this regard, meaning is defined in terms of the speech acts speakers perform in relation to hearers (to be discussed in detail in section 2.1.2.). Blakemore (1992: 47) emphasizes that in order to gain "the successful interpretation of the utterance" we "still need to explain how the hearer's linguistic knowledge ... interacts with her non-linguistic knowledge".

Leech (1983) sees pragmatics as the relationship between language and its users i.e. between abstract language competence and the use of that competence by speakers and hearers: "meaning in pragmatics is defined relative to a speaker or user of the language, whereas meaning in semantics is defined purely as a property of expressions in a given language, in abstraction from situations, speakers, or hearers" (Leech, 1983: 6). Thus, semantics as represented here is the meaning of linguistic units like words, phrases, sentences or texts outside a context. I will try to prove that without employing context and pragmatic parameters, the hearer will be unable to access the speaker's intended meaning.

Since language is used in context, Lyons (1981: 28) contends that "it is worth bearing in mind that the acceptability of grammatical and meaningful sentences is not something that can be decidable independently of the context in which they might or might not be uttered". This entails that "semantics is not autonomous with respect to pragmatics, and ... pragmatics provides part of the necessary input to a semantic theory" (Levinson, 1983: 35).

Blass (1986) argues that even semantically contradictory exchanges such as

- 1) "a. Is he an atheist?
b. He is and he isn't."(Blass, 1986: 45)

would be judged as true if related to their context. This fact stands for Blass's assertion that "for an adequate account of appropriateness and inappropriateness we must turn to something outside the text" (Blass, 1986: 45). However, this same notion of the importance of context and its role is approached in a different way by Blakemore (1992). What we need to keep in mind is that any semantic choice of an utterance is affected by and related to the speaker's intentions. The following example illustrates this idea:

- 2) a. Could you please pass me the book?

b. B passes the right book

B passes the right book because of his previous knowledge of the speaker's intentions (shared knowledge). This shows us that the choice of specification or constraints is first of all pragmatic rather than semantic. Further, Carnap (1956: 233 cited in Lyons et al., 1987: 156) explains that "descriptive semantics" or the analysis of meaning "may be regarded as part of pragmatics".

This research is concerned with the semantic formulas of requests in cross-cultural communication for the purpose of English language teaching. Therefore, this study of semantics/pragmatics will depend on contrastive aspects of requests in these two languages and cultures. The implication here is that such a contrastive study is not expected to throw light on such semantic concepts as homonymy, hyponymy, or synonymy (see Lyons, 1981) that are usually studied in one language rather than in comparative linguistics. This is because studying such terms cannot yield useful results in cross-cultural studies. The focus will be on the realisation of requests in real speech situations in Syrian Arabic and British English. Leech (1983: 6) defines pragmatics as "the study of meaning in relation to speech situations", while Blum-Kulka (1997: 38) explains it as follows:

In the broadest sense, pragmatics is the study of linguistic communication in context. Language is the chief means by which people communicate, yet simply knowing the words and grammar of a language does not ensure successful communication. Words can mean more – or something other-than what they say. Their interpretation depends on a multiplicity of factors, including familiarity with the context, intonational cues and cultural assumptions. The same phrase may have different meanings on different occasions, and the same intonation may be expressed by different linguistic means. Phenomena like these are the concern of pragmatics.

The transfer of lexical meaning into the target language might result in a kind of ambiguity that could cause misunderstanding. In this regard, let us consider the following examples from Syrian Arabic:

L1 Expression

1) aLLa yxaliik, aTiini hal-ktaab.

L2 Semantic translation

God keep, you give me this book.

The phrase "aLLah yxaliik" is a request initiator which is generally used in Syrian Arabic to precede a direct request, adding a polite touch to it. However, if we are to find the

best equivalence in English we need to look for it on the pragmatic level since the semantic one does not give the hearer any hint that this is intended as a polite request. "Please" would be the best translation equivalence, although it does not convey the cultural side of the utterance which assumes the existence of positive face in the politeness of the Syrian speech community, as will be illustrated in Chapters Six, and Seven. Therefore, the lexical equivalence between the two languages under study is weak and does not guarantee a full understanding of the speaker's intentions.

This distinction was further illustrated by Nida's (1964: 159) two types of translation equivalence, namely formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. These two terms are defined by Nida as follows:

***Formal equivalence:** Formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content ... One is concerned that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language.*

Formal equivalence is oriented towards source text structure, which plays an influential role in determining accuracy and correctness. In this sense, formal equivalent is parallel to the semantic meaning of an utterance.

***Dynamic equivalence:** Dynamic or functional equivalence is based on the principle of equivalent effect where "the relationship between the receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which exists between the original receptors and the message."* (Nida, 1964: 159).

A dynamic equivalent as defined by Nida (1964) is parallel to the pragmatic meaning of an utterance.

In conclusion, in cross-cultural studies such as the current study, the interpretation of an utterance as a request depends on various factors other than its linguistic components. Accordingly, we have adopted the assumption that semantics is subsumed under pragmatics. As was discussed earlier, the study of linguistic entities which is the sole concern of semantics is insufficient to account for the meaning of an utterance in actual communication. It pays no attention to non-linguistic items such as the identity of the speaker, the place and time of an utterance, the intonation and the cultural assumptions that play a crucial role in deciding even the meaning of the linguistic elements. It is only by the

use of pragmatics that takes into account the context of an utterance, that one is able to determine the speaker's intended meaning.

1.3. Rationale of the study:

Since the 1980s when cross-cultural studies became more popular, for example in Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), we have been able to gain insights into the formulation of the speech act of request in a variety of languages. However, we still lack empirical research on Arabic in general and Syrian Arabic in particular as we do not have any published study on Syrian Arabic in English. In addition, there is no evidence as to whether the findings of previous studies are applicable to the Syrian Arabic language and speech community.

The current study is interested in widening the scope of the languages and cultures tested by investigating the requestive speech act in Syrian Arabic and comparing it to that of British English. The speech act of request has been under-researched in Arabic in general and has never been researched in Syrian Arabic.

Moreover, this study will provide insights for language learners and contribute to a better understanding of the requestive behaviour of both Syrian and British speakers. Further, the study has pedagogical implications for foreign language teachers, as it highlights the importance of the interrelationship between the use of requests and the social variables that control their uses in a given culture. Another motivational facet for this research is the fact that, quite often, Syrian students in the UK are often perceived to be direct and sometimes impolite in their requests; whereas, in the Arab world, Syrians are more typically recognised for their hospitality, generosity, manners and politeness. Conversely, British learners of Arabic are rarely perceived as direct or impolite. Hence, this research is interested in probing the reasons behind these perceptions.

Finally, this research uses Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness as a theoretical background and it aims to test the claim of universality for this theory. Many researchers like Matsumoto (1988), Ide (1989), Gu (1990), Sifianou (1992a), and others have questioned the same claim. They argued that societies and cultures are not similar in their perception of notions such as face and deference (see Chapter Seven). The current research is concerned with the study of politeness in a non-Anglo-Saxon culture that has

never been researched before. It will study politeness phenomena by originally analysing the realisation patterns of requests in Syrian Arabic and comparing and contrasting them with their counterparts in British English. Accordingly, we will be able to gain more knowledge on the function of politeness in the Syrian culture.

1.4. Aims and research questions:

The aim of this study is three-fold: firstly, to determine the way the speech act of request is realised in Syrian Arabic and British English, uncovering similarities/differences between the Syrian and the British speakers. The level of investigation involves alerters, strategies, internal and external modifiers. Secondly, the study aims to identify factors or contextual constraints such as familiarity and power that affect the strategy and modification choices. Thirdly, it aims to shed light on the direction of politeness (positive/negative) that operates in both cultures under study and hence check the validity of the claim for universality of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory. In essence, the study is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What differences and similarities are there between Syrian Arabic and British English in the realization patterns of requests?
2. Does the requestive speech act intrinsically threaten the participants' face in both the Syrian and British cultures? If not, what is the direction of politeness in these two cultures?
3. What contextual constraints influence the choice of request components?

One should note that the first two research questions will be broken down into sub-research questions in Chapters Five and Six in order to address the components of request sequences, and how such sequences compare across the Syrian and British groups.

1.5. Overview of the methodology:

In the current study, as will be explained in Chapter Four, a mixed-methods approach of discourse completion tests (DCTs) and follow-up interviews is adopted to answer the research questions above. In the DCTs, which include twelve different social situations that are designed to elicit the requestive speech act, subjects are asked to respond in the context

of these situations and accordingly perform their requests in their native language. The subjects can also choose not to make a request, provided that they explain their choices. The DCTs are also used to investigate the relationship between the request sequences and the contextual constraints and how the situations were perceived in both cultures. Then the Syrian and British data sets are compared and contrasted with each other. They are also analysed from the viewpoint of the requests components, namely strategies, modification types (internal, external), and alerters. The DCT sample consists of 200 undergraduate university students. Half of them are Syrian students studying in Damascus University, while the second half consists of British students studying at the University of Leeds.

The second method adopted is the follow-up interviews which are conducted with a group of 20 students divided equally between the Syrian and British subjects who had already completed the DCTs. This is undertaken in order to provide the researcher with qualitative depth to complement the data gained in the DCTs and hence present a clearer picture of the similarities and differences between the linguistic behaviour of both groups in the course of performing requests. The interviews are semi-structured interviews based on the twelve situations used in the questionnaires.

The theoretical frameworks I use for data analysis include a combination of two models: the Cross Cultural Speech Act Realisation model used in Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) study for the analysis of said responses and Marti's (2006) model for the analysis of unsaid responses. However, I have made some modification to the CCSARP model by adding some new categories that arose in my data (see Chapter Four for details).

1.6. Structure of the thesis:

In this section, an overview of the rest of the thesis is provided. Following the present introductory chapter, Chapter Two provides the theoretical background of the study. This chapter starts with an overview of the classical works on speech act theory. I then introduce and discuss major definitions and studies of requests with an emphasis on inter-language and cross-cultural studies.

Chapter Three centres on the discussion of the most common politeness theories dealing with literature or previous research on politeness.

Chapter Four explains the research procedure adopted in this study. It covers the research approach, the specific research questions and the hypotheses behind them, the rationale for the design of the DCTs and semi-structured interviews, the selection of subjects, and finally the coding scheme and the criteria for classifying the components of requests.

Chapter Five reports the findings and analysis of the request strategies first by situation and then by the main and sub-types of the strategies adopted in the coding scheme.

Chapter Six concentrates on the analysis of internal and external modification of the speech act of request employed by both Syrian and British respondents.

Chapter Seven is concerned with the discussion of the main findings of this research project and with linking them to the previous body of literature. The analysis of the main components of requests is revisited and highlighted. Then, the notions of Brown and Levinson (1987) face and Syrian face are discussed, and after that an attempt is made to examine the direction of politeness in the Syrian and British cultures. Finally, the effect of contextual parameters on the request of both groups is examined.

The thesis concludes in Chapter Eight with the summary of the major findings, evaluation of strengths and limitations, implications of this study, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: OVERVIEW OF SPEECH ACT THEORY AND THE SPEECH ACT OF REQUEST

2.1. Introduction:

This chapter provides a review of the major theoretical and empirical approaches to the speech act of request. The chapter proceeds as follows: first, I review the classical works of speech act theory. This will be followed by a review of requests, outlining their theoretical background, definitions, form, and function. As a next step, I go through both interlanguage and cross-cultural studies on requests. Finally, the chapter is concluded with a summary of the main points discussed.

2.2. The classical works on the speech act theory:

2.2.1. Austin's theory of speech acts:

How language does more than merely represent the world was the main concern of philosophers like Austin (1962). In his work 'How to do things with words' he distinguished between the meaning of sentences as a result of our understanding whether they are true or false and the speech acts performed by the speaker using them, i.e. what they count as doing. He argues that declaratives are not just used as "constatives" to say things or describe states of affairs, but rather to do things, as "performatives". He suggests that although performatives cannot be judged as true or false, they can go wrong or be infelicitous if they do not meet a set of felicity conditions. These consist of three main categories:

1. - There must be an accepted conventional procedure having a conventional effect. In the UK, for instance, a man simply saying to his wife "I divorce you" does not count as legal divorce because simply saying this utterance in the UK is not a conventional procedure having the conventional effect of divorcing.
 - Certain acts can only be done by certain people in certain places.
2. The procedure must be done correctly and completely. Thus, you have to say the right conventional words to marry someone. You cannot marry someone by simply saying "I marry you".

3. - The person must have the feelings and intentions to do the speech act.
 - The concerned person must do the consequent conduct as long as it is specified.
- (Levinson, 1983: 229)

In his attempt to distinguish between performatives and constatives, Austin provides us with criteria to test performatives. According to him, performatives should have the following properties:

1. First person subjects.
 2. Active simple present tensed verbs.
 3. One of a special set of performative verbs that collocate with the adverb "hereby".
- E.g. I "hereby" warn you that this is your last chance.

However, by uttering words one may perform actions either explicitly or implicitly without having a performative verb, e.g. "This is your last chance". This led Austin to review his argument and make a shift from the dichotomy of performative/constative to a theory of illocutionary acts which states that all utterances can be thought of as actually doing something (Levinson, 1983: 231-232).

As pointed out by Austin (1962: 100-101), the linguistic act of saying an utterance can be divided into three components: first, the locutionary act or the communicative act of uttering a sentence; second, the illocutionary act, the act which is performed as a result of uttering the sentence by virtue of the conventional force associated with it; and third, the perlocutionary act, the act of causing a certain effect on the hearer by uttering a sentence. For example, one might say: "it's hot in here!" (locution), meaning that he wants some fresh air (illocution) and the perlocutionary effect could be that someone opens the window (Thomas, 1995: 49). In many cases, however, the locution could have different illocutionary forces in different contexts e.g. "what time is it?" may have any of the following different forces depending on the context of an utterance:

- A real question where the speaker wants to know the time.
- An indication of annoyance with the addressee because he is late.
- A hint that it is time the addressee goes home. (Thomas, 1995: 50)

Moreover, not only the same set of words may perform various speech acts but also different sets of words could perform the same speech act:

- Open the window!
- Could you please open the window?
- Did you forget the window?
- What do we usually do when we come into the classroom?

Austin (1962: 150-163) came up with a five-fold classification of the speech acts according to the illocutionary force they provoke:

1. **Verdictives:** The giving of a verdict by a jury or umpire denotes this category of verbs which includes: acquit, describe, analyse, calculate, estimate, rank, date, assess, and characterise.
2. **Exercitives:** This category is illustrated by the exercise of rights or power in favour of or against a certain course of action. This class includes verbs like: order, command, direct, recommend, beg, entreat, and advise.
3. **Commissives:** This category is marked by promising or undertaking. Good examples of these verbs are: promise, pledge, guarantee, embrace, swear, and contract.
4. **Behabitives:** This category entails reaction to other people's behaviour or attitudes and expression of attitudes to others' conduct. Examples of this class are: apologise, thank, welcome, congratulate, deplore, commiserate, felicitate, bless, curse, drink, toast, and criticise.
5. **Expositives:** This category involves making utterances fit into the course of argument or conversation. Verbs belonging to this class include: deny, affirm, emphasize, illustrate, accept, answer, report, describe, class, identify, call, object to, and concede.

In conclusion, Austin's theory of speech act states that speakers can imply and mean more than their words say and that the majority of illocutions are indirect. The indirect illocution of an utterance is any further illocution an utterance could bear. In other words, indirect speech acts are performed when form and function do not match.

Austin's work has given rise to a large body of philosophical work in general and to two developments in particular. One is represented by an influential systematisation of Austin's work by John Searle and the other is Grice's theory of the Cooperative Principle.

2.2.2. Searle's theory of speech acts:

In his notably influential work Searle (1969) distinguishes between 'propositional content' and 'illocutionary force' similar to Austin's 'locutions' and 'illocutions' and Grice's 'what is said' and 'what is meant'. Searle (1969: 54-71) attempted to extend Austin's work in two ways. First, he tried to establish a set of rules for the successful completion of a speech act. Second, he proposed a detailed classification of the categories of speech acts. Concerning the rules, we will use the example of the speech act of requesting to clarify how the proper application of these rules enables the hearer to get to the actual speech act performed by an utterance.

1. **Propositional Act:** A future act A of the hearer H.
2. **Preparatory Condition:** The speaker S believes that the hearer H can do act A.
3. **Sincerity Condition:** S wants H to do act A.
4. **Essential Condition:** S attempts to get H to do act A.

In addition to the requesting speech act, Searle (1969: 66-67) offers eight further examples of speech act rules for: promising, asserting, questioning, thanking, advising, warning, greeting and congratulating. However, depending on these rules, one is not always able to distinguish among speech acts and this in its turn pushed Searle to introduce an additional preparatory rule that is related to the understanding of the power relationship between the speaker and the hearer.

As for the classification of speech acts categories, Searle (1976 cited in Levinson 1983: 240) states that there are just five types of speech acts that could be performed in speaking through the use of the following five types of utterance:

1. **Representatives:** The speaker is committed to the truth of the expressed proposition like in asserting, concluding, denying, reporting...etc.
2. **Directives:** The speaker tries to get the hearer to do something like in asking, requesting, commanding, challenging ...etc.
3. **Commissives:** The speaker is committed to some future course of action like in promising, offering, threatening, swearing...etc.
4. **Expressives:** The speaker expresses his attitude towards a state of affairs like in apologising, thanking, congratulating, welcoming ...etc.

5. Declaratives: The speaker alters the external condition of status of an action by articulating the utterance, e.g. baptising, firing from employment, declaring war...etc.

In a later work, Searle (1979: 30-57) makes a distinction between two types of speech acts, direct and indirect speech acts. In the former, the relationship between the linguistic structure of an utterance and its function is direct; whereas in the latter, this relationship is indirect. Searle (1979: 32) suggests that there are two factors through which the hearer captures the correct indirect speech act expressed by an utterance. One is that the speaker and the hearer share the same background information, and the other is that the hearer relies on inference strategies that help him understand the true illocutionary force.

Searle clarifies the difference between the direct and indirect speech acts through using the example of 'can you reach the salt?' in which the speaker utters a question, but intends to make a polite request for the hearer to pass the salt to him. Of crucial importance here for the calculation of the meaning of indirect speech acts is the Cooperative Principle as proposed by Grice (1975) that will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.3. Grice's Cooperative Principle:

Austin claimed, as was discussed before, that we can do things with words. However, this can be done directly or indirectly. Grice (1975) points to the fact that meaning in any interaction has two levels. The first one is the conventional denotative meaning which is presented by the semantic meaning of an utterance, while the second is presented by the intentions of the speaker. Thus, according to Grice (1975) indirect speech acts are those cases that occur when the speaker intends a meaning different from its literal meaning and the hearer infers that meaning. The inference principle provided by Grice's theory of conversational implicature enables the addressee access to the intended indirect force of the speech act. Therefore, if a sentence does not make sense on the surface level in a particular context, the hearer needs to look for an implied meaning. Grice (1975: 45-47) introduces four conversational maxims as the main components of the Cooperative Principle. These maxims are:

1. The maxim of quantity, in which the participants need to make their contributions as informative as is required for the purpose of the exchange, but not more informative than is required.
2. The maxim of quality, in which interactants should not say what they believe to be false or that for which they lack adequate evidence.
3. The maxim of relation, in which interactants should say only what is relevant to the purpose of the conversational exchange.
4. The maxim of manner, in which participants should:
 - Avoid obscurity of expression.
 - Avoid ambiguity.
 - Be brief.
 - Be orderly.

Speakers do not always abide by these maxims since there are many occasions where they apparently fail to observe these maxims. There are five ways of non-observing the maxims, namely flouting, violating, infringing, opting out of, and suspending a maxim. However, the discussion here will be focused on flouting the maxims since this is the most important category, the one through which an implicature is generated. To flout or exploit a maxim the speaker deliberately does not observe a particular maxim with the intention to create an implicature. This indicates that Grice's theory of inference (1975: 47-55) constitutes a method that enables hearers to calculate extra layers of meaning.

Irony, metaphors and sarcasm are clear examples where the speaker flouts the quality maxim. Thus, by uttering "that was smart!", for instance, one could implicate "that was stupid!" if the addressee realises that what the speaker said is relevant, but does not believe it to be true (Green, 1996: 103). The following example, where the maxim of quantity is exploited, the speaker implies to the listener that what he is seeking to know is none of his business rather than simply answering the question.

- A: Where've you been?
- B: Out.
- A: Where do you live?
- B: Somewhere. (Green, 1996: 103)

Here in this example, the addressee does not cooperate with the speaker in giving as much information as was required. Flouting the relation maxim might be illustrated by the

following interaction where speaker B hints at the fact that he does not believe what speaker A has just said by uttering an irrelevant comment. However, in this example, both maxims of relation and quality are flouted simultaneously:

- A: You know I can crush rocks with my bare hands.
- B: Yeah, and I'm Marie of Romania.

Or (Yeah, and the sun rises in the west). (Green, 1996: 102)

Finally, flouting the maxim of manner is reflected by the interactants' choice to be intentionally obscure in their choice of communicative style. They can even communicate in a foreign language which sometimes they can't speak fluently in order to implicate that what they are saying is not for the ears of those who may hear them such as the children playing nearby (Green, 1996: 104).

Grice (1975) implicitly hints at the universality of these maxims. However, the Cooperative Principle (CP) does not always facilitate communication as it could make the listener's task more difficult. This is because it is built on the speaker's assumption that their hearers need to derive non-related propositions from the meaning of the actually uttered words (Davies, 2007: 2310).

All works on speech act theory in general and Grice's work on conversational implicature in particular form essential background to my research since it seeks to examine the direct and indirect speech acts conveyed through the use of request semantic formulas in both English and Syrian Arabic.

A final point to draw attention to concerning Grice's Cooperative Principle is that he suggested that his theory may need to be enhanced by adding a potential maxim of politeness. This suggestion spurred on linguists like Robin Lakoff and Geoffrey Leech to work on the missing maxim (Watts, 2003: 58). Therefore, the second chapter of my thesis will be focused on the issue of politeness and how it affects meaning. First, however, we will look in detail at the requestive speech act which is the subject of this dissertation.

2.3. Literature review on requests:

2.3.1. Theoretical background on requests:

This part of the chapter will be concerned with defining requests and shedding light on the form and function of requests. In this regard, we will cover the possible request strategies as suggested by researchers such as Ervin-Tripp (1976); House and Kasper (1981); Blum-Kulka (1982, 1983); Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984); Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). In addition to that, we will discuss the issues that could have an influence on the choice of the requesting strategies. Finally, we will present an overall picture of previous inter-language and cross-cultural studies on the speech act of request.

2.3.2. Defining requests:

As was discussed previously, Searle (1976) distinguished between five speech act categories, namely representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives. He defines directives as “attempts by the speakers to get the hearer to do something” (1976: 11). The illocutionary verbs: ask, order, command, request, beg, plead, request, pray, entreat, invite, permit, and advise come under this same category. However, they differ in the degree of intensity of act and imposition they put on the hearer. Searle (1969), like other researchers (e.g. Fraser, 1975), classified the verbs *order* and *command* under the category of requests. On the other hand, some researchers like Ervin-Tripp (1976; 1977); Gordon and Ervin-Tripp (1984) treated and used the terms requests and directives interchangeably. Yet, many other researchers such as Andersen (1978), and Schmidt (1983) view requests as a subclass of directives while others (e.g. Read and Cherry, 1978; McTear, 1980) classify directives as a subtype of requests. Becker (1982 cited in Achiba, 2003: 6) provides us with a broader definition for requests indicating that requests are more common and less manipulative than directives:

... ‘request’ refers inclusively to an utterance that is intended to indicate the speaker’s desire to regulate the behaviour of the listener- that is, to get the listener to do something. (Becker, 1982:1)

Similarly, Green (1975: 121) states that requests are used to get someone to do something. In their work, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 11) define requests as “Pre-event acts:

they express the speaker's expectation of the hearer with regards to prospective action, verbal or non-verbal". As for Brown and Levinson (1978), requests are face-threatening acts since they can be interpreted by the hearer as "intrusive impingements on freedom of action" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 12) or because of the speaker's hesitation in formulating a request for the fear of the hearer's loss of face. In both cases, requests are face-threatening acts which call for redressive action or mitigation to compensate for the potential imposition on the hearer. In this research, requests will be defined as directives, adopting Searle's definition as an attempt by the speaker to get the hearer to do something.

2.3.3. On the form and function of request:

There have been various attempts in both theoretical and empirical work to lay down request strategies and forms in an attempt to establish a cross-linguistically valid scale of indirectness. In this regard, we will examine the models of Ervin-Tripp (1976); House and Kasper (1981); Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984); Blum-Kulka et al. (1989); and Marti (2006).

Ervin-Tripp (1976: 25), in her study, states that directives take a variety of syntactic forms and that the distribution of these forms is affected by familiarity, rank, territorial locations, difficulty of task, whether or not a duty is expected, and whether or not non-compliance is likely. She obtained her data by four different methods:

1. Systematically recording all identifiable directives that occurred in the chosen setting between different sets of participants, with the emphasis on different pairs.
2. Selecting directive instances from transcripts of tape-recorded natural conversations.
3. Directives' elicitation through creating special situations.
4. Noting naturally occurring instances of misunderstandings.

In an attempt to answer the question "How does one recognize directives in natural conversation?" (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 28), Ervin-Tripp suggests six different types of directives yielded by the corpus of her study. The forms are organised against a scale of the relative power of the speaker and addressee in conventional usage and the obviousness of the directive:

1. Need statements: such statements usually appear among people of different ranks. They occur in transactional work setting where the job description of everybody is very clear, and the statement of need by a superior indicates an obligation on behalf of the subordinate e.g. *I'll need a 19 gauge needle, IV tubing, and a preptic swab.* [Doctor to nurse in a hospital] (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 29)

Need and want statements also arise in families when the speaker assumes care by the hearer:

-I need a spoon. Mommy, I need a spoon. (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 30)

2. Imperatives: In general, imperatives incorporate a verb and in case of a transitive verb they also include an object and sometimes a beneficiary. However, if the necessary action is obvious in a situation, it is likely to use elliptical forms indicating the new information only, for instance the direct or indirect object:

- *Coffee, black.* [Customer to waitress]

- *Me, too, Sue.* [Clinic technologist to secretary who is pouring coffee] (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 30)

The variants of deletion are based not only on the principle of retaining new information but also on other structural variants: 1) you + imperative, e.g. [Passenger to driver]: *You should turn right here, then you go straight.* (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 30), 2) attention-getters like 'hey' or 'excuse me', names or honorific address terms, and 'please' when used to get the attention of the hearer, 3) post-posed tags, e.g. *carry some of these, will you?* (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 31), 4) rising pitch.

3. Embedded imperatives: The term embedded imperatives stands for the cases in which the agent and object are explicit in a way that the forms preceding them look like formal additions:

-Why don't you open the window?

Sinclair and Coulthard (1974: 32 cited in Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 33) identify a rule for many embedded imperative forms:

Modal directive rule:

An interrogative clause is to be interpreted as a command to do if it fulfils the following conditions: (i) it contains one of the modals can, could, will, would (and sometimes going to); (ii) the subject of the clause is also an addressee; (iii) the predicate describes an action which is physically possible at the time of utterance.

4. Permission directives:

The form representing permission directives consists of modal + beneficiary + have/verb. The modals include can, could, can't, couldn't, and may. The rule is similar to that of embedded imperatives with the focus shifted to the beneficiary or recipient's activity rather than the addressee so that the form looks like a permission request. A good example can be reflected in the following:

- [Brother to sister]: *Can I have my records back?* (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 37)

5. Non-explicit question directives:

Question directives are treated as if they were information questions as they provide the listener who is not willing to comply with an escape route. Accordingly, they are considered more challenging to interpret than embedded directives.

- [Daughter to father]:

- *You ready?*

- *Not Yet.* (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 38)

The question directives offer the listener a way out as they explicitly express a condition that compliance could be impossible. However, by adding a negative tag question, the speaker indicates more than 50 per cent chance of a negative reply. This in its turn makes non-compliance sound easier.

- [Motorist to gas station attendant]:

You don't happen to have any change for the phone, do you? (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 38)

6. Hints: Ervin-Tripp's (1976: 42) study data yield three kinds of social settings in which hints appeared. The first is the use of statement conditions by children as they do not initially have a well-articulated sense of what to do to relieve discomfort and

thus they depend on their caretakers to reach a solution, e.g. *My nose is bleeding* (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 42). Second, in situations where service needed is special, and the speaker is unwilling to be explicit, it is left to the listener to find the intended interpretation.

- [Adult sister to brother, as she reaches into cupboard]:

- *Oh dear, I wish I were taller!*

- *Here, can I get something for you?*

- *Yes, please, some of those green dishes up there.* (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 42)

Third, in situations where the required acts are very clear, it is sufficient to mention statements of time or condition since what to be done and by whom is known by everybody. In office settings such condition directives tend to be to a different age or rank.

- [Professor to office worker]

Mrs Terry, it's quite noisy in here. (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 43)

Hints can possibly play many tasks more effectively than other forms. For example, they can tease or joke as in:

- [Laboratory technologist to another]:

Hey, dummy, you forgot this! (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 43)

They can also enhance solidarity by alluding to shared knowledge.

- [Husband to wife]:

That's a wine tasting tomorrow night.

(i.e. serve dinner early, pick up an *au pair* at night school) (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 43-44)

After outlining the forms of directives Ervin-Tripp (1976: 51) summarizes that directives consist of a wide scale, ranging from explicit imperatives to questions and statements that do not sound like requests. Interpreting such utterances as directives is learned by participants when "the service is feasible or part of their normal role, and when the interpersonal relations known to the participants account for the selection of the form of

the directive" (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 51). Besides, Ervin-Tripp (1976: 51) states that "The discourse constraints of statements, interrogatives, and embedded imperatives are successfully more coercive". Accordingly, statements leave the hearer with the freedom not to respond verbally at all; interrogatives give the chance to the non-compliant listener to reinterpret the directive as an information question; embedded comparatives allow the listener who is willing to comply to respond as if he had acted. Indirectness provides both parties with protection from the embarrassment of explicit non-compliance. Furthermore, directive forms vary in the amount of inference they require so that statements and question-directives entail most inference particularly when goods or services are not pointed out and the utterances are not well known.

In another work, House and Kasper (1981: 163-166) distinguish eight levels of directness for request strategies starting from level 1 representing the most indirect type of requests and level 8 illustrating the most direct type of requests. These different levels will be demonstrated by means of "the situational context 'X wants Y to close the window'" (House and Kasper, 1981: 163):

1. Mild Hint: The proposition used in the locution is different from that of the illocutionary point. However there is a clear implicational relationship that Y can still discover, e.g. *It's very cold in here.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 163)
2. Strong Hint: Although the proposition conveyed in the locution is not identical to that of the illocutionary point, it is related to it as they both have referential elements aside from reference to either of the interlocutors, e.g. *Why is the window open?* (House and Kasper, 1981: 163)
3. Query-preparatory: The locution asks a preparatory condition to execute the action indicated in the proposition, e.g. *Can you close the window?* (House and Kasper, 1981: 163)
4. State-preparatory: The locution confirms a preparatory condition maintaining the execution of the action denoted in the proposition, e.g. *You can close the window.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 163)
5. Scope-stating: The locution expresses X's intention, desires and feelings via the articulated proposition, e.g. *I would prefer it if you closed the window.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 163)

6. Locution-derivable: The semantic meaning of the locution immediately offers the illocutionary point to the listener, e.g. *You should close the window.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 164)

7. (a) Hedged-Performative:

Although X names the illocutionary intent that he wishes his locution to be understood by Y, he hedges it by using a modal auxiliary, e.g. *I must ask you to close the window.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 164)

(b) Explicit-Performative:

X explicitly states the illocutionary intent that he desires his locution to be understood by Y, e.g. *I ask you to close the window.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 164)

8. Mood-derivable: The illocutionary point is conventionally determined as a request by the grammatical mood of the locution, e.g. *Close the window!* (House and Kasper, 1981: 164)

After the introduction of directness levels of the speech act of request, House and Kasper (1981: 166) realized the importance of having more profound measures to reveal the different effects of politeness that occur on the same directness level. Therefore, they looked at modality markers that exist in utterances. Take, for instance, the following two utterances to further clarify this point:

- *Come here!*

- *Please come here, will you?* (House and Kasper, 1981: 166)

Both utterances are classified under the same directness level. However they differ in the politeness effect they create according to the kind and number of modality markers involved. House and Kasper (1981: 166-170) distinguish between two major kinds of modality markers, namely downgraders and upgraders:

The downgraders are markers that minimize the impact X's utterance is expected to have on Y. The downgraders group consists of 11 different types:

1. Politeness markers: These are optional elements added to an act in order to both illustrate deference to the listener and to urge for cooperative behaviour, e.g. *please.*

2. Play-downs: These are syntactic devices used to reduce the perlocutionary effect an utterance may have on the addressee such as:

(a) Past tense: *I wondered if...*

(b) Durative aspect marker: *I was wondering.*

(c) Negation: *Mightn't it be a good idea ...*

(d) Interrogative: *Mightn't it be a good idea?*

(e) Modal: *Mightn't...* (House and Kasper, 1981: 166)

3. Consultative devices: These are optional devices through which X seeks to involve Y and advocates Y's cooperation, e.g. *Would you mind if ...*(House and Kasper, 1981: 166)

4. Hedges: These are Adverbials — apart from sentence adverbials — that enable X to avoid a particular proposition and thus prevent any possible annoyance the proposition might entail. X upon using these adverbials leaves Y with an open option when he completes his utterance and thereby sounds less forceful, e.g. *Kind of, sort of, somehow, and so on, and what have you, more or less, rather.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 167)

5. Understarters: These are adverbial modifiers that allow X to underrepresent the state of affairs the proposition designates, e.g. *a little bit, a second, not very much, just a trifle.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 167)

6. Downtoners: These are sentence modifiers that X uses to moderate the impact of his utterance on Y, e.g. *just, simply, possibly, perhaps, rather.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 167)

7. ("minus") Committers: These are sentence modifiers X uses to decrease the degree he commits himself to the state of affairs denoted in the proposition. They enable X to express his utterance as his personal opinion, e.g. *I think, I guess, I believe, I suppose, in my opinion.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 167)

8. Forewarnings: These are anticipatory disarmament devices X uses to warn Y and anticipate potential negative reactions to X's act, e.g. *far be it from me to belittle*

your efforts, but...; you're a nice guy, Jim, but...; this may be a little bit boring to you, but...(House and Kasper, 1981: 168)

9. Hesitators: These are malformulations deliberately used to impress Y of the fact that X has doubts about his act, e.g. *erm, er, stuttering, reduplication*. (House and Kasper, 1981: 168)
10. Scope-Staters: These are elements that enable X to explicitly state his subjective opinion about a state of affairs mentioned in the proposition so that he lessens the force of his utterance, e.g. *I'm afraid you are in my seat; I'm a bit disappointed that you did P; I'm not happy about the fact that you did P*. (House and Kasper, 1981: 168)
11. Agent avoiders: These are syntactic devices by means of which X is able not to identify himself as well as his interlocutor Y as agents and thereby avoiding attack, e.g. passive, impersonal constructions using people, they, one, you as 'neutral agents' lacking [+definite] and [+specific] reference.

- *This is just not done*, Mr Robinson. (House and Kasper, 1981: 168)

House and Kasper (1981: 168) add that there are other elements in utterances particularly those called gambits or phatic-discourse lubricants (cited from Edmondson, 1977) which can be regarded as downgraders since they may downgrade the impact of an utterance on a given addressee. However Edmondson specifies two types of gambits to function as downgraders, namely cajolers and appealers. Cajolers are "elements used to increase, establish, or restore harmony between the interlocutors". *You know, you see, I mean, actually* are good examples to illustrate this category. Appealers, on the other hand, "appeal to the hearer and function to elicit a hearer signal, an uptaker" like for instance *okay, right, yeah*.

Moreover, House and Kasper (1981: 168) contend that supportive moves can act as downgraders. Supportive moves have three different types:

1. Steers, where X plans to lead the discourse in a parallel direction to his intentions, e.g. (X wants to borrow Y's records) *Would you like to put a record on?* (House and Kasper, 1981: 169)

2. Grounders, in which X provides reasons for his intent. They may precede or follow the major move, e.g. *God, I'm thirsty. Get me a beer, will you?* (here the grounders precede the central move) (House and Kasper, 1981: 169)
3. Preparators: X suggests the type of an intent he is going to show without pointing out the proposition to follow the preparatory, e.g. *I would like to ask you a question.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 169)

In contrast, upgraders are modality markers which raise the influence of an utterance on the addressee. They include six subtypes:

1. Overstaters: Adverbial modifiers which allow X to over-represent the reality indicated in the proposition to enhance the force of his utterance, e.g. *absolutely, purely, terribly, and frightfully.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 169)
2. Intensifiers: Adverbial modifiers X uses to highlight particular elements of proposition in his utterance, e.g. *very, so, such, quite, really, just, indeed.*

- *I'd be really pleased if you could help me.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 169)

3. + ("plus") Committers: Sentence modifiers X uses to denote his degree of commitments towards the state of affairs revealed in the proposition, e.g. *I'm sure, certainly, obviously, really.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 169)
4. Lexical intensifiers: lexical items known for the negative social attitude they have, e.g. *That's bloody mean of you.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 170)
5. Aggressive interrogatives: X employs an interrogative mood to have Y engaged explicitly and thus have the impact of his utterance on Y intensified, e.g. *'Why haven't you told me before?'* (House and Kasper, 1981: 169)
6. Rhetorical appeals: X uses rhetorical appeal to hint to the non-possibility of P and prevent Y from not accepting P, e.g. *You must understand that, anyone can see that, it's common knowledge that.*

- *You must understand that this is a public property.* (House and Kasper, 1981: 169)

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984: 200-202) developed a revised taxonomy of request strategies based on previous works on requests. What distinguishes their model from that of Ervin-Tripp (1976) and House and Kasper (1981) is that they differentiated, theoretically

speaking, three major levels of directness to perform requests. Then they expanded the number of request strategies to nine. The three levels of directness Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984: 201) describe are:

1. The most direct explicit level: recognised by syntactically marked requests such as imperatives, or by other verbal means labelling the act as a request like performatives (Austin 1962) and 'hedged performatives' (Fraser 1975).
2. The conventionally direct level: procedures that name the act as a request by referring to contextual preconditions essential for its performance, as conventionalised in a particular language like, for instance, '*could you do it*' or '*would you do it*'.
3. Nonconventional indirect level: the group of indirect strategies that realises the act as request by either partially referring to an object needed for the implementation of the act ('*Why is the window open*'), or by relying on contextual clues ('*It's cold in here*').

At the level of individual strategies for requests, Blum Kulka and Olshtain (1984: 202) introduced the following nine types which I am going to use as the coding strategies in my study as they proved to be applicable to all 8 languages studied in the Cross Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP). Moreover, it has been proved to be quite an effective model adopted in many other studies.

Types	Tokens
1. <i>Mood derivable:</i>	
The grammatical mood of the verb in the utterance identifies its illocutionary force as a request,	- <i>Leave me alone!</i> - <i>Clean up this mess please!</i>
2. <i>Explicit performative:</i>	
The speakers explicitly name the grammatical force of the utterance.	- <i>I am asking you not to park the car here.</i>

3. *Hedged performative:* - *I would like you to give your lecture a week earlier.*
Naming of the illocutionary point is embedded in the utterance itself.

4. *Locution derivable:* - *Madam, you'll have to move your car.*
The listener directly derives the illocutionary point from the semantic meaning of the locution.

5. *Scope stating:* - *I really wish you'd stop bothering me.*
The utterance conveys the speaker's intentions, desire or feeling towards the hearer's action X.

6. *Language specific suggestory formula:* - *Why don't you get lost?*
- *How about cleaning up?*
The utterance includes a suggestion to perform action X.

7. *Reference to preparatory condition:* - *Could you clear up the kitchen please?*
- *Would you mind moving your car please?*
Sentence contains reference to preparatory condition (e.g. ability or willingness, the possibility of the act being performed) as conventions in any given language.

8. *Strong hints:* - *You've left this kitchen in a right mess.*
The utterance includes a partial reference

to objects or elements necessary for the implementation of the act.

9. The Utterance has no elements of - *I'm a nun* (in response to a persistent direct reference to the intended boy).
illocution but is understood via the context as a request.

Table 1. Request strategies suggested by Blum Kulka and Olshtain (1984): 202.

Examples above are taken from Blum Kulka and Olshtain, 1984: 202.

Marti (2006: 1836) argues that, despite the fact that the CCSARP framework, described in Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), provides a powerful coding scheme for analysing discourse completion test (DCT) data cross-linguistically, it does not count for 'unsaid' data. Therefore, she, in her study, expands the strategy types used by informants in response to the DCTs so as to include not only the CCSARP nine directness categories but also the deliberate choices of opting out, providing alternative solutions, and attempts at negotiation. Each of these new categories will be highlighted and discussed in detail.

1. Opting out:

Marti (2006: 1853) introduced this strategy in order to analyse the responses of informants who have deliberately chosen not to do the FTA (face threatening act). Brown and Levinson (1987) view this strategy of opting out as a pragmatic choice that lies at the ultimate end of the politeness scale because the FTA is too difficult to do.

Yeung (1997) conducted a study to investigate reasons behind participants' choice to use off-record strategies. She asked informants to rate the politeness level of requests in some English and Chinese documents like memos and letters in order to examine the influence of the relative power P, social distance D, and imposition R on linguistic choices. While imposition proved to be influential in the English data, none of the factors had any influence in Chinese. Yeung explains that this may be because of the

importance of the “on-record appropriateness” and “reciprocity” principles in Chinese society. The former principle states that the decision of making a request relies on whether or not it is appropriate to go on-record in a specific context and whether the person is “in the position to do so” (Yeung, 1997: 519). Yeung provides an explanation behind the choice of off-record strategies. She postulates that when the appropriateness requirement is not met in a particular context, the speaker may employ off-record strategies or use an intermediary to make the request.

A good example to illustrate the opting out strategy can be found in the lift situation¹ in Marti’s (2006: 1856) data, where some informants explained that they would not request a lift from a couple who did not know very well even though they live in the same street. Some of the participants justified their choice of opting out (e.g., *‘I do not know the couple well enough’*). Others simply stated that they would prefer to wait for the bus or call a taxi: *“I wouldn’t ask for such a thing. I would wait even if the bus is in 2 hours. The offer has to come from the other side. If I want to go to a concert I would take care of everything beforehand.”* (Marti, 2006: 1856)

The previous examples show the importance of opting out as a strategy the respondents can choose in tested situations. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), avoiding an FTA is more indirect than a “verbalised” off-record strategy.

Marti (2006: 1858) argues that although it is difficult in real life situations to identify instances of non-verbalised or avoided requests and the reason behind them, the role indirect strategies (off-record and avoidance of FTA) have is important since it reflects the norms of a culture. This point adds to the credibility of DCTs as good ways of finding unsaid strategies not apparent in naturally occurring data.

2. *Alternative responses:*

¹ In the lift situation in Marti’s study the informant asks a couple (not very familiar) who live on the same street for a lift. Here is the English translations of the (Lift) situation:

Lift: The concert is over. You were planning to take the bus, but you have to wait for an hour. You see a couple (whom you don’t know very well) who have a car and you ask for a lift:

Marti (2006: 1855) clarifies that in some situations, rather than providing a straightforward request, informants produced alternative solutions, so that for example when they needed to ask for change, some decided to make a small purchase (such as a chewing gum) in order to fulfil that need. She compares this act to Brown and Levinson's (1987) strategy 'Don't do the FTA' although it could be distinguished as 'Do a less face threatening FTA'. Marti (2006: 1858) states that recent studies such as Fredsted (2005), Kallen (2005), and Lorenzo-Dus (2001) reveal that participants provided "non-verbal and paralinguistic cues" to convey their message. The alternative responses in Marti's data remind us that in real life, speakers are not restricted in performing their request in a straightforward manner; on the contrary, they have a wide range of ways to get their message across.

3. *Negotiation:*

Marti (2006: 1855) remarks that in some situations informants tried negotiating whilst making a request. The participants tried using some strategies to establish common ground to reduce the size of imposition by employing some utterances like: *How are you? Good evening. Did you like the concert? You were also at the concert?* As in the lift example: *"Good evening. I guess you were also at the concert. By the way, I think we are neighbours, I frequently see you around. Can you take me as well when you go [home]?"* (Marti, 2006: 1855).

The second example below shows that a straightforward request may not always be the preferred strategy by some informants. In this example, the informant has the role of a teacher in a context where the teacher is supposed to ask the student to give his presentation a week earlier:

"Murat, I have realized that your topic is more suitable for next week. If you say, '(my) teacher, I can manage to do it', then your presentation is next week. But if you say 'no, I can't manage this', I can give you half of the topic material [to prepare]."

Obviously, the speaker is making the request that the student needs to do something next week. However, the informant offered the student a choice between presenting the whole material in case he is willing to do so, or only half of the proposed subject in case he is not able to prepare it. Providing the student with a choice would increase his options and decrease the face threat of the request.

Marti (2006: 1855) explains that responses when used in a dialogue format can be viewed as “reflections of the interactive nature of authentic requests”. She concludes that negotiation and alternative responses strategies employed by informants reflect the dynamic feature of the act of requesting.

2.3.4. A reflexive account of previous studies on requests:

In the previous sections, I have provided definitions for requests and discussed different requests’ forms and functions. The aim of this section is to provide a comprehensive review of interlanguage and cross-cultural studies that have focused on requests. The first half will focus on researchers in the field of interlanguage studies such as Blum-Kulka (1982, 1983, 1991), Olshtain and Cohen (1983), Faerch and Kasper (1989), Garcia (1989, 1993), Cohen and Olshtain (1993), Goldschmidt (1996), Hasall (2003), and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2008) who studied how learners or non-native language users request in a second language. Although the current research main focus is not in the field of interlanguage studies, it has some pedagogical implications for both teachers and learners of second languages. The second half of this section will discuss studies that reflect on cross-cultural issues including universality versus culture-specificity of requests. Cross-cultural studies, under which our study is classified, are concerned with the socio-cultural rules underlying requesting behaviour across languages and cultures and the function of politeness and deference in requests realisations. The studies of House and Kasper (1981), Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), Blum-Kulka (1989), Blum-Kulka and House (1989), and Marti (2006) that will be covered stand as good examples of cross-cultural research studies.

Inter-language Studies:

Studies in inter-language research are mostly concerned with deciding the universal as well as the language-specific aspects of second language development and uses. This aim can be achieved by contrasting native performance with its non-native counterpart. In this regard, one can either compare learner groups of different language backgrounds aspiring to acquire the same target language, or learners of the same native language while studying different target languages (Faerch and Kasper, 1989: 221). Some inter-language studies

focus their attention on learner's linguistic errors or inappropriate speech act realisations in order to reveal the pragmatic knowledge they have gained, such as the studies conducted by Blum-Kulka (1982, 1983). However, Thomas (1983) distinguishes between two types of pragmatic failure: sociopragmatic failure, where learners use their own sociopragmatic rules to measure the relevant situational factors (rather than that of the target culture), and pragmalinguistic transfer, where native linguistic means and procedures of speech act performance are transferred to inter-language communication, such as the study of Olshtain and Cohen (1983). Such studies' main concern is what learners can successfully transfer from their native language. Another group of inter-language studies investigates the influence of sociopragmatic factors like age, sex, relative status of the interlocutors, and other situational constraints which are recognized and used by second-language learners while understanding and producing their requests (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 9-11).

Faerch and Kasper (1989) examine request realizations of native Danish speakers learning English and German in an attempt to uncover both the similarities and differences in native and non-native norms. However they narrowed their focus to be on the mitigating functions of internal and external modification. Their research thus addresses the following questions:

- *What are the mitigating categories used on both dimensions?*
- *Is there a systematic relationship between the use of internal and external modification?*
- *How do contextual factors such as the interlocutors' role relationship, their rights and obligations, and the degree of imposition involved in the request influence the choice of internal and external modification?*
- *How do patterns of internal and external modification vary cross-culturally, in particular between native and non-native speakers? (Faerch and Kasper, 1989: 222)*

Faerch and Kasper (1989: 224) distinguish between two major types of mitigation: internal and external modification. Concerning syntactic downgraders, Faerch and Kasper (1989: 224-227) reveal that the Danish-German interlanguage data exhibits a tendency towards overcomplexity in the use of syntactic downgraders. By contrast, the Danish-English interlanguage requests do not show a similar tendency towards syntactic overcomplexity. Further, they state that the Danish learners of German differ from German

native speakers both qualitatively and quantitatively reflecting pragmalinguistic failures in the following areas: sentence negation, modal verbs, and pronouns of address. On the contrary, the English interlanguage realizations comply with the native English responses.

With respect to lexical/phrasal downgraders, Faerch and Kasper (1989: 231-234) found that the learners prefer using politeness markers because of their double function as illocutionary force indicator and transparent mitigator. They explain that language learners tend to abide by the conversational principle of clarity by choosing explicit transparent unambiguous means of expression instead of implicit, opaque, and ambiguous realizations. These qualities are perfectly met by politeness markers rather than other lexical/phrasal downgraders. When it comes to external modification, Faerch and Kasper (1989: 237-240) note that learners use considerably more supportive moves than German and English native speakers. The Danish speakers tend to support their requests by means of grounders and grounder combinations.

In the end, Faerch and Kasper (1989, 245) conclude that “there is a universal trend for language learners to observe the principle ‘the more the better’ as an implementation of playing it safe strategy during the intermediate phase of their interlanguage development”. They suggest two explanations to count for this phenomenon. Firstly, learners like to distinguish themselves from beginner learners through displaying their linguistic abilities. Secondly, intermediate learners, though realizing their restricted competence compared to advanced or native speakers, try to make themselves understood by means of over-elaboration as it helps to clarify the learner’s intended meaning.

Unlike Faerch and Kasper (1989) who compared learner groups of the same native language while studying different target languages, Garcia (1989) in her paper investigates the stylistic devices used by American (L1) and Venezuelan (L2) speakers in two different English language role-play situations: disagreeing and requesting. Although informants used different combinations of devices, certain patterns followed by L1 and L2 speakers were distinguished. These patterns indicate the cultural styles of the participant groups. L1 speakers preferred non-confrontational stylistic devices in disagreeing with an L1 interlocutor and impersonal stylistic devices when requesting a service. L2s, on the other hand, used more confrontational devices when disagreeing and more personal devices when requesting a service. This paper is an illuminating piece of work since it draws conclusions about second and foreign language education. It implies that it is really helpful for students

to acquire skills that allow them to identify and adapt to different cultural and language-appropriate situations. This is of great importance as Omaggio (1986: 359) suggests:

The development of higher levels of [language] proficiency requires a growing awareness of the most effective and appropriate means of communicating with native speakers in various social settings and circumstances.

Moreover, it is important for students to learn to choose and use the culturally and language-appropriate frame/stylistic devices which enable them to cope effectively in most situations because, as Green and Smith (1983: 360) point out, when the frame of participation is not understood, it might result in not only misinterpretation but also anger and irritation.

In another piece of research, Garcia (1993) expands the notion of language and culture specific research by testing the strategies Peruvian Spanish speakers use while requesting a service and refusing or accepting it. In general, the strategies used by the informants when requesting showed a marked preference for expressing deference over camaraderie or solidarity in head acts² and also supportive moves³. On the other side of the spectrum, informants preferred camaraderie with the interlocutor in responding to the request. This behaviour is parallel to that of Peruvian participants when refusing an invitation and when accepting it. The first case could be justified due to the fact that both refusals and requests form a threat to the hearer's negative face and thereby require expressions of respect and deference to avoid imposition. However, in the second case Peruvian Spanish speakers chose solidarity politeness strategies because accepting a request or an invitation would not pose any threat to the interlocutor's negative face. On the contrary, it would satisfy his/her positive face, i.e. the need to be liked or approved by others (Garcia, 1993: 147-148).

² Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 275-276) define head acts as "the minimal units[s] which can realize a request; they are the core of the request sequence"

³ Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 275-276) define supportive moves as "units external to the request, which modify its impact by either aggravating or mitigating its impact by either aggravating... or mitigating...its force."

Gathering evidence from both cross-linguistic and inter-language data, Blum-Kulka (1991) presents a model to discuss the inter-language pragmatics of requests. The analysis reflects the differences in behaviour between Israeli and American patterns. Blum-Kulka claims that the Israeli norms are disregarded due to the learners wish not to be identified with native speaker norms. She (1991: 268) suggests two complementary lines of explanation for this phenomenon. The first shows that ways of speaking are culturally determined and that they differ from one culture to another. The speech acts of the bilingual English-Hebrew immigrants were significantly different from both Hebrew and English patterns. The Americans were less direct than the American immigrants, and the American immigrants were less direct than the Israelis. This case stands as a 'typical' example of the effects of cultural contact on language regardless of the level of linguistic proficiency. The second line of argument speculates that the use of inter-cultural style serves as an assertion of 'cultural identity' on both the individual and the group levels.

Other inter-language studies like that of Cohen and Olshtain (1993) do not compare and contrast native and learner performance in the target language. They rather focus their attention on learner's linguistic errors or inappropriate speech act realisations in order to reveal learners' pragmatic knowledge. Cohen and Olshtain (1993) report on a study reflecting ways in which non-native speakers assessed, planned, and then delivered speech acts. The findings show that in performing the speech acts, half of the time the respondents conducted only a general assessment of the utterances requested in situations without planning specific vocabulary and grammatical structures. They often utilized a series of different strategies in searching for language forms without paying much attention to either grammar or pronunciation. In their work, Cohen and Olshtain (1993) shed light on the process of producing types of speech acts across cultures, and this is a new dimension for studying speech acts cross-culturally.

The third type of inter-language studies such as Goldschmidt, (1996); Hassall, (2003) and Economidou-Kogetsidis, (2008) investigate the influence of sociopragmatic factors like age, sex, relative status of the interlocutors which are used by second-language learners. Goldschmidt (1996), in her study, highlighted the speech act of favour-asking and the impact it has on an addressee in terms of imposition. She identified four features that characterize the speech act of favour-asking which 1) involves asking for something outside the addressee's daily routine, 2) entails doing activities that require some time and/or effort

on the part of the addressee or involves goods belonging to the addressee, 3) entails no role-related obligation on the part of the addressee to fulfil the task, and 4) implies the notion of reciprocity in terms of a return favour. The results showed that in this particular speech community the most imposition felt was that in situations where family privacy was intruded upon or in situations that require a great deal of time and effort. The imposition ratings were very similar in most situations regardless of age, gender, and student or non-student status of the respondent. This, in turns, suggests a sort of universal understanding of imposition parameters. This conclusion emphasizes the importance of teaching non-native speakers the situations known to create the feeling of imposition in a particular speech community in order to learn the appropriate ways of favour-asking.

In his research, Hassall (2003) was planning to investigate how Australian learners of Indonesian perform their requests in everyday situations in comparison to Indonesian native speakers. The analysis highlights the potential importance of: positive pragmatic transfer, the negative effect of formal instruction, and learners' concern about their ability to express meaning clearly. Further, this study carries developmental implications for L2 pragmatics as it confirms Bialystok's (1993) claim that gaining control over knowledge rather than knowledge itself is the main challenging task for adult learners of L2 pragmatics. Moreover, this study proposes that learners avoid transferring pragmatic features from their native language as their L2 linguistic proficiency increases. Thus, the learners' level of linguistic proficiency is vital to acquire the pragmatic features associated with skills in conversational management. In addition, the study suggests that learners use less want and hint statements as their linguistic proficiency develops.

In another piece of research, Economidou-Kogetsidis (2008) examines how cultural norms can affect speakers' linguistic choices both in their native language and in a second/foreign language. In her paper, she traces the inter-language request mitigation of Greek learners of English in comparison with British English native speakers' performance. She detects the learners' deviations concerning the use of internal and external modification by examining the way non-native speakers of English use lexical and phrasal downgraders and external supportive moves for mitigating their English requests in three power asymmetrical social situations. These situations are difficult as they commonly require better pragmatic skills. Therefore, her study seeks to not only uncover the deviations of Greek learners of English, but also relate any deviation to issues of politeness and culture.

Moreover, this article pursues the extent to which the social variables of power, familiarity, and imposition of the requested act could possibly influence the learner's use of request mitigation.

The Greek learners underused lexical/phrasal downgraders in the study, particularly, the marker 'please' and consultative devices/openers. They also underused apologies and overused disarmers and preparators in their mitigating supportive moves. This phenomenon can be explained in the light of the native influence. Being less conventionalised in Greek these formulaic expressions, which are overt politeness markers in English, tend to be less used by the Greek speakers. Moreover, Economidou-Kogetsidis (2008: 131-132) argues that Greeks view these markers as less valuable distancing devices, naturally associated with formality rather than politeness.

Having shed light upon some inter-language studies on requests in section 2.3.4.1, we shall discuss cross-cultural studies, the main aim of which is to illustrate the different cultural norms concerning request behaviour and the way the speech act of request is realised cross-culturally as well as cross-linguistically.

Cross-cultural studies:

Cross-cultural studies focus their investigation on patterns of speech or "cultural ways of speaking" (Kartiel, 1985). These studies try to uncover culture-specific features of discourse and distinct interactional styles that could possibly lead to breakdowns in communication within expectations of linguistic behaviour, interpretative strategies, and signalling devices. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 7) indicate that particular attention, in the realm of cross-cultural studies, has been devoted to the following two issues:

1. *The value and function of politeness or deference in speech act realization.*
2. *The universality of politeness phenomena across languages and cultures.*

House and Kasper (1981) compare English and the German speakers' use of politeness markers in the realization of requests and complaints. They (1981: 158) analyse the politeness phenomena in English and German contrastively because the verbal behaviour of the German learners of English is often perceived as impolite by English native speakers. They also check whether different social norms of different speech communities might

affect the politeness aspects of the linguistic behaviour of native speakers. Further, they investigate how different norms of interlocutors' communicative strategies may result in various distributions of deference markers in two different speech communities.

They (1981: 182) concluded that, in general, Germans selected higher levels of directness in both complaints and request cases. They state that the distribution of modality markers in the two languages differ according to the speech act category and the directness level as well. The Germans used upgraders more frequently than English speakers, and thereby showed a stronger tendency to intensify the force of their speech act in conflict situations. In the case of requests, English speakers use lower directness levels in their requests as well as more downgraders than German speakers. House and Kasper (1981: 182) point out that, in the case of requests, the tendency for using low directness levels with a higher frequency of downgraders in both languages can be interpreted as "an indication of speaker's heightened awareness of the interactional consequences their speech act may entail, which induces them to 'play it doubly safe.'"

In another related study, which also aims to detect the effect of cultural differences on the choice of strategy types while performing the speech act of request, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984: 197) report on the CCSARP project designed to highlight the realization patterns of two speech acts (requests and apologies) in order to point out the similarities and differences between native and non-native speakers. They assume that there are three types of variation in the realization of the two speech acts: 1- intra-cultural, situational variability; 2- cross-cultural variability; 3- individual variability. The speech acts of apologies and requests were studied in various situations across eight languages, namely Australian English, American English, British English, Canadian French, Danish, German, Hebrew, and Russian. For this purpose, they designed a discourse completion test and distributed it to groups of informants. In the course of analyzing the data, the researchers developed a coding scheme applicable to all the tested languages.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984: 209) conclude their paper by reflecting on the implications their research project introduces. They point out that one central issue in studying speech acts is the question of universality, i.e. the extent to which any natural language reveals basic pragmatic features of a given speech act. They clarify that their work was based on a series of hypotheses of what represents universal features of request and

apologies. Concerning requests, they emphasize three working hypotheses regarding universal features that guided their work:

1. In requesting behaviour, it is possible to distinguish important phenomena such as strategy types and different forms of internal and external modification.
2. Requesting behaviour is based on selecting choices ranging from direct to indirect strategies.
3. The scale of directness includes three main categories, namely direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984: 209) note that the employment of an empirical framework to analyse the CCSARP data is expected to reveal cross-cultural variation along the direct/indirect scale. In their study, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain demonstrate a powerful critical way for analyzing the data collected drawing on many previous studies. This in-depth analytical framework is going to form the backbone of the coding scheme of my research project.

In another paper related to the CCSARP project, Blum-Kulka (1989: 46) states that the two major findings in the CCSARP project were: 1) The modes of realizing pragmalinguistic conventions are different among languages; and 2) The fundamental uses of conventional indirectness seem to be universal. Blum-Kulka (1989: 68) explains that in examining the variations of conventional indirectness in various languages, the focus was on their forms, contents, shared and unshared properties across languages. The analysis revealed a multitude of differences but also pointed to similarities in main features as well. It reflected the importance of conventional indirectness as a preferred option for speakers to choose in all examined languages. However, conventional indirect strategies do not carry similar social meanings across the studied languages. Furthermore, cultural norms and attitudes have their own influence on determining the relative politeness in actual use.

Blum-Kulka and House (1989: 149) upon testing the cross-cultural variability of the requesting behaviour in the CCSARP project, identify interesting cross-cultural differences in directness levels among speakers of Hebrew, Canadian French, Argentinean Spanish, Australian English, and German: Argentinean Spanish speakers followed by Hebrew speakers were the most direct among the other groups, while the least direct speakers were

the Australian English speakers. Canadian French and German speakers were placed at the mid-point on the directness scale.

Adopting a broader perspective than that followed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) in the analysis process of her data, Marti (2006) attempted to cast light on both realization and politeness perception of the requests performed by Turkish monolingual speakers and Turkish-German bilingual returnees. She traced the influence of the pragmatic transfer on the pragmatic performance of the Turkish-German bilingual returnees. She administered a discourse completion test DCT to both groups so as to obtain requests in 10 different situations. Next, she distributed a politeness rating questionnaire to measure politeness in Turkish requests and hence establish a relation between indirectness and politeness.

Marti (2006: 1862) concludes that her findings conform to Blum-Kulka (1987) in that there is no linear link between indirectness and politeness, although indirectness and politeness are strongly interconnected concepts. Therefore, she argues that it is vital to distinguish between these two concepts. With reference to the overall directness, cross-cultural comparisons yielded the information that the Turkish monolingual speakers are inclined to use more direct strategies in contrast to German speakers. However, Marti (2006: 1862) reports no significant differences between Turkish monolinguals and Turkish-German bilinguals except that in the Guest⁴ and Lift situations where the Turkish-German bilingual speakers used indirect strategies. This refers to the slight influence of German on the bilingual speakers. Further, concerning investigating the nature of requests beyond the boundaries of the Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) directness scale “which covers only the ‘said’, but not the ‘unsaid’”, Marti illustrates that the fact that her study’s informants employed distinct strategies to those followed in previous studies reflects the dynamic nature of requests.

Upon re-analysing the data, the Turkish monolinguals, in some situations, demonstrated a higher opting out rate than their Turkish-German bilingual peers. This indicates that Turkish speakers tend to be more reluctant to make a request since they opt out more, while the

⁴ Here is the English translations of the (Guest) situation:

Guest: It is 6:30 and you have been invited out to dinner at 7:30. You have an unexpected visitor. You have to get ready and leave for the dinner. You ask your visitor to leave:

Turkish-German speakers tend to opt out less, but use more indirect strategies instead of opting out. Marti's study is important to the current research because I adopt the same coding scheme Marti used, which identifies categories for analysing unsaid strategies.

Ogiermann (2009: 209) provides more insights into cross-cultural variation in the realisation of the speech acts as she analyses English, German, Polish and Russian. She elicited data by means of discourse completion. The results of her research for English and German confirm previous findings (e.g. Faerch and Kasper 1989), that there is a strong preference for interrogative constructions. However, with regard to Polish, the finding that there is a preference for using the interrogative construction undermines Wierzbicka's (1985, 1991) early studies of the central role of the imperative in Polish (Ogierman, 2009: 209). As for results in Russian, Ogiermann was not able to validate previous studies' claims that the imperative is the most frequent request type. She also claims that contextual factors play an important role in the choice of request strategies.

2.4. Chapter summary:

In this chapter, I have reviewed the classical works on speech act theory because of their interconnection with my research. They shed light upon both direct and indirect illocutions of speech acts including requests, so that they provide us with tools to cover the different meanings a request utterance could bear. After that, attention was paid to defining requests and the potential forms or strategies to perform a request.

Finally, we looked at a series of inter-language and cross-cultural studies on the speech act of request. Many of these studies investigate similarities and differences in realization patterns of requests within the realms of one language by native speaker and learners of that particular language, and across different languages. Moreover, some of these studies highlighted social and situational factors affecting the speaker's choice of request strategy and its level of directness. Usually, the person performing a request tailors his/her words, taking into account the status of his/her addressee and the situation in which he/she is involved. Furthermore, it was found that the sociopragmatic rules in one's native language underlie the way speakers make their request in another language. Learners, therefore, tend to request in a different way to native speakers of the target language. However, this could

be explained in terms of learners' poor mastery of either linguistic devices or the sociopragmatic competence available in that language.

The next chapter will be devoted to discussing the relevant politeness theories that may offer an explanation of the politeness choices adopted by the subjects in this study.

CHAPTER THREE: AN OVERVIEW OF THEORIES OF POLITENESS

3.1. Introduction:

The main purpose of this chapter is to review previous research on linguistic politeness in order to build a contextual background against which the current research stands. Most of the research studies conducted in this field explore the relationships between politeness on one hand and language and the social world on the other. However, they differ in the way they tackle politeness. The discussion in this chapter will cover the major approaches to politeness theory: the social-norm view, the conversational-maxim view, the face-saving view, the conversational-contract view, and finally the discursive post-modern view.

3.2. The Social-norm view:

According to Fraser (1990), the social-norm view — which is a non-linguistic approach to politeness — reflects a historical understanding of politeness, at least for the English-speaking world. Politeness in this approach is associated with etiquette, good manners, correct behaviours, and social rules, i.e. what to do and what not to do. Fraser states that it is assumed that every society has a certain set of social norms (rules) which prescribe certain behaviour, states of affairs, or ways of thinking in a particular context. An action receives a positive evaluation if it is in line with the norm or a negative evaluation (impoliteness-rudeness) if it does not adhere to the norm. Fraser (1990: 221) explains that “This normative view considers politeness to be associated with speech style, whereby a higher degree of formality implies greater politeness”.

The social-norm view, which reflects more or less the 'rules' of polite behaviour in a society, has not been found to provide an operational framework for studying politeness as it only covers common-sense notions of politeness and thus does not amount to a theoretical construct. Therefore, I will not elaborate on this view, but rather move to “the conversational maxim view”, which has received more discussion in the literature.

3.3. The Conversational-maxim view:

The second view of politeness which is the conversational maxim view is principally based on Grice's (1975: 41) Cooperative Principle (CP). Lakoff (1973) and Leech (1983) have adopted Grice's Cooperative Principle and expanded it. In this section I will review Lakoff's view in 2.3.1. and Leech's view in 2.3.2.

3.3.1. Lakoff's approach as conflict avoidance:

Lakoff (1973) was the first to conceptualise the issue of politeness from the conversational-maxim viewpoint. In her (1973) article "The logic of politeness or minding your p's and q's", she took up Grice's suggestion to establish a politeness maxim. She recommended complementing syntactic and semantic rules by adding a pragmatic set of politeness rules to Grice's cooperative principle. In this regard, she attempts to set up pragmatic rules of well-formedness as an extension to the rules of grammar. She claims that the search for pragmatic rules has its seeds in the notion of 'pragmatic competence' which is parallel to Chomsky's notion of grammatical competence (Watts, 2003: 59-60). Lakoff's model of pragmatic competence consists of two rules:

1. Be clear
2. Be polite.

Each of these rules is composed of a set of subrules. She inserted Grice's maxims under the first rule 'be clear' which is directly under the dominance of the rules of politeness 'be polite', as she contends that the rules of clarity are a "sub-case of the rules of politeness" (Lakoff, 1973: 305). She explains that "when clarity conflicts with politeness, in most cases (but not ... all) politeness supersedes: it is considered more important in a conversation to avoid offense than to achieve clarity" (Lakoff, 1973: 297).

The rules of politeness are:

1. Don't impose.
2. Give options.

3. Make A feel good – be friendly.

The first rule “Don’t impose” is the most formal politeness rule that is appropriate to account for situations where there is a considerable difference in power and status between participants such as that between a student and a dean. The second rule “offer options” is less formal than the first one. It is appropriate to be used in situations where participants have fairly equal status and power such as the relationship between two strangers sitting in the doctor’s waiting room. The third rule “make A feel good, be friendly” is used to express a friendly politeness used among intimates or close friends (Green, 1996: 148-149). In a subsequent work, Lakoff (1975: 65) renamed these rules of politeness as follows: Formality: keep aloof, Deference: give options, Camaraderie: show sympathy.

Eelen (2001: 3) criticizes Lakoff’s assumption that her politeness rules are universal and integrated in every social interaction. He argues that different cultures would be likely to stress one or two of these rules at the expense of the others: politeness phenomena are evaluated differently across cultures. Yeung (1997: 506) also points out that she “never goes into the question of how the choice is made”. Overall, Lakoff’s approach is not adequately formulated to be taken as a basis for this study as it cannot be applicable across cultures. Therefore, the next section will focus on Leech’s further attempt to involve Grice’s maxims in his politeness model.

3.3.2. Leech’s model of general pragmatics:

Leech (1983: 1) calls his approach to linguistic politeness phenomena “general pragmatics” in which he tries to explain “how language is used in communication”. In his work, he adopts and expands Grice’s Conversational Principles. However, he points out that these principles on their own cannot explain why people choose to be indirect in their speech and what relation there is between sense and force in non-declarative types of sentences (Leech, 1983: 80).

He distinguishes between two systems of rhetoric in his pragmatic framework: the textual rhetoric and the interpersonal one. Each of these systems consists of a set of

principles. Politeness lies in the realms of interpersonal rhetoric which includes three principles: the Cooperative Principle or Grice's (CP), the Politeness Principle (PP) and finally the Irony Principle (IP) which, as he claims, enables the speaker to be impolite while seeming to be polite (Leech, 1983: 142). Leech considers the Politeness Principle as essential and complementary to Grice's Cooperative Principle. He explains that while the Cooperative Principle accounts for *how* meaning is indirectly conveyed, the Politeness Principle accounts for *why* indirectness is being used in conveying meaning:

The CP [Cooperative Principle] enables one participant in a conversation to communicate on the assumption that the other participant is being cooperative. In this the CP has the function of regulating what we say so that it contributes to some assumed illocutionary or discoursal goal(s). It could be argued, however, the PP [Politeness Principle] has a higher regulative role than this: to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place. (Leech, 1983: 82)

He clarifies that the Politeness Principle provides an interpretation for the exceptions where speakers do not abide by the conversational maxims of the Cooperative Principle (Leech, 1983: 80).

- A: We'll all miss Bill and Agatha, won't we?
- B: Well, we'll all miss Bill. (Leech, 1983: 82)

In this example the speaker B flouts the maxim of quantity in order not to be offensive by giving the full information, i.e. 'we won't miss Agatha'.

Leech's model (1983: 123) is based on three pragmatic scales that are interconnected with the notion of politeness:

1. The "cost-benefit" scale of politeness involves both the speaker and the hearer. According to Leech, politeness is achieved through minimising the cost and maximising the benefit to the speaker/hearer.
2. The "optionality" scale that refers to the degree to which the proposed action is chosen by the hearer.
3. The "indirectness" scale that implies the amount of inference required on the part of the addressee to understand what is meant by the proposed action. In his work,

Leech (1983) introduces six maxims associated with his Politeness Principle:

1. The tact maxim:

- a. Minimise cost to other.
- b. Maximise benefit to other.

This maxim can be illustrated through the illocutionary functions of ordering, requesting, commanding, advising, recommending, offering, promising ...etc.

2. The generosity maxim:

- a. Minimise benefit to self.
- b. Maximise cost to self.

An important point to make here is that over-applying this maxim creates sarcasm: E.g. *Have another vat of wine, dear.* (Thomas, 1995: 162) while under-applying it makes the speaker appear mean: e.g. *Have a peanut!* (Thomas, 1995: 162).

3. The approbation maxim:

- a. Minimise dispraise to other.
- b. Maximise praise of other.

This maxim is expressed through the illocutionary functions of thanking, congratulating, blaming, complaining ...etc.

4. The modesty maxim:

- a. Minimise praise of self.
- b. Maximise praise of other.

E.g. *Well done! What a wonderful performance! I wish I could sing as well as that.* (Watts, 2003: 67)

5. The agreement maxim:

- a. Minimise disagreement between self and other.
- b. Maximise agreement between self and other.

This maxim is mostly used in congratulating or condoling with someone.

6. The sympathy maxim:

- a. Minimise antipathy between self and other.
- b. Maximise sympathy between self and other.

E.g. Despite very serious disagreement with you on a technical level, *we have done our best to coordinate our efforts in reaching an agreement*, but so far not been able to find any common ground. (Watts, 2003: 67)

Leech (1983: 83-84) makes a distinction between two types of linguistic politeness: absolute and relative politeness. Leech defines absolute politeness as a set of scales that indicates the degree of politeness between a positive and a negative pole. He claims that some linguistic forms are inherently more polite than others. Orders, for example, are impolite in nature while on the other hand, offers are intrinsically polite. According to Leech, the term negative politeness represents the minimisation of the impoliteness of impolite illocutions, whereas positive politeness stands for the maximisation of the politeness of polite illocutions (Fraser, 1990: 226). This is in contrast to the meaning of these terms in Brown and Levinson's (1987) model, to be discussed in section 3.4. below. Relative politeness, on the other hand, is associated with different variables such as context and situations. Hence, different cultures employ the Cooperative and Politeness Principles in different ways.

Leech's theory, like any theory, has been subject to both praise and critique by many scholars. Locher (2004: 66) indicates that Leech's maxims could provide us with an explanation of motivations behind politeness phenomena in British culture. Other researchers perceive Leech's model to be a great contribution to the field of politeness studies. Watts (1992: 7) states that Leech's model highlights the normative aspect of politeness and the achievement of social goals.

On the other hand, Thomas (1995: 167) explains that the absence of a "motivated way to restrict the number of maxims" is considered to be one major weakness in Leech's model as "it makes the theory at best inelegant, at worst virtually unfalsifiable". Similarly, Dillon et al. (1985), Lavandera (1988), Fraser (1990) and Turner (1996) argue that Leech is not decisive in terms of the number of principles required to justify politeness phenomena in the sense that he does not specify the number of principles required to explain politeness phenomena. One further problem raised by scholars such as Fraser (1990) and Spencer-Oatey and Jiang (2003) is Leech's classification of illocutionary acts as intrinsically polite or impolite. Fraser believes that speech acts cannot be labelled as inherently polite or impolite without taking cultural and situational variables into account. The use of the speech act of ordering in the classroom, for instance, should not be viewed as impolite according to Fraser.

Held (1992: 139) identifies another limitation in Leech's model in which Leech makes an association between indirectness and politeness. Held claims that direct utterances can be perceived as polite in specific contexts where indirect utterances can be perceived as impolite. Moreover, Blum-Kulka (1987: 131), after testing both concepts of politeness and directness in her study, discovered that "indirectness does not necessarily imply politeness".

Watts (2003: 69) suggests that Leech, in his work, offers no guidance to researchers on "how an individual participating in an interaction can possibly know the degree and type of politeness required for the performance of a speech act". However, Leech argues that his theory is concerned with politeness interpretation rather than production and, therefore, it should not be perceived as a deficit. In the next section I will discuss Brown and Levinson's model which does explicitly include the process of production as well as interpretation.

3.4. The Face-saving view:

In contrast to Leech's approach, Brown and Levinson's (1987) model is an attempt to create a theory of how individuals *produce* linguistic politeness. Therefore, the main focus in their model is on the speaker unlike Leech's model where the focus is on the hearer. Brown and Levinson (1987: 58) argue that politeness is a universal phenomenon. They build their assumption on their observation of the similarities speakers of different languages display. They employ a Model Person (MP) in order to provide a detailed account of the linguistic similarities in language use. They describe their Model Person as a "fluent speaker of a natural language, further endowed with two special properties — rationality and face" Brown and Levinson (1987: 58). They explain that rationality refers to the Model Person's ability of reasoning from ends to the means that will fulfil those ends, whereas face refers to the two special wants the Model Person is equipped with: the want to be unimpeded and the want to be approved of by others.

In their analysis of politeness, they draw on Goffman's (1972) notion of face as a presentation of self. They define face as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself", and clarify that face is "something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 61). They state that preserving 'face' is one major concern for participants in any given conversation across cultures. They also assume that every

individual has two types of face, positive and negative. Positive face refers to the individual's desire to be accepted and valued by others, whereas negative face demonstrates the individual's wish for freedom of action and freedom from being imposed upon. They argue that the notion of face with reference to these two basic desires is universal in spite of the fact that the content of face is culture-specific:

Central to our model is a highly abstract notion of 'face' which consists of two specific kinds of desires...: the desire to be unimpeded in one's actions (negative face), and the desire (in some respects) to be approved of (positive face). This is the bare bones of a notion of face which (we argue) is universal, but which in any particular society we would expect to be the subject of much cultural elaboration.

(Brown and Levinson, 1978: 13)

Brown and Levinson's key concept with regards the notion of face is Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs), i.e. "certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face, namely those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker" (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 65). Accordingly, participants in interaction would seek to avoid or minimise face-threatening acts by selecting one politeness strategy from a set of five politeness strategies they introduce. The first strategy (bald-on-record) is associated with acts where face threat is the least, whereas the last strategy (avoidance) is employed where face threat is the greatest:

1. Bald on record: FTA is performed bald on record, in a direct and concise way without redressive action when the speaker does not expect to either receive or impose face loss on the addressee.
2. Positive politeness: FTA is performed with redressive action. Strategies oriented towards positive face of the hearer, i.e. the hearer's desire to have his wants respected.
3. Negative politeness: FTA is performed with redressive action. Strategies oriented towards negative face of the hearer, i.e. the hearer's desire not to be imposed upon.
4. Off-record: FTA is performed off-record when the speaker anticipates great face loss on the part of the hearer. The implied message might allow the act to have more than one interpretation.

5. Avoidance: FTA is not performed when there is a great potential for face loss so that no linguistic strategy is sufficient to minimize the face loss.

The most important point about Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies is that they are ranked from doing the action on record baldly without any linguistically encoded compensation, through a hierarchy of escalating strategies, to not doing the face threatening act (FTA) where face threat is considered to be too high to be linguistically compensated for by the use of any formula (Grundy, 2008: 198).

These strategies are employed according to the degree of face threat the speaker estimates. The assessment of face threat according to Brown and Levinson is predominantly dependent on the relevant circumstances or social variables such as the social distance D between speaker S and the hearer H , the relative power P of S and H and the degree of imposition of an FTA in particular culture R_x . These variables work in an equation to define the weightiness W_x of the FTA (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 71-74):

$$W_x = D(S,H) + P(S,H) + R_x$$

On defining requests, Brown and Levinson state that requests are face-threatening acts in the sense that they require some future act on the part of the hearer. They argue that in the course of a request, the speaker impinges on the hearer's freedom of action and freedom from imposition. Therefore, they argue that speakers in all languages use a variety of direct and indirect ways for making requests to minimize the imposition involved in the request speech act itself.

In spite of the fact that Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) have provided a powerful politeness model which they claim to be universal, their model has been subject to series of criticisms from various scholars and researchers. Fraser and Nolen (1981), Wierzbicka (1985), Blum-Kulka (1985), Lavendera (1988), Matsumoto (1988, 1989), Ide (1989), Kasper (1990), Sifianou (1989, 1992a), Gu (1990), Janny and Arndt (1993), Mao (1994), Bargiela-Chiappini (2003), Mills (2003), and Watts (2003) are among those who have presented critiques covering a variety of dimensions such as the issue of universality, the relationship between politeness and indirectness, and the lack of a discursive context in the discussion of examples.

Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) assumption of the universality of the 'face construct' has been challenged by Matsumoto (1988, 1989), Ide (1989), Gu (1990), Mao (1994) who have all argued that this model is incompatible with Chinese and Japanese cultures. Gu (1990: 241-242) notes that Brown and Levinson's notion of face is different from that of Chinese face since Chinese politeness expresses different moral or normative views. Further, it is argued that the underlying interactional focus in non-western cultures centres around group identity rather than the individual as is the case in western cultures (Matsumoto, 1988, 1989; Ide, 1989). Watts (2003) also raises his doubts about the universal applicability of Brown and Levinson's model by advocating its inappropriateness to collective societies. Bargiela-Chiappini (2003: 1454) criticizes Brown and Levinson's 'diluted' use of the term 'face' and their postulation that individuality is a universal principle guiding human behaviour across cultures. However, she suggests that Brown and Levinson's model is 'instructive' as it provides insight on the "the moral constitution of a society" (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003: 1466). She (2003: 1466) argues that their model of 'strategic politeness' is characteristic as it reflects western preoccupation with 'duties to self' or individual rights, whereas many non-western societies are oriented more to 'duties toward the group'.

Furthermore, Brown and Levinson's suggestion that the more indirect the strategy, the more polite it is has been undermined by Blum-Kulka's (1985) series of experiments designed to test the perceptions of politeness and directness. She concludes that there is no direct relationship between indirectness and politeness.

Mills (2003: 89-90) criticizes another dimension of Brown and Levinson's work which deals with their data collection, analysis of variables, and their claim about their model. She seems to be sceptical about the Model Person used by Brown and Levinson to describe the speaker and the hearer. This model, according to her, is designed only to analyse the speaker and has nothing to do with the hearer except when he acts like a speaker. She explains that they do not analyse the hearer when he/she is actually processing the speaker's words. Further, she casts doubt on the way Brown and Levinson interpret their data since they claim to know "what a polite or impolite act means" and hence assume that the intentions of the Model Person they used can be easily decoded by the hearer. When using the concept of a Model Person, she argues, one makes the assumption that both the speaker and the hearer share the same background knowledge. However, this can be

problematic (knowledge is not shared at all times by both the speaker and the hearer). Brown and Levinson (1978: 297) express their awareness of this type of assumption because “assessments like ... whether an actor is known to enjoy being imposed on ... raise a very complex problem, that of assessing the status of mutual knowledge in a given interaction. How do we know what is mutually known, and how do we know we know’. Mills (2003: 91) indicates that this problem cannot be resolved when the notion of ‘Model Person’ is adopted as we cannot tell whether “our intended politeness is perceived as such by others and is not perceived by them as impolite or non-polite”. In addition, Mills (2003: 99) argues that in their model of analysis, Brown and Levinson focus on utterances and pay no attention to silence, which also plays a key role in politeness and impoliteness.

In addition, she evaluates two of the social variables they used in their work, namely power and distance. She explains that Brown and Levinson built their model of power on the ability of the speaker to impose their will on the hearer, a model that is ‘repressive’ as it denies freedom to another. She argues that power is much more complex than being repressive alone, i.e. the assessment of one’s power in any institution depends not only on the position one occupies in that institution but also on many other factors and hence, is “negotiated throughout all conversations” (Mills, 2003: 100-101). In relation to social distance, Mills opposes Brown and Levinson’s definition of it as something stable. Instead, she suggests that it is unstable due to the dynamic relationships among interactants as well as the mood of interactants and that makes it impossible to classify them as consistently familiar or distant.

Moreover, Mills states that Brown and Levinson did not take the age variable into account in their work. In the interviews she held, she found that older and younger people perceive politeness differently. She found that older people tend to focus on politeness as an important issue and regard young people as less polite than they used to be, while the young people view politeness as a more “trivial” factor (Mills, 2003: 101-104).

Mills criticizes Brown and Levinson for relying on speech act theory and the absence of linguistic or situational context in the theory they proposed. She highlights the importance of context, particularly when conventional politeness is employed (Mills, 2003: 93). More precisely, Mills’ argument highlights the vitality of the social context in cases where the illocutionary force of an utterance is completely different from its proposition.

For example, analysts in the course of analysing one given interaction will never be able to know exactly what is going on in it unless they know what had happened before this particular conversation, i.e. the interactants' interactional history. There could be some issues which are mutually understood for interactants involved in one conversation, but are unclear to analysts.

Brown and Levinson's classification of certain speech acts such as the request being an intrinsically face-threatening act directed towards the hearer's negative face is another subject of critique. Sifianou (1992a) refers to the fact that in Greek, requests to in-group participants are not perceived as impositions because Greeks believe that it is their duty to help others, and accordingly, use positive politeness strategies in performing their requests.

To conclude this discussion of Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness, one needs to state that despite all criticisms their work received, it has made the biggest contribution to the debate on politeness phenomena. They provided in their work an in-depth analysis of politeness and offered a highly detailed account of politeness phenomena with sufficient examples to explain their viewpoint. Accordingly, their work is still considered to be the most influential in the field of politeness. Locher and Watts (2005: 9-10) found that their model provides an effective tool to evaluate politeness phenomena across cultures:

Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness (1978, 1987) has given scholars an enormous amount of research mileage. Without it we would not be in a position to consider the phenomena of politeness as a fundamental aspect of human socio-communicative verbal interaction in quite the depth and variety that is now available to us. The Brown and Levinson theory has towered above most others and has served as a guiding beacon for scholars interested in teasing out politeness phenomena from examples of human interaction. It provides a breadth of insights into human behaviour which no other theory has yet offered, and it has served as a touchstone for researchers who have felt the need to go beyond it.

Because of these strengths, I propose to use Brown and Levinson's theory as the backbone of my research project. However, part of my aim will be to investigate the validity of their claim of universality for their theory by comparing the results of the request components selected by the Syrian and British subjects.

3.5. The Conversational-contract view:

Fraser and Nolen (1981) sketched out what they call the “conversational-contract view” of politeness. They contend that participants, when entering a given conversation, need to act according to a set of rules including rights and obligations which are determined by social institutions to set out what the communication partners may expect from each other. (Eelen, 2001: 13)

In this framework, participants are required to adhere to the social norms of conversation and hence, they are judged to be polite due to the level they observe these norms (Fraser and Nolen, 1981: 96). Similarly, failure to obey the specified conditions of conversation results in viewing the linguistic act as an impolite one. Fraser (1990: 233) rejects Brown and Levinson’s approach to politeness as he remarks that politeness is not an inherent feature of specific linguistic choices: “sentences are not ipso facto polite, nor are languages more or less polite. It is only speakers who are polite”. Fraser stresses the vital role the addressee plays in deciding whether the act is polite or impolite regardless of what the speaker says; this critical decision lies only in the hands of the hearer.

Fraser and Nolen classify their conversational rules into four main categories: conventional, institutional, situational, and historical. Conventional rules involve all types of social interaction. Good examples of these rules can be manifested by the rules of turn-taking and the rules of loudness and softness of speaking. Institutional rules are those set by social institutions like those restricting conversations in courts. Situational rules are concerned with the evaluation of relative role, status, and power of both the speaker and the addressee such as the awareness of a child of their inability to have authority over their parent. Finally, historical rules indicate that previous encounters serve as a starting point for new interactions. All previous rules might be debated, except that of the conventional terms that cannot be trespassed upon since they stem from “previous encounters or the immediate situations” (Eelen, 2001: 14).

What is interesting and significant about the conversational-contract approach is its emphasis on the notion of rights and obligations which other theorists have ignored. The selection of the components of the requestive speech act is influenced by the rights and obligations of the interlocutors involved in communication. For instance, it is completely acceptable for managers to ask one of their employees to photocopy some papers as this is

part of the administrative right they have. Conversely, it would not be appropriate for the manager to ask an employee to prepare a cup of coffee as this is not part of either the employee's job description or the manager's rights.

In spite of the fact that the conversational-contract view was valued for emphasizing the rights and obligations of interlocutors, it has been subject to criticism. Thomas (1995) argues that it is not clear as to how the conversational rules would relate to real language use. Accordingly, such vagueness reduces the potential of using this model as the basic framework for the current research study.

3.6. The Discursive post-modern view:

In this section, I will briefly explore the various approaches to politeness research that have been marked as discursive or post-modern. All of these approaches attempt to go beyond Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness. I will introduce the main concerns and definitions of discursive approaches. Then, I will highlight the main forms of analysis.

Mills (2011: 26) argues that discursive approaches to politeness are not concerned with the analysis of politeness or impoliteness in the use of isolated phrases and sentences. It is rather focused on "a number of turns or even much longer stretches of interaction". Generally, issues of context play a key role in the discursive approach. The main focus is on discourse, as Foucault (1981: 67) states: "we must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we would only have to decipher. The world is not the accomplice of our knowledge; there is no discursive providence which disposes the world in our favour". Foucault emphasizes the key role discourse plays in structuring reality. He stresses the need to examine the effects of "discursive constraints" on individuals rather than holding the assumption that interlocutors simply make conscious decisions of politeness norms to follow (ibid.: 27).

As regards theoretical influences on discursive approaches, Eelen (2001) was found to play a key role in pushing theorists to move beyond Brown and Levinson (1987). He (2001: 246) provided a thorough critique of politeness in which he calls for a more adequate model

of politeness. He summarizes the problems that are associated with politeness traditional concepts and lists them as follows:

- 1) The inability of politeness concepts to adequately account for impoliteness.
- 2) The complete disregard of the hearer's active evaluative position of politeness.
- 3) The loss of theoretical normativity as a result of an ethically involved position.
- 4) Insisting on a model that is not able to adequately account for empirical variability and the concurrent need for statistical data processing.
- 5) The notion of culture where the social level comes before the individual. This leads to the unidirectional determination of the individual by the social level.
- 6) A static view of social reality.
- 7) A social world devoid of human individuality, human creativity, and historicity.

Therefore, Eelen recommends that theorists examine culture by looking into the mechanisms behind its construction: "Within a view that focuses on the process of construction of social reality, Politeness should be seen as particular 'representations of reality' instead of as factual references to an 'objective reality'" (Eelen, 2001: 247). He urged theorists to provide a clearer distinction between politeness1 (what people say/think they do when they use politeness) and politeness2 (what scientists say/think those people do when they use politeness, i.e. the scientific description of Politeness1) (Eelen, 2001: 32). He advised theorists to focus on politeness1 in their analyses and move away from the generalisations of Brown and Levinson and other researchers.

On this basis, Eelen laid the foundations of an alternative view of politeness whose main aspects are argumentativity, historicity, and discursiveness. This leads to a notion that takes the hearer's position into its full account in addition to its ability to capture both politeness and impoliteness. In addition, it reflects the bi-directional view of the social-individual relationship. Thus, this new view of politeness acknowledges both the individual and change as intrinsic to the nature of politeness.

The discursive post-modern theorists have relied on a range of theoretical traditions in the process of analysing politeness rather than taking one theoretical viewpoint. Some of them such as Bousfield (2008) and Terkourafi (2005) preferred to retain Brown and Levinson's (1987) work on politeness, but made significant changes to the model and developed a rigorous model for analysis in order to be able to generalise about politeness

and impoliteness in relation to the context. Terkourafi's main goal is to develop a frame-based analysis that allows for the description of statistical norms in communities by means of quantitative analysis of certain language forms in certain contexts. She claims that there are two types of norms, "norms about what one should do, and norms about what one is likely to do" (Terkourafi, 2005: 244). She claims that, depending on statistical evidence about the norms of politeness behaviour prevailing in a given society, one could predict what individuals are likely to produce in a particular context.

Others like Watts (2003), Locher (2004), and Christie (2007) have chosen other traditions such as Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1995) in order to develop a new theoretical framework rather than maintaining Brown and Levinson's model. Christie (2007: 271) in her argument in favour of Relevance Theory claims that in spite of fact that Sperber and Wilson in their work did not highlight the role of social communication, they contend that inferential communication is social in its essence. Hence, it is possible to develop politeness theory that is capable to incorporate both "the general mechanisms that underlie communication" at an abstract level in addition to "certain inferential processes that allows the assumption of certain meanings in specified contexts". She assumes that Relevance Theory also allows a focus on the process whereby utterances are *understood as* polite or impolite, rather than being inherently polite or impolite.

Theorists like Geyer (2008) make use of research in discursive psychology, Conversational Analysis (CA), and ethno-methodology. She contends that the precision of Conversational Analysis in organising features of talk is useful in handling politeness. Her focus is on the discursive ascription of interactants to "a membership category particular to a particular interaction". Arundale (2010) also employs the Conversational Analysis model in an attempt to create politeness as an interactional achievement rather than an outcome. Arundale refers to the strength of Conversational Analysis as it emphasizes the interactants' orientation towards certain goals and maps out the functions of adjacent utterances. Geyer (2008: 65) argues that Conversational Analysis is useful because of its conceptualisation of culture. She says:

Instead of conceptualising culture as an entity that is located outside of the sphere of social interaction, influencing and determining interactional practices, conversation analysts conceive of culture as common-sense knowledge that is constantly deployed, renewed and co-constructed in interaction.

Accordingly, we could trace the effect of culture *in* the utterances of interactants, rather than trying to find the effect of the abstracted culture on interaction. Geyer (2008) draws on discursive psychology as she argues helps her uncover how the interactants construct their identities in interaction. She uses the discussion of face as a way to describe “interactants positive self-image, constructed and managed in discourse” (ibid.: 54). She considers this approach to be discursive as it “requires analysts to seek sequential and/or linguistic accountability based on their knowledge of the relevant communities of practice” (ibid.: 55). The way she uses a combination of discursive psychology and conversation analysis allows her to focus on politeness as “the intersection of language, culture, action and cognition” (ibid.: 57).

However, in spite of the variability discursive theories display in adopting theoretical viewpoints, they share some specific assumptions about politeness. Haugh (2007: 297) explains that “the discursive approach abandons the pursuit of not only an *a priori* predictive theory of politeness, but also any attempts to develop a universal, cross-culturally valid theory of politeness altogether”. They do not aim at constructing a model of politeness to replace that of Brown and Levinson’s model because they believe that such models would lead to generalisations and stereotyping. Instead, as Mills (2011: 35) puts it, they aspire to develop a theory that accounts for “contextualised expressions of politeness and impoliteness”.

Discursive theories share the following three main elements: Firstly, they share the view that politeness is not inherent in utterances. They are also concerned with the relationship between politeness and impoliteness. Secondly, discursive theories are interested in describing the relationship between individuals and society in the process of politeness analysis as they argue that identity is not pre-formed but constructed jointly within groups. Therefore, individuals do not essentially choose all instances of polite behaviour they make use of. Thirdly, discursive theories tend to employ a similar form of analysis in spite of the fact that they are inspired by different theoretical models. They show an inclination to question the role of the analyst, and emphasize the analysis of context. In general, they focus the analysis on longer stretches of interaction rather than the traditional theories of politeness. Further, they focus on the process of judgement of politeness and avoid the assumption that politeness resides in utterances themselves (Mills, 2011: 35).

3.6.1. View and definition of politeness:

Discursive theorists consider politeness as an intensely problematic term. Arundale (2010) and Terkourafi (2001) contend that politeness is not only “strategic conflict avoidance” but also “social indexing” (Terkourafi, 2001: 11). However, other theorists have decided that that politeness is such a problematic term that is better avoided. They prefer to use alternative terms. Spencer-Oatey (2005: 96), for example, uses the terms “rapport and rapport management”. The former is used to describe the harmonious and smooth relations among people, whereas the latter includes “[...] not only behaviour that enhances or maintains smooth relations, but any kind of behaviour that has an impact on rapport, whether positive, negative, or neutral” (Spencer-Oatey, 2005: 96).

Watts (2003) and Locher (2006: 3) use the term ‘relational work’ which stands for “the ‘work’ that individuals invest in negotiating relationships with others”. Locher differentiates between the definition of politeness for the speaker and for the hearer as she sees politeness as “a marked form of appropriate behaviour for the speaker who may be aiming to display concern for the other at the same time as being motivated by ‘egocentric desire’; the hearer will understand an utterance as polite when it is marked and appropriate” (Mills, 2011: 37). Locher and Watts not only focused on notions of politeness and impoliteness but also on elements that are considered as non-polite such as elements which are judged to be either over polite or politic i.e. those which are judged to be appropriate but not marked. However, Locher (2006: 264) draws attention to the point that politeness norms change as she states “it lies in the nature of politeness to be an elusive concept since it is inherently linked to judgements on norms and those are constantly negotiated, are renegotiated and ultimately change over time in every type of social interaction”.

Terkourafi’s (2005: 248) perception of politeness is completely different from that of Locher and Watts. She argues:

Assuming that [frame-based analysis] indeed uncovers regularities of co-occurrence between expressions realising particular acts and types of contexts, why should such regularities be defined as polite behaviour? The answer of the frame-based view is simple: they are polite because they are regular. It is the regular co-occurrence of particular types of contexts and particular linguistic expressions as unchallenged realisations of particular acts that creates the perception of politeness. Politeness resides not in linguistic expressions themselves, but in the regularity of this co-occurrence.

Moreover, Terkourafi (2005: 250) contests Brown and Levinson's definition of politeness as she claims that "politeness is a matter not of rational calculation, but of habits".

Most discursive theorists realise that politeness is defined differently by different communities which makes the task of defining politeness rather difficult. Pizziconi (2003) explains that certain cultures attach different values to politeness. She sets the example that in the British English culture, politeness is associated with considerateness, whereas in Japanese it correlates with showing the position one has within the group and the consideration one has towards group values. Furthermore, not only various languages but also various groups with a given society associate politeness with different values and define its meaning and function differently.

Concerning the relationship between the individual and society, discursive theorists presume that individuals do not have preformed identities/roles which might affect their choices of politeness and impoliteness routines. It is rather the interaction that constructs identities and politeness is conceived of as a tool that enables individuals to construct their identity. In the discursive view, the individual is considered to be the "nexus of social forces" and politeness is seen as a response to reflect the need to show concern for the group (Mills, 2011: 41-42).

3.6.2. Form of analysis:

Discursive theorists focus on first order politeness. Therefore, Haugh (2007) explains that this would shift the emphasis from quantitative to qualitative data. They tend to be sceptical about what can be judged with confidence about politeness and impoliteness. Locher (2006: 265) indicates that it is the context that provides researchers with rules of interpretation and appropriateness and nothing particular in the utterance that regards it as polite, non-polite, politic or over polite.

Most discursive work on politeness and impoliteness is concerned with making judgements about politeness and impoliteness. Locher and Watts (2005: 10) in their view of relational work, maintain that: "politeness itself [is] ... a discursive concept arising out of interactants' perceptions and judgements of their own and others' verbal behaviour". Geyer (2008: 1) claims that:

At the core of discursive acts of politeness are evaluations concerning not only appropriateness but also participant's 'face' — their interactional self image determined in relation with others in discourse, closely related to their discursive identity.

It is also worth noting that most discursive theorists would avoid generalisations informed by stereotyped or ideological thinking and rather focus on contextual analysis. Mills (2009a, 2009b) highlights the point that, in spite of the difficulty of holding norms that are applicable to an entire language group, it is still possible to make some generalisations about tendencies in a given language provided that one hedges those claims via making references to the rest of styles and norms that are not dominant in that language. Bousfield (2008: 38), for example, aspires to make some generalisations about negative and positive face in the UK and US as he says:

This isn't to say that the desire to be approved of, in some direct or peripheral way is non-existent in the UK culture, nor that the desire to be free from imposition is simply non-existent in the US culture (far from it in some sections), rather that (traditionally at least) the desire to be free from imposition and the desire for approval are more important respectively in these two cultures (with all things being equal).

3.7. Chapter summary:

In this chapter, I have provided an overall review of the existing literature on politeness. I presented the major approaches to politeness theory including the social norm view, the conversational maxim view, the face-saving view, the conversational-contract view, and finally the discursive post-modern view. I also introduced the main critiques each of the classical approaches received by scholars and established links between these approaches and the research I am currently conducting.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

4.1. Introduction:

In this chapter I will present the research questions that underlie this research. Then, I will discuss three data collection methods: observation of authentic speech, discourse completion tests (DCTs) and interviewing. The ultimate goal of this discussion is to investigate the relative strengths and weaknesses of each method as well as justify the adoption of the multiple-method approach combining both discourse completion tests with interviews. Finally, I will describe the methods and procedures used in the present study.

4.2. The Research questions:

The main hypothesis behind carrying out this research is that the social and cultural environment is more significant than semantic formulas in order to avoid any pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication. The research questions that form the basis of the current research are:

1. What differences and similarities are there between Syrian Arabic and British English in the realization patterns of requests?
2. Does the requestive speech act intrinsically threaten the participants' negative face in both the Syrian and British cultures? If not, what is the direction of politeness in these two cultures?
3. What contextual constraints influence the choice of request components?

The above mentioned research questions entail:

1. Exploring Syrian Arabic request patterns and types at both the semantic and pragmatic level. This requires comparing and contrasting request components: requesting strategies, types of internal and external modification, and alerter types.

2. Discovering differences in the influence of social and cultural environment for Syrian Arabic and English speakers. Highlighting such differences provides the language learners with a better understanding of requestive behaviour in the target culture.
3. Conducting a pragmatic investigation of the speech act of request as performed by both English and Syrian speakers and the social factors that might have any influence on the choice of the request form.
4. Examining the effect of the social variables (power and familiarity) on the patterns of requests' realization within the Syrian and English speech communities.

4.3. Research approach and methodological considerations:

The initial step of this section is to review some methods used for speech act research. Every method has its advantages and disadvantages. Therefore combining some of the methods might be crucial in capturing what is going on in the 'real world'. In the following sections I will review natural and elicited types of data collection methods:

4.3.1. Observation of authentic speech:

Natural and authentic data can be obtained through ethnographic data collection measures such as participant observation. Participant observation is a research method where researchers immerse themselves in the social setting under study to discover the nature of social reality by understanding the actor's perception and interpretation of that social world.

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2000: 196) recognize two types of observation: controlled and non-controlled. In the former, the researcher makes clear decisions as to what, how, and when to observe, whereas the latter is less systematic and more flexible as it leaves the researcher with a wider choice of decisions of what to do. They add that it is mainly the research problem and the research design that determines the choice between the controlled and non-controlled observation.

Bryman (1989: 143-147) proposes another classification for types of participant observation: covert, full, and indirect. In covert participation the researcher gains access to a certain organisation and gains the chance to watch people while concealing his /her identity as a researcher. In full participant observation, the researcher has his/her own job or position in the organisation, yet his/her identity as a researcher becomes known to others. In indirect participant observation, the researcher does not have a work position in the organisation. However, he/she participates in events such as parties and lunches.

Bryman (1989: 406) contends that the covert type of participant observation helps the researcher as he/she no longer needs to gain access permission to a social setting or organisation. Further, it eliminates the problem of reactivity because the researcher's identity is concealed. Therefore, the researcher's presence will not affect the behaviour of the participants under study. Nonetheless, the limitations of this method reside in the following points: First, the fact that the participants are unaware of the researcher's identity makes it difficult and sometimes impossible for him/her to take notes: an important tool the ethnographer uses. Similarly, Gomm (2004: 223) states that the covert method hinders the researcher from asking the questions he/she has in mind for the fear of having his/her identity revealed. Second, the covert researcher is under the constraint of anxiety because he/she is always worried about discovering his/her identity. On the top of that, the covert method breaches two ethical issues: it does not leave the participant with the choice to either accept or reject taking part in providing information and is considered to be a violation of privacy. Moreover, many writers believe that covert observation is also a harmful practice for research since it might stereotype social researchers as 'snoopers'. Ethical problems might affect the publication of research, in addition to having potential political implications that negatively affect and sometimes destroy the lives of the people under research investigation (Walsh, 1998: 232).

The method of participant observation has been a controversial issue among researchers. Many have stressed its importance as a reliable data collection method to represent social reality, while others have argued against it. Wolfson (1976: 202) raises the point that it is not always easy to define natural speech because one may consider any speech as natural provided that it is appropriate, in the context in which it occurs, to meet a particular goal. On this basis, Wolfson argues that collecting data ethnographically is unreliable because it is unlikely that the researcher will have full control of the contextual

variables if his/her main task is to observe many examples of a speech act in the same situational and interpersonal context.

On the other hand, Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2000: 190-191) emphasize the main advantages of the participant observation method as it enables the researcher to collect data and examine behaviour in the actual time it takes place. There is no need for the researcher to ask people, instead he or she can simply observe them act or speak. This helps the researcher collect 'firsthand' data uncontaminated by factors standing between the researcher and the object of research. This advantage has also been highlighted by Walsh (1998: 217) who stressed the neutrality and objectivity of this method where researchers gather data "untouched by human hands". Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2000: 190-191) claim that effective observation describes human behaviour in its natural settings while other data collection methods bring into research environment some elements of artificiality. They add that observational methods require a lower level of engagement on the part of the group studied particularly when they are unwilling or incapable of expressing themselves verbally like in the case of children. Moreover, observation helps researchers validate verbal reports upon comparing and contrasting them with actual behaviour. Finally, observation enables the researcher to identify the impact of environment on the group under study and makes it easier to analyse the contextual background of the behaviour under study.

Cohen (1996: 391-392) sums up the advantages of naturally occurring data:

1. *The data are spontaneous.*
2. *The data reflect what the speakers say rather than what they think they would say.*
3. *The speakers are reacting to a natural situation rather than to a contrived and possibly unfamiliar situation.*
4. *The communicative event has real-world consequences.*
5. *The event may be a source of rich pragmatic structures.*

Cohen (1996: 392) points out the following disadvantages:

1. *The speech act being studied may not occur naturally very often.*
2. *Proficiency and gender may be difficult to control.*
3. *Collecting and analyzing the data are time consuming.*

4. *The data may not yield enough examples of target items.*
5. *The use of recording equipment may be intrusive.*
6. *The use of note-taking as a complement to, or in lieu of taping, relies on memory.*

4.3.2. Discourse completion tests (DCTs):

The use of discourse completion tests (DCTs) in the field of cross-cultural pragmatics and politeness research is very common. DCTs, in Kasper and Dahl's words, "have been a much used and criticised elicitation format in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics" (1991: 21). Many studies (Blum-Kulka, 1984; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Faerch and Kasper, 1989; Cohen and Olshtain, 1993; Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993; Marti, 2006; Ogiermann, 2009; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010) have used this data eliciting method. The largest project to have used this technique is the Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP). It looked at a variety of eight languages and aimed to measure the directness levels of the speakers of these languages upon performing requests and apologies.

A Discourse Completion Test (DCT) is a questionnaire consisting of a set of briefly described situations, typically specifying the setting, the social distance between the interlocutors, and their relative status to each other followed by an incomplete dialogue which the subjects are asked to complete. The situations are designed to draw out and extract a particular speech act. Participants read the situations and respond in writing and accordingly provide the intended speech acts. However, at this stage it is important to distinguish between two types of DCTs: those that include hearer's response and those that do not. Each of these DCT types is illustrated by the following examples:

A. An example of a discourse completion test including the hearer response:

-Dan: Ron, I found a great apartment, but I have a problem. I have to pay the landlady \$500 deposit by tonight.

Ron: And you haven't got it?

Dan: No. I'll get my salary only next week.....?

Ron: Sorry, no. I'm out of money right now. (Blum-Kulka, 1982: 56)

-You missed class and you need to borrow a friend's notes. What would you say?

You:.....

FRIEND: Sure, just make sure to give them back before the next class.

(Rose, 1992: 61)

B. An example of a discourse completion test excluding the hearer response:

-You missed class and you need to borrow a friend's notes. What would you say?

You:.....

(Rose, 1992: 61)

There has been a debate among researchers concerning the question "which form of DCTs is more effective?". Researchers like Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) after comparing the two versions of discourse completion (i.e. DCTs both with and without the hearer's response) conclude that including the conversational return is better for eliciting reactive speech acts such as rejections. However, Rose's (1992) results clash with the above findings as he noticed that the inclusion of the hearer's response in the discourse completion task has no significant influence on the speech act elicited. This disagreement can be justified after having a closer look at the speech act obtained in Rose's study which is a request. Requests could be used and stand out on their own due to their nature as initiating speech acts contrary to rejections (obtained in Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993) which are reactive speech acts.

DCTs like other data collection techniques have their own strengths and weaknesses. Beebe and Cummings (1996: 80) summarize the advantages of DCTs as follows:

1. *Gathering a large amount of data quickly;*
2. *Creating initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies that will likely occur in natural speech;*
3. *Studying stereotypical, perceived requirements for a socially appropriate response;*

4. *Gaining insights into social and psychological factors that are likely to affect speech and performance; and*
5. *Ascertaining the canonical shape of speech acts in the minds of speakers of that language.*

Concerning the first strength, discourse completion tests seem to surpass other instruments for collecting data in the ease of use. This advantage has been pointed out by many researchers (e.g., Beebe and Cummings, 1996; Johnston et al., 1998; Rintell and Mitchell, 1989; Rose, 1992; Hill et al., 1986). The reasons behind the ease of obtaining a large amount of data are manifold. For example, Hill et al. (1986: 353) propose that DCTs, within a comparatively short time, can collect a lot of information like age, sex, nationality, education in addition to answers to the questions designed for the DCT. Beebe and Cummings (1996) also think that DCTs enable researchers to collect a large corpus of data on a variety of difficult to observe linguistic phenomena in short time intervals. Similarly, Johnston et al. (1998: 157-158) point out that by the use of DCTs one quickly collects comparable data from members of various speech communities. Upon comparing DCTs with conversational data, they explain that DCTs are easier to code as they come in the form of written responses that require no further transcription.

With regards to the second advantage, Beebe and Cummings (1996) argue that the data elicited with DCTs are in harmony with naturally occurring data as far as main patterns and formulas are concerned. They state that DCTs enable researchers to produce a preliminary classification of semantic formulas and strategies that appear in natural speech. The third advantage of DCTs as data elicitation devices is that they identify the conventionally acceptable requirements of appropriate responses to specific speech act. For example, Beebe and Cummings (1996: 73) claim that the stereotypical requirements of a refusal response in American English are an adjunct+ regret+ negative ability+ excuse. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 13) clarify that DCTs as written techniques help researchers attain more stereotyped responses and that this stereotyped aspect or fixed pattern of speech behaviour is significant for cross-cultural comparability.

The fourth advantage of DCTs is that they detect the operative social and psychological factors such as power and distance that influence the speech act performance.

DCTs, according to Rintell and Mitchell (1989: 250), also give the opportunity to control contextual variables effectively that are essential to the study and to compare strategies from different languages as well as the strategies used by native speakers and learners of the same language. Finally, DCTs help one capturing the basic formulas employed to perform particular illocutions. Kasper and Dahl (1991: 242-243) contend that DCTs provide insights into the canonical shape of refusals, apologies, partings, and others in the minds of the speakers of that language.

In spite of the fact that DCTs enjoy many theoretical and methodological advantages, they have been criticized for the inaccurate reflection of real language use on various dimensions (Beebe and Cummings, 1996; Rintell and Mitchell, 1989; Wolfson et al., 1989; Kasper and Dahl, 1991). Beebe and Cummings (1996), for instance, found that DCT responses fail to reflect the real wording used in actual interactions, the full range of formulas and strategies used in spoken data, the length of responses and the level of elaboration and frequency of repetitions parallel to that of human conversations, and the depth of emotion that has its impact on the tone, form and content of linguistic performances used in speech. Wolfson et al. (1989: 182) also raise their doubts about the validity of DCTs through questioning firstly, the representativeness of the written responses in relation to the spoken ones and secondly the comparability of short, decontextualised written sentences to the longer routines of real life interactions.

Rintell and Mitchell (1989: 250) sum up the problems of the DCTs in the following points:

1. One cannot decide how representative the written responses of the DCT are when compared to what people say in spontaneous speech.
2. The written responses could be constrained both in length by the space provided for the subjects to write in and in form by the familiarity of the subject with the spelling of one word rather than another.
3. The potential that participants may choose more formal language in the DCT due to their perception that writing is a more formal activity than speaking.

They end their discussion remarking that “the question of how ‘realistic’ the data are, or indeed need to be, remains open”. Finally, Kasper and Dahl (1991) raise questions about the authenticity of the situations the DCTs represent. In this respect, they classify the DCTs in

the category of role-plays as a highly constrained instrument. Thus, in spite of the fact that they both yield “productive responses”, they are limited in the authenticity of the situations they stand for.

4.3.3. Interviews:

The second major tool to collect data in this research is personal interviews since they can “yield rich insights into people’s biographies, opinions, values and feelings” (May, 2001: 120). In general, there are four types of interviews in social research: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews, and group and focus interviews. In moving from structured interviews to unstructured ones, there is a decreasing shift in the control the researcher has over the interview. However, in this study the semi-structured interview will be employed rather than other types of interviews. In the semi-structured interview, although the questions are specified, the interviewer has more freedom to probe beyond the answers and the respondents can answer the questions more on their own terms in comparison to structured interviews. Nevertheless, semi-structured interviews can still offer a sufficient structure for comparability (May, 2001: 120-124).

Dörnyei (2007, 140-141) reflects on the interview’s two key features. Firstly, the qualitative interview “flows naturally, with the various parts connecting seamlessly”. Secondly, qualitative interviews are “rich in details”. However, Dörnyei states that the primary principle in carrying out interviews is the neutrality of the interviewer as they need to avoid personal bias as much as possible. Similarly, Taylor and Bogdan (1984) explain the factors that could help researchers get better results in interview situations: one is concerned with creating a comfortable atmosphere for the interviewees to talk freely. Being non-judgemental, as well, is an important factor that reassures the respondents and helps them communicate in a better way. In addition to that, letting people talk without interruption and paying attention to them means communicating a sincere interest in their speech. Another key to successful interviewing is to know when and how to probe for details. Neuman (2003: 290) adds that skilful interviewers may ask a range of questions including complex ones which might not be possible via DCTs. The last essential feature of good interviews is the use of audio or video recording since it allows the interviewer to capture much more than he/she could when relying on memory.

The merits of interviewing as a data collection method are mainly that it provides greater flexibility in the questioning process than questionnaires. Frankfort-Nachmias et al. (2000: 218-219) state that the interviewer has the option of asking for more details to clarify things when necessary. Burns (2000: 582-583) explain that interviews are flexible since they enable the interlocutor to observe the whole situation in which the interviewees respond. Further, interviewers have greater control of the interview situation. They have the decision of choosing who to answer the questions, where the interview takes place, and the order of questions to ask. Secondly, interviews guarantee a higher response rate than questionnaires particularly for people who cannot read or write or those who find difficulties in understanding the language. Burns (2000: 582-583) suggests that most people prefer to communicate verbally rather than filling in questionnaires, and this in its turn would lead to a higher response rate and more representative data than that obtained through questionnaires alone. In addition, interviews enable researchers to get further information as they can collect supplementary information from their respondents such as background information and spontaneous reactions. Burns (2000: 582-583) adds that interviews allow researchers to ask probing questions when they receive an irrelevant or incomplete response. On top of that, interviewing offers researchers detailed descriptions, integrates multiple perspectives, describes processes, and shows how events are interpreted (Jones, 1996: 141).

After all, despite all the advantages that distinguish the interviewing process, it has its own weaknesses. The higher cost interviews have over questionnaires is the first disadvantage to come across especially when respondents are spread over a wide geographic area. Oppenheim (2003: 82-83) claims that interviews are much more expensive than questionnaires in both data collection and processing phases. The larger the sample gets in data collection, the greater the cost is. Furthermore, the adoption of a coding operation in data processing makes the cost greater. He explains that the cost is to be assessed not only in terms of money but also in terms of time. This is because most interview-based studies take considerable time to both collect, code, and process the data in addition to having to meet the informants in person. Further, in conducting interviews there is a risk that the interviewer's influence or bias may occur as the result of following different interview techniques. Thirdly, interviews lack anonymity and sometimes the presence of the interviewer might make the respondents feel threatened (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2000: 219).

Gomm (2004: 219) concludes that in order to get a better understanding of the social world, one needs to combine research methods. He believes that adopting interviews alongside different instruments helps the researcher discover 'why' since they throw light on what has been going on in the mind of respondents whilst they were completing, for example, the questionnaires. The next section will further discuss the implementation of a mixed- methods approach.

4.3.4. Discussion:

Having reviewed three distinct research methods, we reach the conclusion that observation of authentic speech is not an appropriate choice in conducting our research study since it does not provide enough data to meet the requirements of this study. Moreover, it is not always feasible for researchers to gain access to real situations where the targeted speech act is taking place, particularly for the time constraints and practical considerations involved in a project such as a PhD thesis. In addition, it does not give the researcher a sufficient control of the important social variables in this study such as social power, social distance, and the ranking of imposition. What is more is that adopting the method of participant observation does not guarantee generating similar semantic formulas under the same combination of social variables in both Syrian and British cultures. Finally, researchers could not guarantee getting adequate representative data if they choose to observe subjects of random choice since the sample of the study may not be a sufficiently homogenous population.

In order to address some of the previously mentioned limitations, the current research uses a combination of two methods for collecting data: Discourse completion test/task (DCT) and follow-up interviews. Thus, this research involves a mixed-methods approach employing both quantitative and qualitative data. The importance of applying a multiple-method approach has been stressed and valued by many researchers such as Labov (1972), Wolfson (1976), Stubbs (1983), Brown and Yule (1983), Miles and Huberman (1994), Strauss and Corbin (2004), Greene et al. (2005), Dörnyei (2007) who all support the adoption of a variety of methods in the course of investigating language for the following reasons:

Rossman and Wilson (1991, cited in Miles et al., 1994: 41) propose three reasons for linking a quantitative and qualitative approach:

1. to enable corroboration.
2. to elaborate analysis by offering richer details.
3. to give a spark to new dimensions of thinking through considering “surprises or paradoxes”.

With regards the first reason, Dörnyei (2007: 45) explains that using a mixed-methods approach increases the strengths and decreases the weaknesses of the research by bringing out the best of the two methods adopted, like for instance, following a quantitative approach by a qualitative one to add an in-depth dimension to the quantitative results, and thus “putting flesh on the bones” (Dörnyei, 2007: 45). Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1994: 310) urge researchers to “entertain mixed models” and avoid “polarization” or “life at the extremes” because “quantitative and qualitative inquiry can support and inform each other”. Sieber (1973 cited in Miles et al., 1994: 41) states that quantitative data can help the qualitative side of the study in the three phases of design, data collection and analysis. In the design phase, it helps through obtaining a representative sample and tracing any nonstandard or unexpected cases. During data collection, it helps by providing background data. For example, in the current study the DCTs provided information about the age, gender, and education of the participants taking place in this project. In the course of analysis, the quantitative data assistance is reflected by demonstrating generalization of particular observations and shedding light on the qualitative outcome. On the other hand, qualitative data can help its quantitative counterpart in the design of the study by providing “conceptual development and instrumentation”. The qualitative data can help in data collection through facilitating access to data. Then, during the analysis it assists in the validation, interpretation and illustration of the quantitative results in addition to its aid in generating and revising theory. In the current research study, the use of the interview qualitative data helped the researcher in interpreting and understanding the motives behind the answers provided in the DCT data.

The second reason for adopting a mixed-methods approach is that it allows for multi-level analysis. It enables the researcher to gain data about both the individual and the broader society. Ragin (1994: 92) claims that “Most quantitative data techniques are data condensers. They condense data in order to see the big picture.... Qualitative methods by

contrast, are best understood as data enhancers. When data are enhanced, it is possible to see key aspects of cases more clearly". Further, mixing methods improves the validity of the research findings by means of joining and confirming the results obtained. Similarly, Greene et al. (2005: 275) claim that multi-method research allows for better understanding and new ideas, perspectives and meanings. In this research, the interviews are mainly used to gain a better understanding of the motives behind the answers participants provided in the DCTs as well as gaining insights about their perspectives and preferences. Finally, researchers adopting a mixed-methods approach get through to multiple audiences as they yield results acceptable for a larger audience than those of one method only. Dörnyei (2007: 45) contends that a well performed mixed-methods study has "multiple selling points and can offer something to everybody, regardless of the paradigmatic orientation of the person". However, Mason (2002: 60) believes that researchers should plan carefully the integration of two methods in order to have the expected useful findings.

Clearly, then, the integration of more than one research method, namely DCTs and interviews in the body of this research project, would serve the ultimate goal of having stronger more valid, reliable, and representative data that capture what is happening in the real world. Although DCTs seem to have great potential for this study taking into account time and logistic considerations, they have their own limitations (see section 4.3.2.). One main weakness is that the respondent's engagement tends to be relatively shallow. Accordingly, researchers cannot explore complex or unpredicted answers by means of this technique. In order to remedy this weak point, we would have follow-up interviews to add a qualitative depth to the findings. Interviews enable us to ask the respondents to provide explanations and illustrations of the outcome patterns and validate the DCT results (Dörnyei, 2007: 171).

In the previous three sections, each of the given methods was discussed in detail. Further, light was shed on the strengths and weaknesses of each instrument in an attempt to justify the choice of DCTs and interviews and showing the importance of combining them together in the course of this research. In the current research project DCTs are employed as a primary data collection method, while follow-up interviews help with the interpretation of the primary DCT data.

4.4. The Methodological Framework of the study:

4.4.1. Instrument:

Data are collected in this study by means of two methods: a discourse completion test (DCT) and follow-up interviews. The first method which is a controlled elicitation instrument is a discourse completion test adopted from Blum-Kulka (1982) following Levenston (1975) and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984). The test consists of scripted incomplete discourse sequences that stand for different social situations. Each discourse sequence introduces a short description of the situation, specifying the setting, the social distance between the informants and their relative status to each other, followed by an incomplete dialogue without giving a response to the request. The respondents are requested to complete the dialogue in their language. Accordingly, they provide the request speech act in a particular social situation within which the targeted student population is expected to be familiar. For example, although situation 2 (street) is concerned with female responses, male participants provided their answers depending on their familiarity of such situation and what would females usually say in such context. The questionnaire was written in two versions: an Arabic version and an English one. Syrian informants were asked to produce their responses for the Arabic DCT in the colloquial language as it is the language used in everyday speech. The reason behind this is to examine responses representing naturally occurring conversations. It is worth noting that it is unusual to use this variety in writing because this is considered a formal activity that requires a formal variety of Arabic (Modern Standard Arabic in this case). The questions in the DCT were written in Modern Standard Arabic because Syrian Arabic respondents are not used to seeing the colloquial variety written and this would help the researcher minimise the misunderstandings, particularly on the part of the participants. In addition, there are many spoken dialects in Syria. Therefore, writing in one dialect rather than another may reveal the researcher's background and could affect the way respondents reply. Accordingly, the most secure way to explain the situations and form questions in the DCT is by writing in Modern Standard Arabic since the main point here is to get the best response rate with the lowest rates of question misinterpretation. Syrian participants were asked at the end of each situation whether they would request in a different way if the person whom they asked were of the opposite gender in order to check if there are any gender differences. This fact justifies why the Arabic version of the questionnaire is longer than its English counterpart.

The analytical framework is based on a combination of both the CCSARP model, Marti's (2006) model for unsaid responses, and Brown and Levinson's variables of politeness (1978, 1987). The reason behind the choice of the CCSARP model lies in the fact that after several attempts to create a systematic classification system of request strategies to form a universal scale of directness (See Searle 1979; Ervin-Tripp, 1976; House and Kasper, 1981; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984), Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) have come up with the most delicate directness scale of request strategies which they applied to eight different languages (Australian English, American English, British English, Canadian French, Danish, German, Hebrew, and Russian). Furthermore, the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP) is "to date the largest research project to systematically inquire into the cultural specificity of speech act behaviour" (Hinnenkamp, 1995: 10). Marti's (2006) model was the first systematic model that addresses the unsaid responses subjects may use upon responding to DCT situations.

In Brown and Levinson's model, they propose that request situations vary due to a number of situational (intra-cultural) parameters or variables like, for instance, the social distance (D) between the participants, the social power (P) of both the speaker and the hearer, and culture-specific (cross-cultural) parameters such as the size of imposition of an FTA in relation to expenses requiring either services "including the provision of time" or goods "including non-material goods like information, as well as the expression of regard and other face payments" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 77). However, Brown and Levinson (1987: 77) claim that these intra-culturally defined expenditures differ in their rank of imposition from one situation to another. They state that even in one situation the rank order of imposition is subject to many factors such as the rights or obligations of the actors to perform the acts, whether the actors have particular ritual or physical reasons for not performing them, and if the actors involved are known to enjoy being imposed on.

Situational variation:

The DCT is designed to capture the potential variability across social constraints so that we could elicit various strategies. There are twelve situations eliciting requests, which vary on the social parameters: \pm Social distance and \pm or $=$ dominance (power) and the size

of imposition. Nevertheless, contrasting pairs differ in one controlling factor at least. Most of the situations are derived from the CCSARP project.

Individual variation:

In theory, one can capture individual variation along personal variables including age, gender, level of education, type of occupation, etc., by looking at various types of informants' populations in both the Syrian and British culture. However, this design, for practical considerations, allows for the gender dimension only. In addition, it aims to exclude variation in other key categories by employing the relatively homogeneous population of students for both native speakers of British English and Syrian Arabic.

Request situation	Social distance	Social power	Type of imposition	Severity of imposition
Situation 1 (Kitchen): A student asks his roommate to clean up the kitchen the latter had left in a mess the night before.	-SD	S=H	Service (time)	High
Situation 2 (Street): A young woman wants to get rid of a man pestering her on the street.	+SD	S=H	Goods (face payment)	High
Situation 3 (Notes): A student asks another student to lend his/her lecture notes.	-SD	S=H	Goods (possession)	Low
Situation 4 (Lift): A student asks people living in the same street for a ride home.	+SD	S=H	Service	High
Situation 5 (Phone): An applicant calls for information on a job advertised in a paper.	+SD	S=H	Goods (Information)	Low
Situation 6 (Police): A policeman asks a driver to move his/her car.	+SD	S>H	Service	Low
Situation 7 (Extension): A student asks his/her teacher for an extension on a seminar paper.	-SD	S<H	Goods (extension)	High
Situation 8 (Presentation): A university professor asks a student to give his/her lecture a week earlier than scheduled.	-SD	S>H	Service (time)	Low
Situation 9 (Smoking): A citizen asking somebody next to him to stop smoking in a non-smoking area.	+SD	S=H	Service (stop smoking)	High

Request situation	Social distance	Social power	Type of imposition	Severity of imposition
Situation 10 (Money): A person asking his colleague at work for money.	-SD	S=H	Service (possession)	High
Situation 11 (Photocopy): A boss asking his/her secretary to photocopy the minutes of the last meeting he had.	-SD	S>H	Service (time)	Low
Situation 12 (Coffee): A boss asking his/her secretary to prepare him a cup of coffee.	-SD	S>H	Service (time)	High

Table 2. Classification of request situations according to social power (dominance), social distance (familiarity) between the speaker S and the hearer H, and the type and severity of the imposition of the request.

The interviews are built on the basis of the twelve request situations used in the DCT. However, they are designed in such a way that the interviewees will be in a more relaxed and less controlled environment in order to obtain the necessary data. The interview's main aim is to get the interviewees to justify their strategy choice and, thereby, reflect a clear image of the motives behind their choices. Having a discussion with the interviewees over their responses to each situation is more effective than interviewing them with a fixed set of questions. The latter would not be suitable to bring forth the data that explains the politeness phenomena in both Syrian and British cultures. Furthermore, such a discussion is vital to reveal how respondents weigh the size of imposition of their requests the social distance, and power between the speaker and the hearer concerned in each situation

4.4.2. Pilot study:

Since the discourse completion test (DCT) is going to be the main eliciting instrument in this research study, and despite the fact that the DCT adopted in the CCSARP project has gone under assessment and validity judgements by many researchers, testing its validity still forms a key point in this study. In particular, this is necessary because I am not using quite

the same situations as the CCSARP and also it has not been used previously in any dialect of Arabic for requests. Furthermore, having the DCT pilot-tested should highlight any shortcomings and identify any unforeseen difficulties, such as the wording and format of the questionnaire in both Arabic and English and the suitability of the situations within the contextual frame of Syrian and British cultures and hence provide an opportunity to avoid such pitfalls during the main data collection phase.

In order to meet the purpose of this cross-cultural study the discourse completion test used was constructed in two languages: Modern Standard Arabic and English. It was pilot-tested with a group of six Syrian Arabic native speakers, divided equally between males and females. All of the Arabic respondents were postgraduate students at the University of Leeds doing their PhDs in different subjects such as computing, engineering, education and linguistics. They were requested to fill in the questionnaire using the Syrian dialect rather than Modern Standard Arabic as to examine the requests they make in their normal speech rather than those used in writing. The English version of the DCT was distributed to six undergraduate linguistics students (three males, three females) in their first year. I distributed the questionnaire to the English students in one of their classes. Having introduced myself and stated the aim of my study to examine the requests they will provide, I handed out the questionnaire and waited approximately 15 minutes for them to complete it. Then I collected the questionnaires and thanked them for their cooperation. It is worth noting that neither the Syrian group nor the British one had studied politeness as part of their degree programme since this could have affected their responses.

Upon examining and analysing the pilot study data, no modifications were made to the DCT since the response rate was satisfactory and all the answers reflected a clear understanding of the DCT situations without any confusion on the part of the participants. However, one major concern in the pilot test was administering it to postgraduate Syrian students, whereas it was distributed to undergraduate British students parallel to the main study's population. That is because it was extremely difficult to find undergraduate Syrian students in England. Although respondents were not of parallel status, the choice of postgraduate respondents was unlikely to affect the pilot testing as it was more a test of the mechanism of the data collection instrument. Further, respondents of the main study will be undergraduate students.

4.4.3. Subjects:

Questionnaire Subjects:

The informants were two hundred university students divided equally between Syrian students and native British English students. Sixty percent of the student population in each group were females, while the remaining 40% were males. The British subjects were undergraduate students from different schools and departments studying at the University of Leeds. Similarly, the Syrian subjects were undergraduate university students in their first year of study in the Department of English at Damascus University. The age range of the students was between 17 and 23 years of age.

The purpose behind targeting the undergraduate student population lies in the fact that this is a sample of opportunity, and was appropriate to the constraints of the project. The second reason is to keep social class, level of income, educational background, occupation, and age range as homogenous as possible in order to maintain the comparability between the subjects in both language groups.

Interview Subjects:

I interviewed twenty respondents in total from both the British English and the Syrian Arabic groups who already completed the DCT and expressed their willingness to take part in the second stage of data collection and act as interviewees. They were all undergraduate students studying at the University of Leeds in the UK and Damascus University in Syria. There were ten respondents in each language group, including five males and five females.

4.4.4. Procedure:

I have designed a consent form that provides potential participants with sufficient information about this research project in order to:

- 1- make them understand the process in which they are to be engaged in.
- 2- understand the purpose of the research and to whom the research findings will be reported.
- 3- understand that they are free to participate in and withdraw from the study in addition to the right not to answer any question.
- 4- be assured that their personal data will be kept anonymous.

Participants were asked to read, date, and sign the consent form before taking part in my study. The Consent forms and questionnaires were written in the participants' native language to minimise any understanding difficulties. Further, the researcher was available near participants in case they would like to ask any questions or get any further explanation.

After checking the validity of the DCT as an effective way for collecting data by having it pilot tested, I had the paper-based DCTs printed and ready to distribute to respondents. I introduced myself and explained the purpose of my research. Then, I asked respondents in both language groups to complete the consent form and questionnaire using the language they speak in everyday interaction i.e. the Syrian Dialect. I explained to subjects that the questionnaire consists of twelve hypothetical situations. Their task was to imagine themselves in that context and accordingly think about what they would say. I furthermore said that they had the freedom to give an appropriate answer of their choice or that they could choose not to respond, if they thought that they would not say anything in that situation. However, in this case I asked them to explain why they would not feel able to do so.

With regards the interviews, I carried them out with subjects who had already completed the DCT. I checked their willingness to be interviewed when they completed the DCT and accordingly arranged the date and time of the interviews. With regards the English interviews, the Department of Linguistics and Phonetics in the University of Leeds, my own department, kindly offered me to use the recording studio for the purpose of carrying out my research interviews. The Arabic interviews, on the other hand, were conducted in one of the lecture rooms of the Department of English in Damascus University.

Once in the interview, I started by introducing myself, the aim of the research study I am carrying out and obtained a written consent from the interviewees. Then, I asked each respondent some background questions, including age and education. Such questions help the interviewer break the ice with the interviewees as well as identify each respondent in comparison with the others. After that I moved to asking probing questions about the participants' evaluation of the imposition involved in each situation and the potential effect it has on performing their requests, the influence of contextual variables such as power, familiarity and the rights and obligations of interlocutors on the responses they had provided. Moreover, I asked some questions to reveal the participants' awareness of the religious and soci-cultural norms that might have an impact on the requestive speech act in

their society. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. All interviews were digitally recorded using the recording instrument and software available in the recording studio in the case of the English interviews and a built-in microphone recording device in the case of the Arabic interviews. Accordingly, a huge amount of qualitative data has been collected in both languages. I have transcribed the digitally recorded data in both languages myself although transcribing the data was a time consuming process. It took me approximately five hours to transcribe each interview. I have also translated the portions of the Syrian data that I used in my thesis into English.

4.5. Analytical Instrument:

In the current study the data analysis procedure is adopted from the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) model used in Blum-Kulka et al., (1989) and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, (1984) for the said responses in the DCT, and Marti's (2006) model for the unsaid responses. The CCSARP model has been widely employed to investigate the realization patterns of the speech act of request across many languages, e.g. Australian English, American English, British English, Canadian French, Danish, German, Hebrew, and Russian. Furthermore, the data will be analysed against Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness, which involves a distinction between negative and positive politeness.

4.5.1. Said responses analysis:

As was pointed out earlier in section 4.4.1 Blum-Kulka et al's (1989) coding scheme was adopted for the analysis of the said responses of the DCT data in the current research project. However, upon analysing the collected data, the coding scheme did not fit all data categories emerging in both the Syrian and British data. Therefore, I have come up with new labels that fit the new emerging categories and marked them as '*new*' in order to distinguish them from the CCSARP categories.

4.5.1.1.Procedure:

The procedure followed is to distinguish the request sequences and discard any sequences which suggest that the informants misunderstood the task.

4.5.1.2.Segmentation or defining units for analysis:

- **Identifying the head act:** The head act is “the minimal unit which can realise a request” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 275).

e.g. John, *get me a beer, please*. I’m terribly thirsty. (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 275).

In this example the head act is represented in the sequence *get me a beer please*. However, in the process of identifying the speech act one may come across parts of the sequence that are unnecessary for request realization: alerters and supportive moves.

- **Alerters:** An alerter is an opening element used to alert or attract the hearer’s attention to the request speech act that follows it. It may take any form of the following:

Alerters									
Title/role	Surname	First name	Nickname	Endearment term	Offensive term	Pronoun	Attention getter	God Wish ^(New)	Greeting ^(New)
Professor	Johnson	Judith	Judy	Honey	Stupid	You	Excuse me	(God give you good health)	Good morning
بروفيسور	بركات	مها	ميهو	حبيبي	غبي	انت	عفوا	يعطيك العافية	صباح الخير
brofisoor	barakaat	maha	miiho	Habiibi	Xabi	inte	‘afwan	ya‘Tiik il-‘aafye	SabaaH il-xeer

Table 3. Alerter types with examples from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 277). The Arabic examples above are taken from the current research data.

Categories marked as new are newly emerging categories in the current research that were not available in Blum-Kulka et al.’s (1989) coding scheme.

- **Supportive moves:** A supportive move is an external unit that adjusts the request influence on the hearer either by aggravating or mitigating its force. The following examples taken from Blum-Kulka et al., (1989: 276) represent the two cases respectively:

- Stop bothering me or *I'll call the police.*

- Could you clean up this mess? *I'm having some friends for dinner tonight.*

Note: When a supportive move offering contextual information related to the performance of the request appears by itself in an utterance, it takes on the 'hint' status of the request:

- *The kitchen is in a terrible mess.* I can hardly see the sink. (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 276)

- **Head acts:** The head act is the nucleus of the speech act of request. The head act and the supportive move can have one of the following structures;

1. The minimal unit only:

- Get me a beer. (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 276)

2. Post-posed: Head act + supportive move.

- Get me a beer, *I'm terribly thirsty.* (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 276)

Or pre-posed: Supportive move + Head Act:

I'm terribly thirsty. Get me a beer. (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 276)

Usually, in having a combination of the head act and a supportive move, the clearest realization of the request is considered to be the head act:

- *The kitchen is in a terrible mess.* I can hardly see the sink. (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 276)

3. Multiple heads: It is possible to have more than one unit carrying out the requestive goal:

- *Clean up the kitchen. Get rid of this mess.* (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 276)

4.5.1.3.Strategy type:

The strategy type is mainly concerned with the level of directness of the request. Directness represents the degree to which the speaker's illocutionary point is clear from its location. The request strategies are mutually exclusive so that each head takes only one particular request strategy. The following nine strategies are ordered according to the degree of directness they carry (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 279-280). The English examples are taken from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 279-280) and the Arabic examples are taken from the current research data⁵:

- **Mood derivable:** The grammatical mood of the verb in the utterance decides the illocutionary force it has as a request, e.g. *Leave me alone/ Please move your car/ The menu please.*

- اتركني بحالي.

- trikni bi Haali.

- (Leave me alone)

- **Explicit performative:** The speaker explicitly nominates the illocutionary point of the utterance as he/she employs a relevant illocutionary verb, e.g. *I am asking you to move your car.*

- عم قالك تتركني بحالي.

- 'am illak titrikni bi Haali.

- (I am asking you to leave me alone.)

- **Hedged performative:** The speaker implicitly name the illocutionary verb denoting the request by using modal verbs or verbs expressing intention, e.g. *I must/ have to ask you to clean the kitchen right now.*

⁵ It is important to note that the translations of all Arabic examples in the thesis are my own.

- لازم قللك تحرك سيارتك.

- laazem illak tHarrek sayyaartak.

- (I have to ask you to move your car.)

- **Locution derivable:** The speaker can tell the illocutionary point of the utterance from its semantic meaning, e.g. *Madam, you will have to/should/must/ought to move your car.*

- لازم تبعد السيارة من هون.

- laazem tba^{cc}ed il-sayyara min hoon.

- (You have to move the car from here.)

- **Want Statement:** The speaker indicates his/her desire that the hearer do X, e.g. *I'd like to borrow your notes for a little while.*

- بدي استعير دفترك شوي.

- bididi ista^{ciir} daftarak šway.

- (I'd like to borrow your copybook for a while.)

- **Suggestory formula:** The speaker introduces the illocutionary goal in the form of a suggestion via using a routine formula, e.g. *How about cleaning the kitchen? / Why don't you get lost?*

- شور اريك تنظف المطبخ؟

- šuu ra'yak tnaDDef il-maTbax?

- (How about cleaning the kitchen?)

- **Preparatory:** The speaker refers to a preparatory condition by indicating ability, willingness, or possibility as conventionalized in the given language for doing

the request, e.g. *Can I borrow your notes? / I was wondering if you could give me a lift.*

- ممكن استعير ملاحظاتك؟

- Mumken ista'ir mulaaHaZaatak?

- (Can I borrow your notes?)

- **Strong hint:** The utterance contains a direct reference to elements of the intended illocutionary point, e.g. *Will you be going home now?* (Intent: getting a lift home).

- رايح عالبيت هلق؟

- raayeH 'al-beet halla'?

- (Are you going home now?)

- **Mild hint:** The speaker indirectly implies the request illocutionary point without making overt reference to the proposition, e.g. *You have been busy here, haven't you?* (Intent: getting the hearer to clean the kitchen)

- شكلكن كنتو معجوقين هون، مو هيك؟

- šakilkon kintu ma'juu 'iin hoon, muu heek?

(You have been busy here, haven't you?)

4.5.1.4. Syntactic downgraders:

Syntactic downgraders soften the impact of the head act by means of syntactic devices. The properties of the syntactic devices and their mitigating functions are language specific as they differ from one language to language.

Syntactic downgraders:	Example
Interrogative:	- Can I borrow your notes?

Syntactic downgraders:**Example**

- ممكن استعير ملاحظاتك؟

mumken ista^eiir mulaaHaZaatak?

(can I borrow your notes?)

Negation of a preparatory condition:

- can't you.../ I don't suppose you'd like to ...

The two most common conditions on request compliance are that the addressee *can* comply, and that he/she *is willing to* carry out the requested act.

- ما فيك تعيرني ملاحظاتك؟

- maa fiik t^eiirni mulaaHaZaatak?

(Cant't you lend me your notes?)

Subjunctive:

- Might it be better if you *were to leave now?*

- يا ريت تجلي هالجليات يللي نسيتن مبارح.

- *yaa reet tijli hal-jalyaat yalli nsiiton mbaareH.*

(I wish you washed up these dishes you forgot yesterday)

Aspect:

- I'm *wondering* if I could get a lift home with you.

- عم فكر إذا فيني روح معك؟

- °am fakker iza fiini ruuH ma°ak? (I am wondering if I could go with you.)

Tense:

- I *wanted* to ask you to present your paper a week earlier.

- كان بدني قللك تعطي محاضرتك قبل بأسبوع.

- kaan bididi illak ta°Ti muHaaDartak abl bi isbuu°.

(I wanted to tell you to give your presentation a week earlier.)

Syntactic downgraders:	Example
------------------------	---------

Conditional clause:	<p>- It would fit in much better if you could give your paper a week earlier</p> <p>- يكون أحسن بكثير إذا فيك تعطي محاضرتك قبل بأسبوع.</p> <p>- bikuun 'Hsan bikiir iza fiik ta°Ti muHaDartak abl bi isbuu°.</p> <p>(It would be much better if you could give your lecture a week earlier.)</p>
Combinations of the above:	<p>- I was wondering if I couldn't get a lift home with you.</p> <p>- كنت عم فكر يا ترى ما فيي روح معك.</p> <p>- kint °am fakker yaa tara maa fiyi ruuH ma°ak.</p> <p>- I was thinking can't I go with you.</p>

Table 4. Types of syntactic downgraders with examples taken from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 281-283). Arabic examples are taken from the current research data.

4.5.1.5. Lexical and phrasal downgraders:

Lexical and phrasal downgraders might be used to mitigate the imposition force of the request by employing particular lexical and phrasal devices.

Lexical and phrasal downgraders:	Examples:
Politeness markers: Terms the speaker	- Please

Lexical and phrasal downgraders:**Examples:**

uses to evoke the hearer's cooperation.

- لو سمحت، إذا بتريد

- law samaHt/ iza bitriid

- If you allow/ if you will (please)

Understaters: Adverbial modifiers by means of which the speaker reduces part of the imposition.

- Could you tidy up a *bit*?

- ما فيك تضيب شوي؟

- maa fiik DDib šway?

(Could you tidy up a bit?)

Hedges: Adverbials by means of which the speaker avoids making a commitment towards the proposition of an utterance.

- It would fit much better *somehow* if you did your paper next week.

- يكون أحسن تقريبا إذا بتحضر للأسبوع الجاية.

- Bikuun aHsan ta'riiban iza bitHaDDer lal-isbuu^c il-jaaye.

(It would be much better somehow if you prepare for the next week.)

Subjectivizers: Elements through which the speaker explicitly conveys his/her subjective opinion regarding the illocutionary point of the proposition.

- *I'm afraid* you have to move your car.

- *I wonder* if you would give me a lift.

- بعتمد انك لازم تبعد سيارتك.

- *bi'ti'ed* innak laazem tba^{cc}ed sayyaartak.

(I *believe* you have to move your car)

Downtoners: Propositional modifiers that enable the speaker to modify the effect of his request on the hearer.

- Could you *possibly/perhaps* lend me your notes?

Lexical and phrasal downgraders:**Examples:**

- ممكن إذا في مجال تعيرني ملاحظاتك؟

- mumkin iza fii majaal t'airni
mulaaHaZaatak?

(Could you possibly lend me your notes?)

Cajolers: Conventionalized speech terms whose semantic meaning is not relevant to their discourse meaning.

-You know, I'd really like you to present your paper next week.

- بتعرف أنا عن جد حابة أنك تحضر للاسبوع الجاية.

- Bta'ref, ana 'an jad Haabbe innak
tHaDDer lal-isbuu' il-jaaye.

(You know, I would really like you to prepare for the next week.)

Appealers: Expressions the speaker uses to appeal for his/her hearer's kind understanding.

-Clean up the kitchen, will you, okay?

- نضف المطبخ! ماشي، اتفقنا؟

- naDDef il-maTbax maaši, ittafa'na?

(Clean up the kitchen, ok, agree?)

Combinations: it is possible for lexical and phrasal downgraders to co-occur together.

Table 5. Types of lexical and phrasal downgraders with examples taken from Blum-Kulka (1989: 283-285) and Arabic examples are taken from the current research data.

4.5.1.6. Upgraders:

Upgraders are lexical elements the speaker uses to enhance the request's influence on the hearer.

Upgraders**Examples**

Intensifiers: Adverbial modifiers the speaker uses to increase the impact of certain components of the proposition in the utterance.

- The kitchen is in a *terrible/frightful* mess.

- المطبخ بحالة بتقرف.

- il-maTbax bi Haale *bit'arref*.

(The kitchen is in a *terrible* condition.)

Commitment indicators: Sentence modifiers the speaker uses to express his commitment towards a state of affairs in the proposition.

- I'm *sure/certain/ surely/certainly/* you won't mind giving me a lift.

- يعرف انو ما عندك مانع توصلني.

- *ba^cref* inno maa ^candak maane^c
twaSSilni.

- (*I know* you won't mind giving me a lift)

Expletives: words that do not contribute to meaning but suggest the strength of feeling of the speaker

- Why don't you clean that *bloody/damn* mess up!

- ليش ما بتنظف هالكركبة/العينة؟

- leeš maa bitnaDDef hal-karkabe *il-laⁱine?*

(Why don't you clean up that *bloody damn* mess?)

Time intensifiers: Adverbial modifiers used by the speaker to the time of the proposition of the utterance.

- You'd better move your car now, *immediately!*

- حرك سيارتك بسرعة!

- Harrek sayyaartak *bsir^a!*

(Move your car quickly!)

Upgraders**Examples**

Lexical uptoners: A marked lexical choice given a negative connotation.

- Clean up that *mess!*

- نضف هالقراف!

- naDDef hal-*araf!*

(Clean up that mess!)

Determination markers: devices that imply the speaker's strong determination.

- I've explained myself *and that's that.*

- أنا قلت اللي عندي وخلص.

- ana ilt illi 'andi *wi xalaS.*

(I have explained myself and that's that.)

Repetitions of request: literally or by paraphrasing it.

- Get lost! Leave me alone!

- انقلع بقى! / تركني لحالي!

- in'ile^c ba'a! *trikni laHaali!*

(Get lost! Leave me alone!)

Orthographic/suprasegmental emphasis: establishing dramatic effects by means of underlining, using exclamation marks, using marked pausing (in the spoken mode), stress, and intonation.

- Cleaning up the kitchen is *your business!!!*

- تنضيف المطبخ شغلناك!

- tanDiif il-maTbax *šaXiltak.*

(Cleaning up the kitchen is *your business!*)

Emphatic additions: the use of lexical collocation to add emphasis to the

- *Go* and clean that kitchen!

- روجي نضفي المطبخ!

Upgraders	Examples
request.	- <i>ruuHi</i> naDfi il-maTbax! (Go clean the kitchen!)
Pejorative determiners: Determiners that have a disparaging or derogatory effect or force.	- Clean up <i>that</i> mess (there)! - نضف ماد القرف! - naDDef <i>haad</i> il-araf! (Clean that mess!)
Combinations of the above:	Types of upgraders may co-occur together in the request utterance.

Table 6. Types of upgraders illustrated by English examples are taken from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 285-286) and the Arabic examples are taken from the current research data.

4.5.1.7. Supportive moves:

Supportive moves enable the speaker to mitigate or aggravate his request. Supportive moves are external to the head act, hence, they become either before or after it.

- **Mitigating supportive moves:**

Types of mitigating supportive moves with all the examples are taken from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 287-288) except the sweetener case is taken from Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984: 205). The Arabic examples, on the other hand, are taken from the current research data. Categories marked as new are newly emerging categories in the current research that were not available in Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) coding scheme.

1. Preparator:

The speaker prepares the hearer for the following request by asking about the hearer's potential readiness to fulfil the request, or by asking for the permission of the hearer to perform the request, e.g. *I'd like to ask you something.*

-*May I ask you a question ...*

-بدي اطلب منك طلب.

- *Biddi iTlob minnak Talab.*

(*I would like to ask you a question.*)

2. Getting a precommitment:

A speaker tries to engage his/her hearer before making the request in order to check for any potential refusal, e.g. *Could you do me a favour? Would you lend me your notes from yesterday's class.*

- معلىش تخدمني هالخدمة؟

- *ma^cleš tixdimni hal-xidme?*

(*Can you do me a favour?*)

3. Imposition minimiser:

The speaker attempts to reduce the imposition of the request on the hearer by indicating consideration of cost, e.g. *Would you give me a lift, but only if you are going my way.*

- ممكن توصلوني بس اذا كنت عطر يقكن؟

- *mumken twaSluuni bas iza kint ^caTaree 'kon?*

(*Will you give me a lift only if I am on your way?*)

4. Promise of reward:

The speaker indicates consideration of reward upon the fulfilment of the request in an attempt to increase the likelihood of the speaker's compliance, e.g. *Would you give me a lift home? I'll pitch in on some gas.*

- توصلوني عالييت؟ وأنا بعبي السيارة بنزين.

- twaSluuni ʿal-beet? Wi ana bʿabbi il-sayyara banziin.

(Would you give me a lift home? I'll pitch in on some gas.)

5. Sweetener:

The speaker decreases the imposition involved in the request by exaggerating his/her appreciation of the hearer's ability to fulfil the request, e.g. *You have beautiful handwriting, would it be possible to borrow your notes for a few days?*

- ياي خطك كثير حلو! ممكن استعير دفترك كم يوم؟

- yaay, xaTTek ktiir Hiluu! mumken istʿiir daftarek kam yoom?

(Wow, your handwriting is very beautiful, can I borrow your copybook for a few days?)

6. Disarmer:

The speaker anticipates potential objections on the part of the hearer by indicating his awareness of the offence in the proposition, e.g. *Excuse me, I hope you don't think I am being forward, but is there any chance of a lift home?*

- بتمنى ما تعتبروني غليظ، بس في مجال توصلوني عالييت؟

- bitmanna ma tiʿtibuuni XaliiZ, bas fii majaal twasluuni ʿal-beet?

(I hope that you don't think I am being cheeky, but would it be possible to give me a lift home?)

7. Promise of refrain ^(NEW):

The speaker indicates that he/she will not ask again upon the fulfilment of the request in an attempt to increase the likelihood of the speaker's compliance.

- رجاء استاذ بدي ياك تأجلي موعد تسليم حلقة البحث و بوعدك انو هالمرة آخر مرة .

- rajaa'an istaaaz bididi yaak t'ajjilli maw'ed tasliim Halaqet il-baHis wi biwi'dak inno hal-marra aaxer marra.

(Please teacher, I want you to extend the deadline for my seminar paper *and I promise you that this is the last time.*)

8. Promise of return ^(NEW):

The speaker makes a promise to return the goods they are asking for in their request in an attempt to increase the likelihood of the speaker's compliance.

- Can I borrow £100 just for this month? *I swear I will pay you back.*

- في مجال تديني هالشهر عشر آلاف ليرة؟ و اكييد برجعن الشهر الجاية .

- fii majaal tdayyini hal-šahir 'ašir taalaaf leera? wi akiid brajji'on il-šahir il-jaaye.

(Can you possibly lend me ten thousand Syrian pounds? *and for sure I will return them next month.*)

9. Promise of improvement ^(NEW):

The speaker makes a promise to improve the quality of their work upon the fulfilment of the request in an attempt to increase the likelihood of the speaker's compliance.

- دكتور معلى سلمك حلقة البحث بعد يومين و بوعدك انو رح تكون احسن مما تتوقع .

- diktoor ma'leeš salmak Halaqet il-baHis ba'd yoomeen wi bwi'dak inno raH tkuun aHsan mimmaa titwaqqa'.

(Doctor, can I hand in the seminar paper after two days and *I promise you that it will be better than you expect*)

10. Encouragement ^(NEW):

The speaker decreases the imposition involved in the request by encouraging the hearer to fulfil the request.

- بنتي تغير وقت محاضرتك و صار قبل باسبوع، بدي ياكي تشدي همتك هه .

- binti tXayyar wa'it muHaaDartek wi Saar abl bi isbuu°, *biddi yaaki tšiddi himtek ha.*

(Daughter, your presentation time is changed. It is now one week before. *I want you to prepare yourself well.*)

11. Thanks/Appreciation ^(NEW):

The speaker decreases the imposition involved in the request by expressing his/her appreciation of the hearer's compliance to fulfil the request.

- Would you be able to do the presentation a week early? *It would be greatly appreciated.*

- لو سمحتم انا بنت جاركم فلان. ضيعت الطريق و ما بعرف ارجع، معليش توصلوني معكم عالبيت؟ و بكوون ممنونة الكن كثير.

- law samaHtu ana bint jaarkon fulaan Dayya'it il-Tarii' wi maa ba°ref irja°, ma°leš twaSluuni ma°kon °al-beet? *wi bkuun mamnuune ilkon ktiir.*

(Please, I am your neighbour's 'name' daughter. I lost my way and don't know how to get back. Can you give me a lift home? and *I will be so grateful to you.*)

12. Offer to help ^(NEW):

The speaker makes a promise to help the speaker in fulfilling the request in an attempt to increase the likelihood of the speaker's compliance

- لو سمحتي نضفي المطبخ منيح و انا رح ساعدك .

- law samaHti naDfi il-maTbax mniiH wi *ana raH saa°dek.*

(Please clean the kitchen properly, *and I will help you.*

13. Apology ^(NEW):

The speaker attempts to reduce the imposition of the request on the hearer by apologizing for having to ask or for any inconveniences their request might cause.

- Hello, *I am really sorry to ask* but I really need a ride home and I think you live on my street.

- استاذ انا آسف كثير ممكن تمدد المهلة آخر مرة.

- *istaaz ana aasef ktiir* mumken tmadded il-mihle aaxer marra.

(Teacher, *I am very sorry*, can you give me an extension for the last time?)

- **Aggravating supportive moves**

Types of supportive moves with all the examples are taken from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 287-288). The Arabic examples, on the other hand, are taken from the current research data. Categories marked as new are newly emerging categories in the current research that were not available in Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) coding scheme.

1. Insult:

The speaker opens his/her request with an insult to increase the imposition on the hearer, e.g. *You have always been a dirty pig*, so clean up!

- انت من يوم يومك عفش و مكركب، يالله قوم نضف!

- *inte min yoom yoomak 'ifeš wi mkarkab*, yaLLa uum naDDef!

(*You have always been disorganized and untidy*, so go and clean up!)

2. Threat:

The speaker threatens the hearer with possible consequences in case of non-compliance with the request in order to guarantee fulfilment of the request, e.g. *Move that car if you don't want a ticket!*

- حرك سيارتك إذا ما بدك تاكل مخالفة!

- Harrek sayyartak izaa maa biddak taakol muxaalafe!

(Move your car if you don't want a ticket!)

3. Moralizing:

The speaker uses a general moral maxim in order to add credibility to his/her request, e.g. *If one shares a flat one should be prepared to pull one's weight in cleaning it, so get on with the washing up!*

- والله اللي بدو يعيش مع ناس بدو يكون فالح و نضايبي ، لازم تتعود عالجلي.

- waLLa illi biddo y'iiš ma^c naas biddo ykuun faaleH wi naDayfi, laazem tit^cawwad ^cal-jali!

(Anyone who lives with other people should be active and clean. So get on with the washing up!)

4. Rhetorical questions ^(NEW):

The speaker uses a rhetorical question to increase the imposition on the hearer.

- يعني يا فلان روح و شوف المطبخ هلق هاد منظر مطبخ بني آدمين؟

- ya^cni yaa flaan ruuH wi šuuf il-maTbax halla' haada manZar matbax bani aadmiin?

(Name of the person, have a look at the kitchen, *Do you think that this is a kitchen fit for human beings?*)

5. Additional imperative ^(NEW):

The speaker uses an additional imperative form in order to guarantee fulfilment of the request and to increase the likelihood of the speaker's refraining from repeating the same action in the future.

- حرك السيارة من هادا المكان لأنك إذا بقيت رح تعمل عجة هون، و لا عد توقف هون مرة ثانية!

- Harrek il-sayyara min haada il-makan, la-innak iza b'iit raH ta°mel °aj'a hoon, wi laa °ad twa''ef hoon marra taanye!

(Move your car from this place because if you stay there you will cause a traffic jam, and never park here again!)

6. Combinations of the above:

It is possible for more than one of the mentioned forms to co-occur with each other.

- شو هالشر شحة يللي تاركينها بالمطبخ مبارح؟ و الله عيب عليكم يعني العنزة بتنضف تحتها قبل ما تقعد.

-šuu hal-šaršaHa yalli taarkiina bil-maTbax mbaareH? waLLa °eeb °aleekon ya°ni il-°anze bitnaDDif taHta abil maa ti'°od.

(What's that awful mess you've left in the kitchen? Really, it's a shame on you. I mean, even a goat would clean up after itself before settling down.)

4.5.2. Unsaid responses analysis:

The procedure followed is to distinguish unsaid responses and label them according to Marti's (2006) three analytical categories:

4.5.2.1. Opting out:

Informants here deliberately choose to opt out and not to make any request, e.g. "I wouldn't say anything. It's their responsibility to clean up their own mess. Making this point may just create a bad atmosphere." (Male British participant)

- لا اطلب، أفضل المشي على أن اطلب منهم.

- laa aTlob ufaDDel il-maši °alaa an aTlob minhom.

(I wouldn't ask. I prefer walking rather than asking them.) (Male Syrian participant)

4.5.2.2. Alternative response:

In this case, informants prefer to give an alternative response rather than making a request (e.g. choosing to change one's place instead of asking other people to stop smoking)

- "I would sit coughing until they notice they should stop." (Female British participant)

- "لن اطلب منه لأنني أتوقع ردا مزعجا، بل أفضل أن أغير مكاني في القاعة."

- lan aTlob minhu li-annani atawaqqa^u raddan muz^oijan, bal ufaDDil an uXayyira makaani fil-qaa^a.

(I wouldn't ask him because I expect an annoying answer. I would rather change my place in the hall.) (Female Syrian participant)

4.5.2.3. Negotiation:

Respondents here use strategies to establish common ground or to diminish the imposition of their requests by using utterances such as *how are you? Good evening. I think we are neighbours. I often see you around.*

- "I would probably say hello to them and ask them how they were doing, what they were up to, when they were going home...etc and hope that they eventually offer. But if they didn't, I would not push it by explicitly asking." (Male British participant)

- "مرحبا كيفكن شو عم تتسوقوا؟"

- marHaba kiifkon šuu ^oam titsawa'uu?

(Hello, how are you? Are you shopping?) (Male Syrian participant)

4.6. Chapter summary:

In this chapter, I have presented the research questions in the current research project. Then, I reviewed and discussed some data collection methods used in cross-cultural pragmatics. The aim was to adopt a combination of methods that handle the research issues

from different perspectives. In the second part of this chapter, I describe the rationale of the study and both the data collection and data analysis phases. Finally, I concluded by providing a summary of the points covered. In the following chapter, I present the results and findings of the request strategies in both the DCT and interview data.

CHAPTER FIVE: STRATEGY FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction:

This chapter's main aim is to report the realization patterns of the requests produced in the twelve situations in the discourse completion tests. In the first phase of the data analysis, the frequencies and percentages of the requests' semantic formulas that comprise the request strategies used by both the Syrian Arabic and British English participants are presented. Next, in the second part of the analysis the focus will be on the discussion of the most frequently used request strategies across both groups of subjects by situation, as a first step towards exploring the form and function of these strategies in the two cultures. Then an analysis of the data in terms of the semantic formulas or strategies adopted will be presented followed by a discussion of the cultural image emerging in the Syrian data. The chapter will be concluded by presenting a summary of the main findings.

5.2. Requests data analysis by situation:

The analysis of semantic formulas collected from 100 British English-speaking students and 100 Syrian Arabic-speaking students will be introduced in two tables. Table 7 demonstrates the distribution of the main request strategy types across the twelve situations. Further, table 8 indicates the frequencies of occurrences of the request strategies and sub-strategies in each situation. The results displayed in each graph across the twelve situations refer to both the actual number and percentage of the semantic formulas chosen by all subjects. A comparison is then made between the British and Syrian results in each situation

Situation	Strategy main type	Syrian	British	Chi-square results
situation 01 (Kitchen)	1.Direct Strategies	33	10	$\chi^2 = 17.23$
	2.Conventionally indirect strategies	50	74	df = 3
	3.Non-conventionally indirect strategies	13	11	p < 0.001
	4.Do not do FTA	4	5	
situation 02 (Street)	1.Direct Strategies	40	28	$\chi^2 = 22$
	2.Conventionally indirect strategies	2	16	df = 3
	3.Non-conventionally indirect strategies	20	35	p < 0.001
	4.Do not do FTA	38	21	
situation 03 (Notes)	1.Direct Strategies	13	1	$\chi^2 = 12.12^*$
	2.Conventionally indirect strategies	86	94	df = 3
	3.Non-conventionally indirect strategies	1	4	p < 0.01
	4.Do not do FTA	0	1	
situation 04 (Lift)	1.Direct Strategies	2	0	$\chi^2 = 10.02^*$
	2.Conventionally indirect strategies	65	45	df = 3
	3.Non-conventionally indirect strategies	3	4	p < 0.02
	4.Do not do FTA	30	51	
situation 05 (Phone)	1.Direct Strategies	14	6	$\chi^2 = 22.40^*$
	2.Conventionally indirect strategies	77	60	df = 3
	3.Non-conventionally indirect strategies	8	34	p < 0.001
	4.Do not do FTA	1	0	
situation 06 (Police)	1.Direct Strategies	56	19	$\chi^2 = 28.97^*$
	2.Conventionally indirect strategies	39	75	df = 3
	3.Non-conventionally indirect strategies	4	5	p < 0.001
	4.Do not do FTA	1	1	

Situation	Strategy main type	Syrian	British	Chi-square results
situation 07 (Extension)	1.Direct Strategies	11	6	$\chi^2 = 6.19$
	2.Conventionally indirect strategies	64	73	df = 3
	3.Non-conventionally indirect strategies	13	5	p > 0.10 **NS
	4.Do not do FTA	12	16	
situation 08 (Presentation)	1.Direct Strategies	8	8	$\chi^2 = 35.38$
	2.Conventionally indirect strategies	53	86	df = 3
	3.Non-conventionally indirect strategies	23	0	p < 0.001
	4.Do not do FTA	16	6	
situation 09 (Smoking)	1.Direct Strategies	19	20	$\chi^2 = 22$
	2.Conventionally indirect strategies	43	57	df = 3
	3.Non-conventionally indirect strategies	24	2	p < 0.001
	4.Do not do FTA	14	21	
situation 10 (Money)	1.Direct Strategies	9	1	$\chi^2 = 20.23$
	2.Conventionally indirect strategies	59	79	df = 3
	3.Non-conventionally indirect strategies	11	0	p < 0.001
	4.Do not do FTA	21	20	
situation 11 (Photocopy)	1.Direct Strategies	59	5	$\chi^2 = 69.49^*$
	2.Conventionally indirect strategies	40	95	df = 2
	3.Non-conventionally indirect strategies	0	0	p < 0.001
	4.Do not do FTA	1	0	
situation 12 (Coffee)	1.Direct Strategies	17	4	$\chi^2 = 33.21$
	2.Conventionally indirect strategies	49	87	df = 3
	3.Non-conventionally indirect strategies	12	3	p < 0.001
	4.Do not do FTA	22	6	

Situation	Strategy main type	Syrian	British	Chi-square results
All Situations	1. Direct Strategies	281	108	$\chi^2=112.18$ df=3 p<0.001
	2. Conventionally indirect strategies	627	841	
	3. Non-conventionally indirect strategies	132	103	
	4. Do not do FTA	160	148	

Table 7. Occurrences of main request strategy types in twelve social situations (Syrian (SY) =100, British (BR) =100) with Chi-square test results.

* Yates correction applied, ** $p > 0.10$ NS: not significant.

In order to identify which of the percentage differences presented in table 7 above were statistically significant, non-parametric procedures were used in the analysis. Non-parametric procedures were employed since the choices of strategy types are nominal scale variables. Chi-square tests of independence were conducted on the distribution of just the main strategies in each situation. This was because the numbers of data points of sub-categories in each situation were too small to warrant doing statistical tests and were unlikely to show reliable statistical results. Therefore, I am providing the numbers of data points in percentages for the subcategories in table 8. Table 8 illustrates the occurrences or percentage distribution of Syrian Arabic and British English request strategies across the twelve situations so that we have a better understanding of the similarities and differences between the two language groups.

The statistical analysis results as is demonstrated in table 7 showed that there are significant differences in the choice of the main requesting strategies between the Syrian and the British groups in most situations. However, situation 7 (extension) stood out as an exception since the responses of both groups showed no significant differences ($\chi^2 = 17.23$, $df = 3$, $p > 0.10$). The significant differences in the rest of the situations indicate in their turn the significance of the findings of this research. Results demonstrated in table 7 and 8 will be discussed in further detail in this chapter upon analyzing request strategies by situation.

Strategies Table	situation 01		situation 02		situation 03		situation 04		situation 05		situation 06		situation 07		situation 08		situation 09		situation 10		situation 11		situation 12		All Situations	
	SY	BR	SY	BR	SY	BR	SY	BR	SY	BR	SY	BR	SY	BR	SY	BR	SY	BR	SY	BR	SY	BR	SY	BR	SY	BR
	Said	96	95	62	79	100	99	70	49	99	100	99	99	88	84	84	94	86	79	79	80	99	100	78	94	1040
Direct Strategies	33	10	40	28	13	1	2	0	14	6	56	19	11	6	8	8	19	20	9	1	59	5	17	4	281	108
mood derivable	33	10	39	28	13	1	2	0	6	0	56	15	8	0	5	0	19	20	8	0	59	3	16	4	264	81
explicit performative	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	5	10
hedged performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	4	2	5	2	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	12	17
Conventionally indirect strategies	50	74	2	16	86	94	65	45	77	60	39	75	64	73	53	86	43	57	59	79	40	95	49	87	627	841
locution derivable	4	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	30	2	1	17	10	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	58
want statement	4	0	0	0	5	1	2	1	13	0	4	0	12	7	20	9	3	0	17	2	20	1	1	0	101	21
suggestory formula	10	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	3	2	2	0	2	0	2	11	7	29	16
preparatory	32	70	2	15	80	93	63	44	64	60	32	45	49	65	14	64	38	43	42	75	20	92	37	80	473	746
Non-conventionally indirect strategies	13	11	20	35	1	4	3	4	8	34	4	5	13	5	23	0	24	2	11	0	0	0	12	3	132	103
strong hint	10	8	14	21	1	4	3	3	8	34	4	5	13	5	23	0	22	2	11	0	0	0	12	3	121	85
mild hint	3	3	6	14	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	18
Unsaid	4	5	38	21	0	1	30	51	1	0	1	1	12	16	16	6	14	21	21	20	1	0	22	6	160	148
opting out	0	4	16	7	0	1	26	42	1	0	0	0	12	13	9	5	7	8	21	17	1	0	13	3	106	100
alternative response	4	1	22	14	0	0	3	5	0	0	1	1	0	3	7	1	7	13	0	3	0	0	9	3	53	44
negotiation	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
Grand Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1200	1200

Table 8. Occurrences of Syrian Arabic and British English request strategies across the twelve situations.

5.2.1. Situation 1 (Kitchen):

A student asking his roommate to clean up the kitchen he/she had left in a terrible mess the night before.

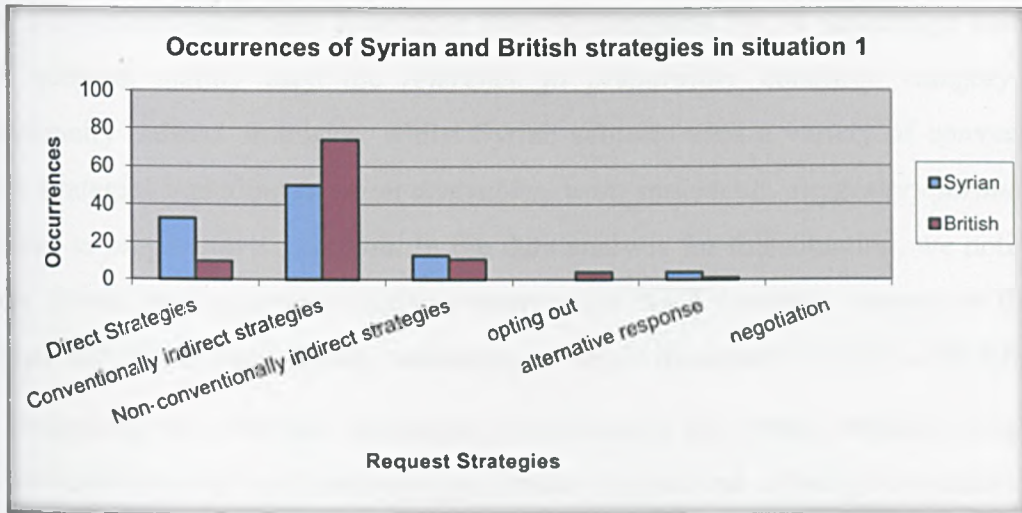


Figure 1. Occurrences of Syrian and British strategies in situation 1.

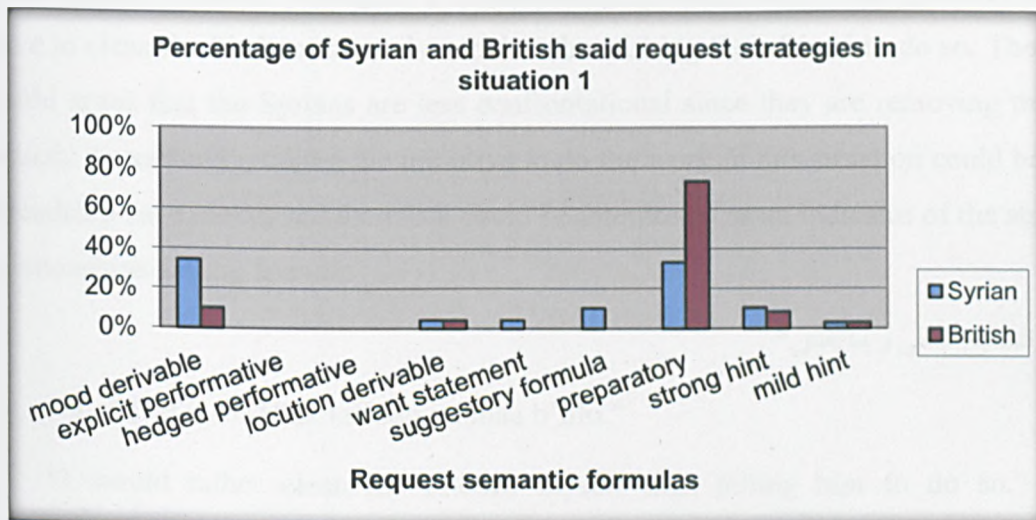


Figure 2. Percentage of Syrian and British strategies in situation 1.

Chi-square test results indicated in table 7 (see section 5.2 above) suggest that there is a statistically significant difference between the Syrian and the British groups' strategy choices in this situation ($\chi^2 = 17.23$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.001$). There was a noticeable difference in

the way they used both direct strategies (SY 33% vs. BR 10%) and conventionally indirect strategies (SY 50% vs. BR 74%).

Based on the data presented in table 8 (see section 5.2), one can see that participants showed a preference for using said strategies to perform requests rather than their unsaid counterparts in this situation across the two languages. In particular, the conventionally indirect strategies were the most frequent strategies for both language groups. However, the British respondents used them more than their Syrian peers by 24 percentage points. The British subjects mainly used the *reference to preparatory condition* category of the conventionally indirect strategies, whilst Syrian subjects used a variety of conventionally indirect strategies including *locution derivables, want statements, suggestory formulas, and references to preparatory condition*. In the data analysis for this situation, we noticed that subjects of both languages were likely to resort to the mood derivable category of the direct strategies, with the Syrian subjects maintaining a higher frequency (SY 33%, BR 10%).

Examining the interview comments more closely, the Syrian subjects revealed that since their addressee is their roommate, politeness is perceived as being less important than making a request in such a situation. The expectation here is that everyone who shares the house respects the house's rules and the rules of hygiene.

As regards the unsaid strategies, it is interesting to report that Syrians chose to take the initiative to clean the kitchen themselves rather than asking their friend to do so. Therefore, one could argue that the Syrians are less confrontational since they are removing the need for request. Accordingly, taking the initiative to do the work in this situation could be taken as a friendship-save move, and therefore could be interpreted as an indicator of the strongly-tied relationships among friends:

"بنضف المطبخ لحالي و ما بقلو."

"bnaDDef il-maTbax laHaali wi maa b'illo."

"I would rather clean the kitchen myself than telling him to do so." (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

Some Syrian respondents explained that they would rather do the cleaning than bother their friend and potentially having the harmonious relationship affected:

"مو محرزة اخسر رفيقي مشان هيك شغلة ناكثة."

“muu meHirze ixsar rfii’i mšasn heek šaXle naakte.”

“It is not worth it to lose my friend for a trivial matter.” (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

Others suggested that cleaning themselves rather than asking their friend to do the cleaning might be the best way to make the friend realize their fault of leaving the kitchen in a mess.

The British participants, on the other hand, mainly chose to opt out showing reluctance to take any action concerning cleaning the kitchen and thus leaving the problem in place. In the interviews with the British subjects, they revealed that refraining from a request is a way of avoiding problems or clashes with their addressee like the following examples:

“I wouldn't say anything. It's their responsibility to clean up their own mess. Making this point may just create a bad atmosphere.” (Male interviewee - British participant)

“I wouldn't say anything as I wouldn't want to cause conflict nor would I clean up the mess.” (Female interviewee - British participant)

5.2.2. Situation 2 (Street):

A young woman wants to get rid of a man pestering her on the street.

In the analysis of the data yielded in this situation, it was found that the Syrian and the British subjects exhibited a large significant difference in the way they form their requests. Such argument is evidenced by the Chi-square test results presented in table 7 ($\chi^2 = 22$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.001$). Looking more closely at this situation, one notices Syrian subjects' extensive reliance on direct strategies (SY 40% vs. BR 28%), whereas their British peers mostly used non-conventionally indirect strategies (BR 35% vs. SY 20%). Further, subjects showed a big divergence in using conventionally indirect strategies (SY 2% vs. BR 16%). These facts alongside the data presented in Figures 3 and 4 above indicate that Syrians used more direct verbalized strategies than the British subjects, who tended to use more indirect said strategies.

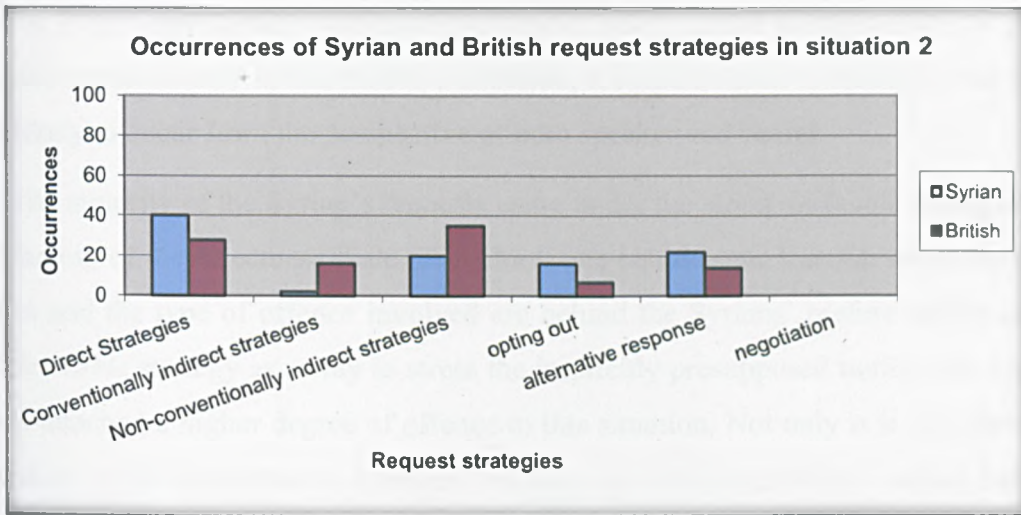


Figure 3. Occurrences of Syrian and British strategies in situation 2.

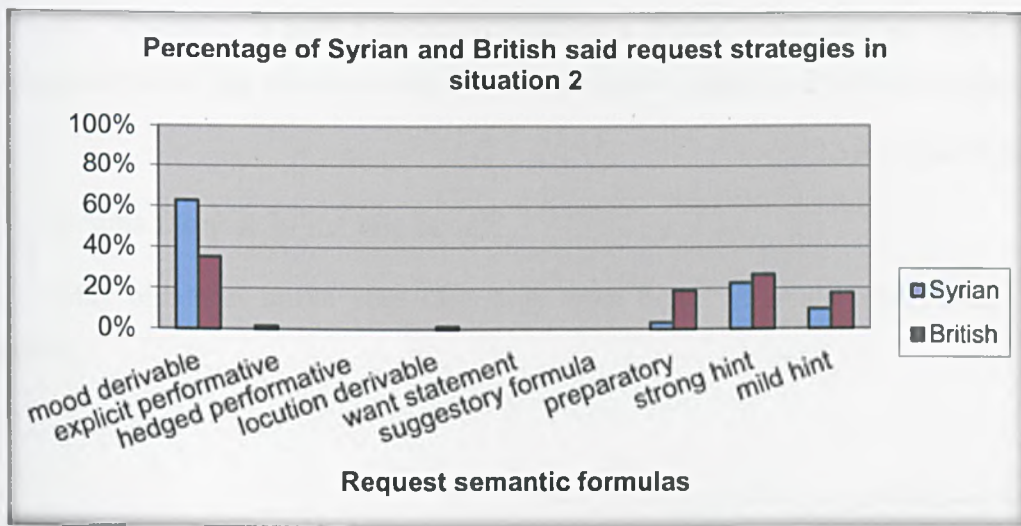


Figure 4. Percentage of Syrian and British strategies in situation 2.

This was explained by the interviewed British participants who emphasized that the social distance between them and their addressee affects their directness choices and pushes them to pick safer options:

“I would say to him: Can you please just leave me alone! (*I think if I do not know someone it is difficult to be rude to them.*)” (Female interviewee - British participant)

“I would not ask him directly because he might be aggressive, who knows! I would probably say ‘look, I’m quite busy at the moment!’” (Female interviewee - British participant)

The British participants had more recourse to said indirect strategies like *preparatory* and *hints*, as particularly in this coercive situation, it could be seen to minimize the face loss that is likely to occur from the perspective of both speaker and hearer.

The majority of the Syrian's requests came under the *mood derivable* strategies which are at the top of the directness scale. Therefore, one could argue that the seriousness of the situation and the type of offence involved are behind the Syrians' preference for using the *mood derivable* strategy as a way to stress the implicitly presupposed notion that the Syrian subjects attached a higher degree of offence to this situation. Not only is it considered as an imposition to the individual's freedom but also to the community's social habits and religious beliefs. It is completely unacceptable to have a male pestering a female in a conservative society such as the Syrian one where people value the importance of females' reputation. The assumption is that females do not talk to male strangers unless there is a clear reason. Therefore, in such a coercive situation a female would not be concerned with polite choices; rather, her concern would be for her public image and individual freedom.

“العمى ضربك انتلع من هون!”

“il-‘ama Darabak in’ile‘ min hoon!”

“May blindness strike you! Get away from here!” (Female interviewee - Syrian participant)

“خلص! بدك تضل تلاحقتني بدي جبلك اخوي يكسر راسك.”

“xalaS! biddak DDal laaHi’ni biddi jiblak axuyi ykasser raasak.”

“Stop it! If you continue to follow me, I’ll get my brother to smash your head.”
(Female interviewee - Syrian participant)

As regards the use of unsaid strategies, one can observe that Syrian subjects exhibited more preference not to verbally perform their requests in this situation than their British peers (SY 38% vs. BR 21%). This could mean that Syrians are more reluctant to make their requests than the British. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), avoiding performing an FTA is more indirect than applying a verbalized off-record strategy. Therefore, in using the unsaid strategies the Syrian subjects were more hesitant than their British peers, a phenomenon that could also be related to the peculiarity of the situation and the social norms in the Syrian culture where it is considered best for females to avoid talking to male

strangers in the street in order to maintain her family’s reputation and dignity. Moreover, some Syrian participants added that opting out and ignoring the person who is pestering them might make him disappointed at the lack of reaction and accordingly leave them alone sooner:

”بزيبلو وما بحكي معو وهو لخالو بمل و بيمشي.“

“bizibloo wi maa biHki ma°oo wi huwee laHaaloo bimil wi byimši.”

“I would ignore him and he will soon get bored and leave.” (Female interviewee - Syrian participant)

5.2.3. Situation 3 (Notes):

A student asks another student to lend his/her lecture notes.

The statistical analysis results in table 7 (see section 5.2) showed that there is a significant difference in the choice of the main requesting strategies in situation 3 ($\chi^2 = 12.12$, $df=3$, $p < 0.01$). Further, in the light of the data presented in table 8 (see section 5.2) and figures 5 and 6 below, we notice that most of the study’s respondents selected conventionally indirect strategies (SY 86% vs. BR 94%). However, by giving the conventionally indirect strategies a closer look, we notice that the British group mainly depended on the use of *preparatory* strategies while there was more variety in the Syrian group.

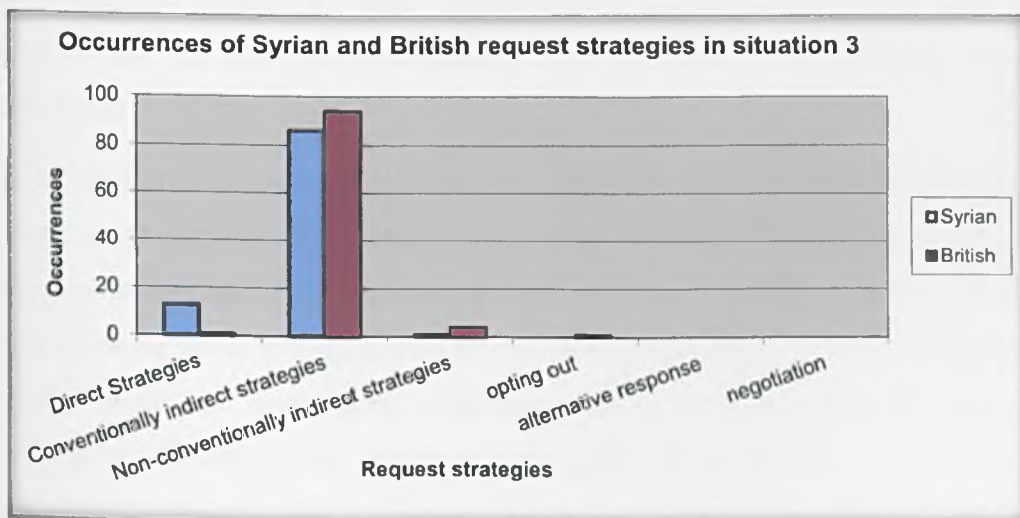


Figure 5. Occurrences of Syrian and British strategies in situation 3.

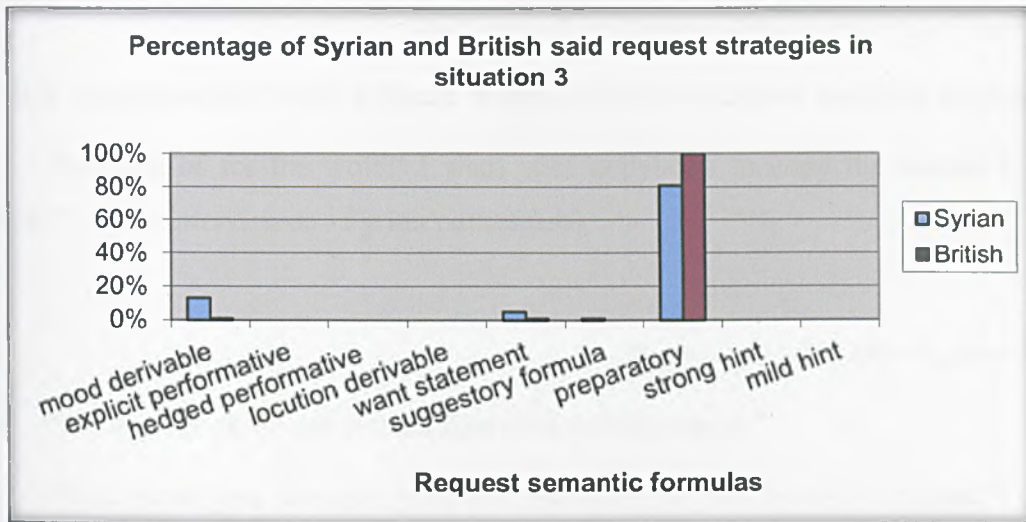


Figure 6. Percentage of Syrian and British strategies in situation 3.

The Syrians used some *want statements* and *suggestory formulas* in addition to using *preparatory strategies*. Based on these results, we may conclude that the British respondents are slightly more indirect in this context than their Syrian counterparts. This tendency comes in line with a negative politeness orientation in the British society which was vividly revealed in the British participants' interview comments as they showed care in approaching and requesting from their addressee, in addition to the strategic usage of supportive moves:

“Would it be ok for me to borrow your notes? I would be really quick with them and I'll give them back as soon as you want them.” (Female interviewee - British participant)

“Did you manage to make some notes in the lecture the other day? (*I would definitely ask that question before asking to look at them.*)” (Male interviewee - British participant)

The inclination of both sets of subjects to use conventionally indirect strategies might shed light on the typical way people of a similar social power and familiarity in both cultures request services of low imposition from each other. However, individuals in Syrian society used more direct strategies than did the British (SY 13% vs. BR 1%), assuming that their social needs are appreciated, understood, or approved of in this situation. Syrian interviewees clarified that close friends might ask without worrying too much about the way they form their requests and that sometimes they can present their requests in a humorous way:

”الك لما للديب؟ بدي دفترك مشان انقل المحاضرة. ما كنت حضرانها.“

“ilak lamma laddiib? biddi daftarak mšaan in’ol il-muHaDara. maa kint HaDraana.”

“For you or for the wolf?⁶ I want your copybook to copy the lecture I did not attend.” (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

”الله يوفقك عطيني المحاضرة اللي راحت علي.“

“aLLa ywaf’ak ‘aTiini il-muHaDara illi raaHet ‘alayyi.”

“God grant you success, give me the notes of the lecture I missed.” (Female interviewee - Syrian participant)

”ابو شريك انت كتبت شو قال الدكتور؟ كفو تعيرني كتابك؟ وبكرة بجبلك ياه.“

“abu šriik inte katabt šuu aal il-duktoor? kafuu t’iirni ktaabak? wi bukra bjiblak yaa.”

“Mate, did you write what the doctor said? Will you lend me your book? And tomorrow I’ll give it back to you.” (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

It is also worth noting that interview respondents in both groups agreed in ranking this situation as the easiest one. They assigned the least imposition to this situation, since they claimed that the social status and closeness of the friend in addition to the type of favour they are asking make the imposition low in comparison to all the remaining situations they answered in the questionnaire.

⁶ An idiomatic Syrian expression used to get a friend’s pre-commitment to do a favour. The same expression will be repeated throughout the examples provided.

5.2.4. Situation 4 (Lift):

A student asks people living in the same street for a ride home.

Chi-square test results in table 7 ($\chi^2 = 10.02$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.02$) suggest that there is a statistically significant difference between the Syrian and the British in the way they pick main strategy types in situation 4 (lift), particularly upon using conventionally indirect and unsaid strategies.

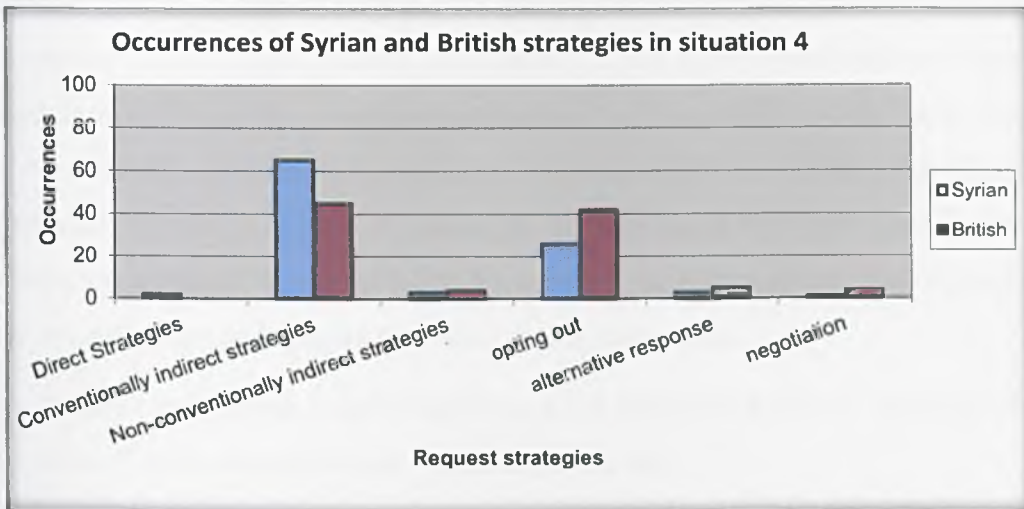


Figure 7. Occurrences of Syrian and British strategies in situation 4.

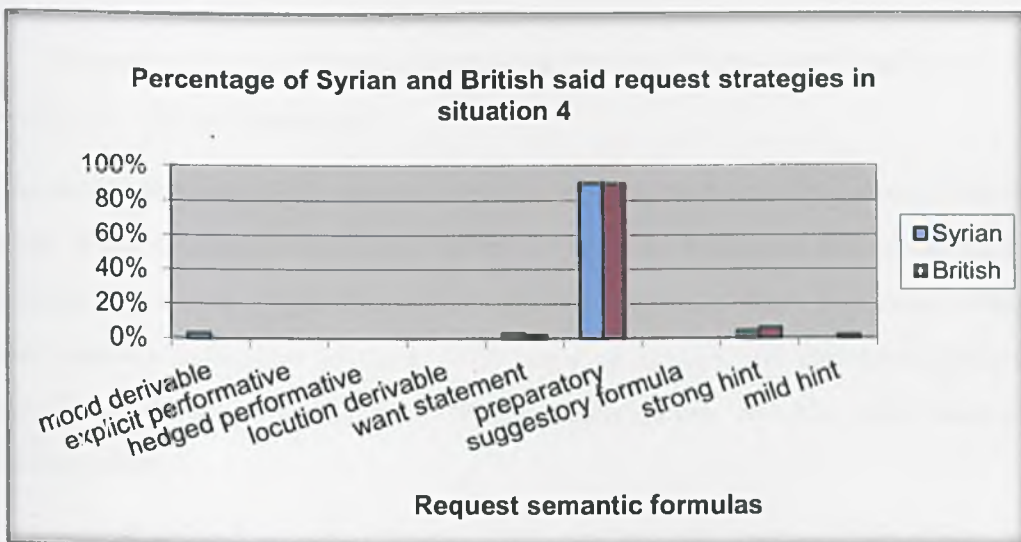


Figure 8. Percentage of Syrian and British strategies in situation 4.

Referring to table 8 (see section 5.2) and figures 7 and 8, one can see that although both the British and Syrian respondents selected conventionally indirect strategies for

performing their requests, the Syrians maintained higher frequencies for using the conventionally indirect strategies (SY 65% vs. BR 45%). On the other side of the spectrum, the British unsaid responses were much higher than the Syrian ones (SY 30% vs. BR 51%). The favoured unsaid strategies in both groups' responses were the opting out strategies (SY 26% vs. BR 42%), while the *preparatory* strategies proved to be the favoured said strategies across both groups.

A large portion of respondents in both groups made their decision to opt out and not to make a request. This tendency might be explained in the light of unfamiliarity between the interlocutors involved in this situation, particularly that they have not spoken to each other before which makes performing the request even more difficult. Further, they think that is not appropriate to make a request. For example, 51% of the British informants declared that it would be too awkward to ask for a lift. Most of the interviewees also highlighted the fact that it is not safe to go with people they don't really know well:

“I don't ask people I don't know for a lift home. (*I'd feel it's both too rude and dangerous.*)” (Female interviewee - British participant)

“I wouldn't. It's a bit weird to get in a complete stranger's car.” (Male interviewee - British participant)

“I wouldn't. It's a bit cheeky to ask.” (Male interviewee - British participant)

“I wouldn't feel comfortable approaching people I hadn't previously met.” (Female interviewee - British participant)

As for the Syrians, their choices varied between conventionally indirect strategies and opting out. Their requests were mainly affected by social traditions that stress the bonds of neighbourhood and how neighbours are expected to help each other. Therefore, although the situation sounded unfamiliar to them, 70% went on record and expressed their requests verbally. The following quotes from Syrian interviewees provide good examples that support this point:

“بسلم عليهن ببشاشة وبقول: مرحبا جار إذا رايعين على بيتكن في مجال اركب معكن و توصلوني؟”

“bsallem ‘aleehon bibašaaše wi b'uul: marHaba Jaar iza rayHiin ‘a-beetkon fii majaan irkab ma'kon wi twaSluuni?”

"I would greet them with a smile and say: Hello neighbour, if you are going home, is there room for me to get in with you so that you give me a lift?" (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

"لو سمحتو انا بنت جاركم فلان. ضيعت الطريق و ما بعرف ارجع، معلش توصلوني معكم عالبيت؟ و بكون ممنونة الكن كثير."

"law samaHtu ana bint jaarkun fulan. Dayya^ait il-Taree' wi maa ba^aref irja^a, ma^aleš twaSluuni ma^akun ^aal-beet? wi bkuun mamnuune ilkun kteer."

"Excuse me, I am your neighbour's daughter. I lost my way and do not know how to get back home. If you can you give me a lift home, I'd be so grateful." (Female interviewee - Syrian participant)

Moreover, it is important to point out it is only in this particular situation that respondents in both groups were tempted to use *negotiation* strategies (SY 1% vs. BR 4%) in order to establish common ground or to diminish the imposition associated with their requests. This is related to the size of imposition involved as well as social distance between the requester and the requestee:

"Would probably say hello to them and ask them how they were doing, what they were up to, when they were going home....and hope that eventually they would offer. But if they didn't, I would not push it or impose on them by explicitly asking." (Male interviewee - British participant)

"مرحبا انتو جيراننا مهيك؟ كيفكن؟ شو عم تتسوقوا؟ و بصير بدردش معهن. إذا عرضوا عليي اطلع معهن بطلع و بقلن شكرا."

"marHaba into jiranna maheek kiifkon šu ^aam titsawwa'u? wi bSiir bdardeš ma^ahon iza ^aaraDu ^aalayyi iTla^a ma^ahon biTla^a wi b'illon šukran."

"Hi, you are our neighbours, aren't you? How are you? Are you shopping? I will chat with them. If they offer to give me a lift I will join them and say thank you." (Female interviewee - Syrian participant)

5.2.5. Situation 5 (Phone):

An applicant calls for information on a job advertised in a paper.

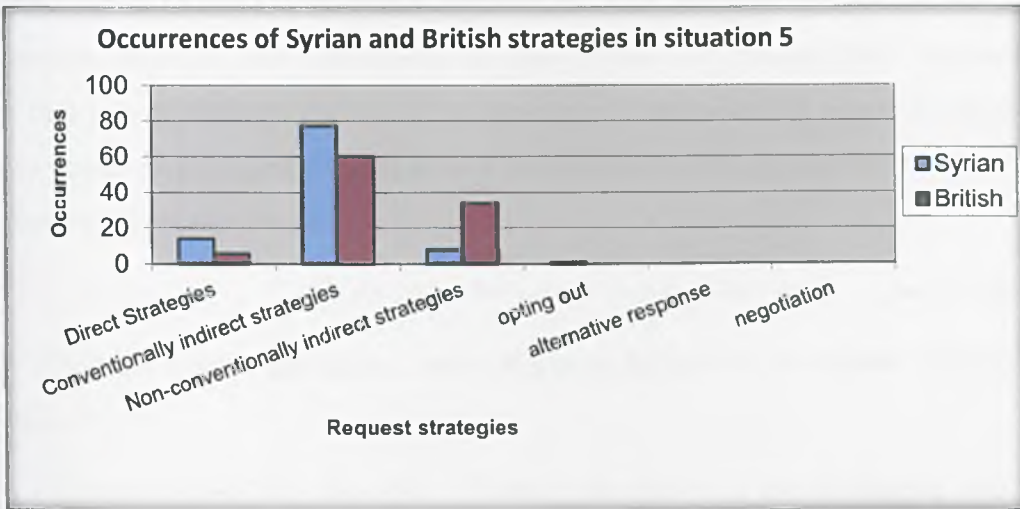


Figure 9. Occurrences of Syrian and British strategies in situation 5.

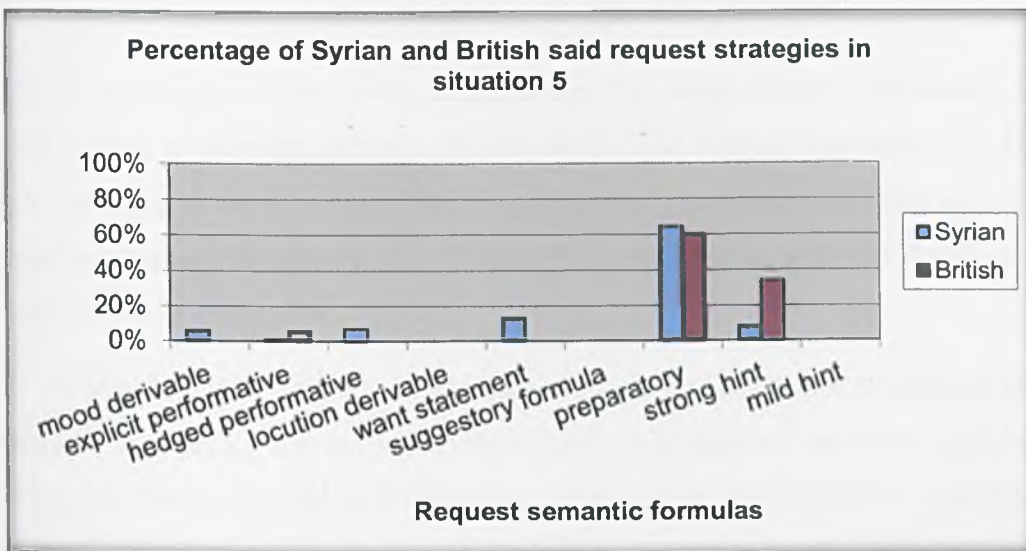


Figure 10. Percentage of Syrian and British strategies in situation 5.

The statistical analysis results for this particular situation displayed in table 7 (see section 5.2) confirm that the two groups of participants display significant differences in their choices of main strategy types ($\chi^2 = 22.40$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.001$). Having a closer look at the data in table 8 (see section 5.2) and in figures 9 and 10, we found that the Syrian group use conventionally indirect strategies more extensively than their British peers (SY 77% vs. BR 60%).

As regards the conventionally indirect strategies, in spite of the fact that both groups prefer to realize this strategy via the *preparatory* sub-strategy, 13% of the Syrian subjects

realized this strategy via the *want statement* semantic formulas, whereas all the British subjects kept to the use of *preparatory* semantic formulas. Based on the interviews conducted, and in line with Fraser and Nolen (1981: 93), it seems that the Syrian people in this situation consider *want statements* as appropriate for making their requests. They assume that it is the responsibility of the person who answers the phone to answer their enquiries concerning the job advertised and therefore they can simply express their wish to learn more details about the job:

“صباح الخير. انا اسمي قرئت اعلانكم بالجريدة و حابب استفسر عن هالوظيفة.”

“SabaaH il-xeer, ana ismi... areet i'laankun bil-jariide wi Haabeb istafser ‘an hal-waZiife.”

“Good morning, my name is ... I read your advert in the newspaper and I would like to know more about the job.” (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

The British in their turn were distinguished for using non-conventionally indirect strategies in such a situation (SY 8% vs. BR 34%). The British interviewees exhibited a tendency for using *hints* in making their requests by expressing their interest in the job advertised and leaving the matter of explaining the job requirements and details up to the person who answers the phone:

“I would start by saying: ‘I have recently seen an advert in a newspaper and I am interested in applying for the job’. I will leave it at that and see what they might be saying, like ‘Sorry, the job is already filled or the job is still available’, and giving me some extra details.” (Male interviewee - British participant)

“ ‘Hello, I am calling to enquire about the job I saw advertised in the newspaper the other day’. Then I would probably leave it at that and let them ask me which job I’m referring to.” (Female interviewee - British participant)

“صباح الخير، شركة ...، اشرح لي لو سمحت عن الشاغر المعلنين عنو بالجريدة. (أول شيء أنا ما بعرف الشخص وتاني شيء شغلتنو يرد عالتليفون و يرد على أسئلة الناس.)”

“Sabaah il-xeer širket ..., šraHli law samaHt ‘an il-šaaXer il-mi‘ilniin ‘anno biljariide. (*awwal šii ana maa ba‘ref ilšaxiS wi taani šii šaXiltoo yrid ‘al talifoon wi yrid ‘ala as’ilet ilnaas.*)”

“Good morning, company X, explain to me, please, about the vacancy you advertised in the newspaper. (*First, I don’t know the person, and second it is his job to answer the phone and provide answers to people’s inquiries.*)” (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

In the light of findings presented in the graph above and table 8 (see section 5.2), the two groups showed differences in the choice and frequency of direct strategies. The Syrian frequencies of direct strategies were more than twice the number of their British peers (SY 14% vs. BR 6%). Moreover, the Syrian direct strategies varied between *explicit performative* (1%), *hedged performative* (7%), and *mood derivable* (6%) while the British direct strategies were exclusively *explicit performative* (6%). Upon interviewing the Syrian subjects, some revealed that the role of the relationship between them, their interlocutor and the job description of the person answering the phone were behind their choice of direct strategies. All the points discussed above refer to the fact that the British group uses fewer direct strategies than the Syrian group.

5.2.6. Situation 6 (Police):

A police officer asks a driver to move his/her car.

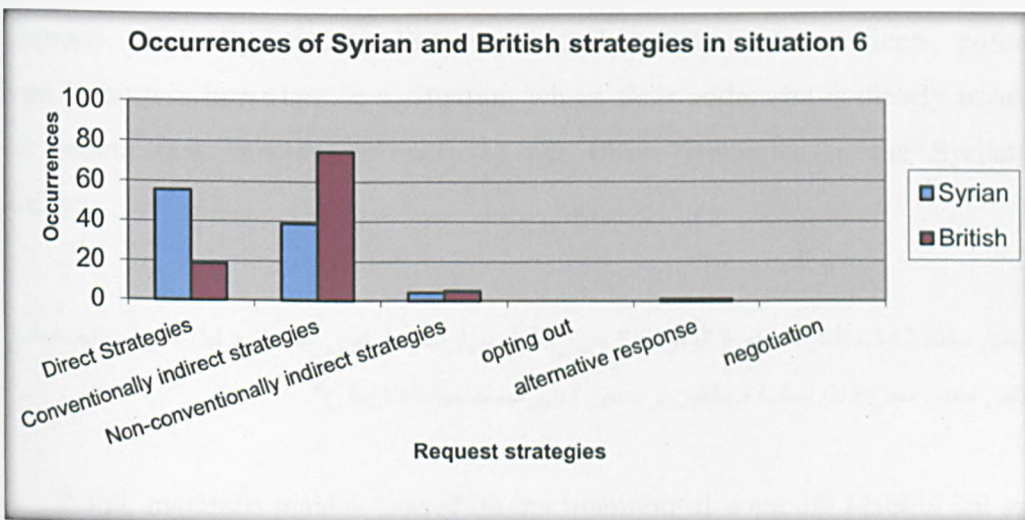


Figure 11. Occurrences of Syrian and British strategies in situation 6.

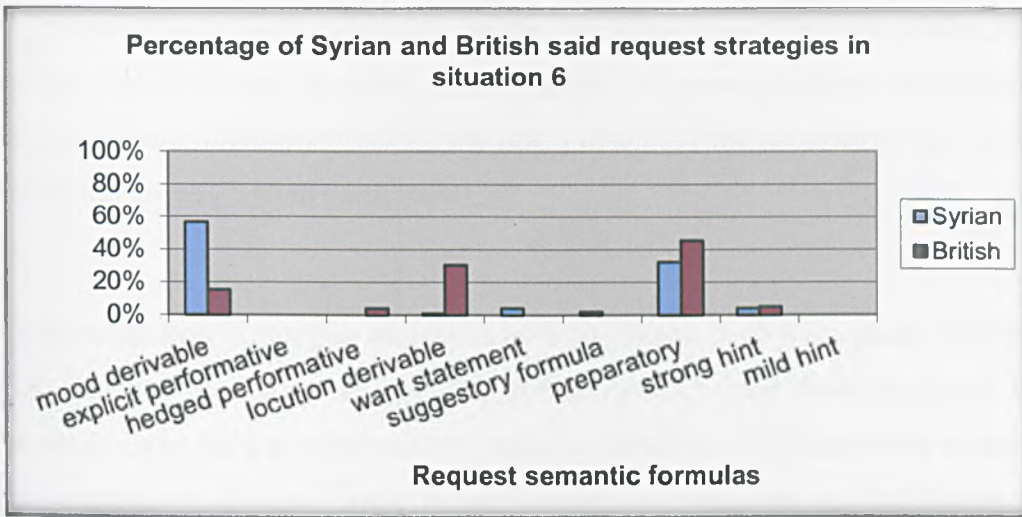


Figure 12. Percentage of Syrian and British strategies in situation 6.

In this situation, the data shown in table 7 (see section 5.2) indicate that there is statistically significant difference in the strategy choices of the Syrian and the British respondents ($\chi^2 = 28.97$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.001$) particularly in the direct and conventionally indirect strategies. As is clear from the figures above, subjects in both groups displayed a disparity in the frequency occurrence of the direct strategies (SY 56% vs. BR 19%). This disparity might be explained in the light of the differences that the Syrian and the British subjects perceive in the degree of imposition in this situation as well as the stereotypical social power police officers hold over drivers. For the majority of the Syrian subjects, and in line with stereotypes employed in the Syrian culture, it believed that police officers not only have power over drivers when they are perceived to violate traffic rules, but it is also their duty to intervene in such a situation without paying much attention to the way they express their requests. Some Syrian interviewees clarified that for police officers, politeness is perceived to be less important in a situation where their addressee is clearly breaking the rules, a reason that encourages many to use direct strategies in the Syrian speech community:

"بقول: مرحبا. مالك شايف اشارة ممنوع الوقوف ؟ حبيبي شيل سيارتك من هون عالسرير قبل ما يجي الضابط.
(ما بكون كثير مادب معن لأنن اساسا مخالفين و بعدين معي الصلاحية اللازمة.)"

"b'uul: marHaba maalak šaayef išaaret mamnuu° il-wuquuf? Habiibi šiil sayyartak min hoon °alsariic° abil maa yiji il-DaabiT. (maa bkuun ktiir m'addab ma°on la'innon asaasan mxaalfiin wi ba°diin ma°i ilSalaahyye illaazme)"

“I would say: ‘Hello, can’t you see the No Parking sign? My dear fellow, do move your car quickly before the chief officer comes’. (*I would not be so polite with them because they are obviously breaking the law. I also have the necessary right or power.*)” (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

Concerning direct strategies employed by both parties, the Syrian group used the *mood derivable* semantic formulas, whereas the British group varied their responses between *mood derivable* and *hedged performative* semantic formulas. This fact refers to the British subjects’ tendency to be less direct in performing their requests in comparison to their Syrian peers. Upon using *hedged performative* strategies, they refer to the power of law that allows them to ask car drivers to move their car without any prejudice on their side:

“Sorry mate, but there’s no parking allowed here, I’m going *to have to ask* you to move.” (Male interviewee - British participant). In this example, the speaker resorted to use the hedging strategically in order to soften the impact of the request they made.

“Excuse me, this is a no-parking zone. *Please* move on!” (Male subject - British participant)

As regards the conventionally indirect strategies, a big divergence between the British and the Syrian speakers was found. The British speakers maintained much higher frequencies of conventionally indirect strategies than the Syrian speakers (SY 39% vs. BR 75%). This fact indicates that the British subjects perceive power in this context in a different way from their Syrian peers. They contend that, regardless of the power police officers enjoy, they are still expected to show respect and politeness in the way they perform their requests. They stressed the importance for police officers to be considerate to their addressees, and thus deliver their requests via channels of respect and deference:

“Excuse me, parking is not permitted in this area. You will have to move.” (Female interviewee - British participant)

“Excuse me, you can’t park here. Can you not see the sign! Do you mind moving your car to a more appropriate place, please? (As a police officer I have to be polite but still authoritative to convince them).” (Male interviewee - British participant)

Having a glance again at the findings outlined in figure 12 above, we also found that the British subjects preferred to realize conventionally indirect strategies exclusively through the use of *locution derivable* and *preparatory semantic* formulas. They exhibited considerably higher frequencies of *locution derivable* strategies in comparison to the Syrian group (SY 1% vs. BR 30%) who mainly chose the *preparatory* subcategory from conventionally indirect strategies. However, occurrences of the British *preparatory* strategies were higher than those of their Syrian counterparts (SY 32% vs. BR 45%).

5.2.7. Situation 7 (Extension):

A student asks his/her teacher for a second extension on a seminar paper.

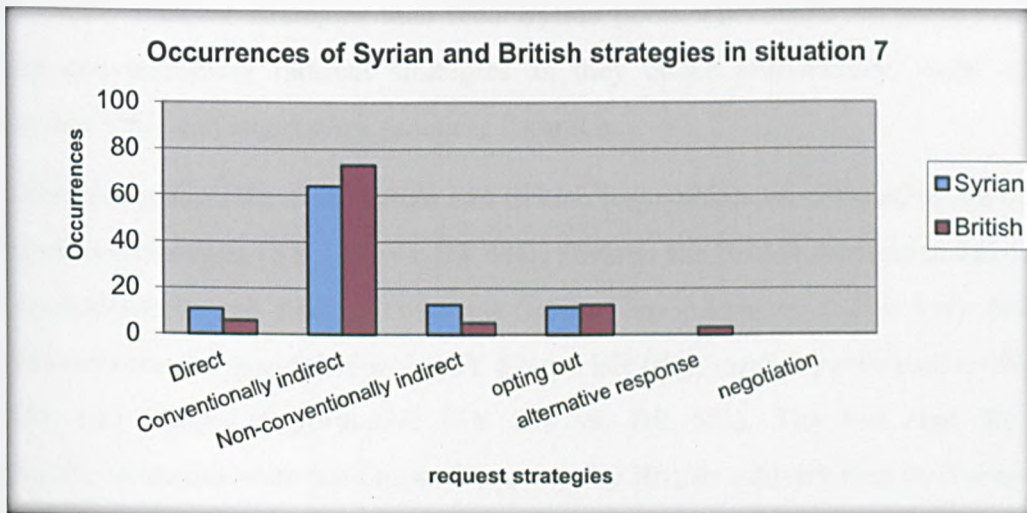


Figure 13. Occurrences of Syrian and British strategies in situation 7.

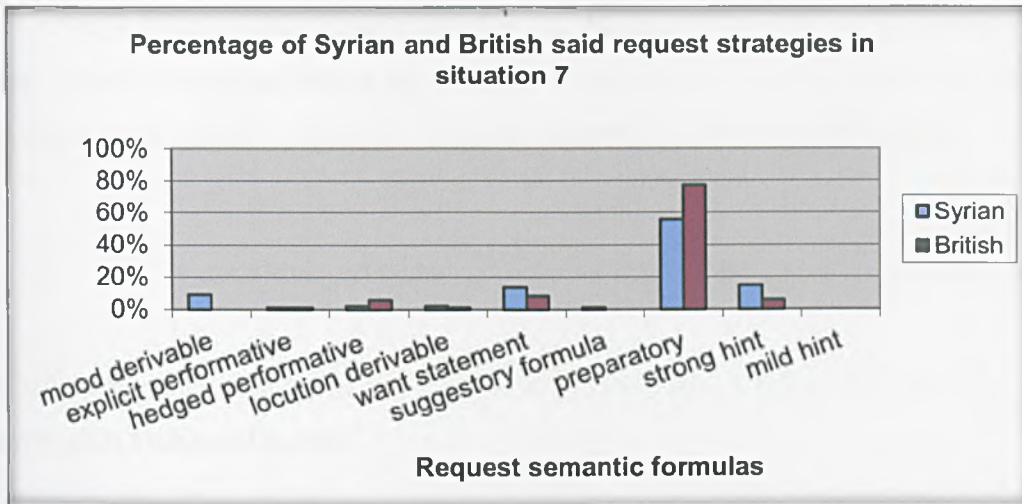


Figure 14. Percentage of Syrian and British strategies in situation 7.

Looking at table 7 (see section 5.2), we notice that the statistical analysis for situation 7 does not yield any significant differences in the main strategy choices of both participants' groups ($\chi^2 = 6.19$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.10$). However, table 8 (see section 5.2) and the figures above illustrate that the conventionally indirect strategies were the most predominant strategies used. The occurrence of these strategies across both languages was very frequent (SY 64% vs. BR 74%). However, the British speakers depended more on the use of *preparatory* conventionally indirect strategies than their Syrian peers who displayed more variation in selecting conventionally indirect strategies as they chose *preparatory*, *want statement*, *locution derivable* and *suggestory* semantic formulas.

Other differences between Syrian and British respondents were found in the frequency of using direct strategies (SY 11% vs. BR 6%). Further, the British subjects mainly used the *hedged performative* sub-strategy, whereas Syrian respondents tended to vary their direct strategies between the *mood derivable* (SY 8% vs. BR 0%), *explicit performative* (SY 1% vs. BR 1%), and *hedged performative* (SY 2% vs. BR 5%). The fact that the *hedged performative* strategies were used more frequently by British subjects than by Syrians comes to stress the implicitly presupposed notion that British subjects attached a higher degree of offence to this situation. In interviews, British subjects placed great emphasis on circumstances out of their control that had pushed them to ask for an extension, while their Syrian counterparts exhibited a preference for using *mood derivables* and mainly minimized the imposition in their request by means of using internal and external modification.

“Hi, I have to ask for an extension on my piece of work, and I'm really, really sorry. I know I've asked before but it really is important. (*I would explain the situation. Having a good reason is the key*)." (Female interviewee - British participant)

"إذا بتسمح دكتور، الله يخليك، الله يوفقك، و الله ما عاد عيدها، بس هالمرّة أجلي حلقة البحث."

"iza btismaH diktoor aLLa yxalliik aLLa ywaf'ak, waLLa maa 'ad 'iida, bas hal-marra ajjilli Halaqet il-baHis."

"Would you please Doctor, God keep you, God grant you success, I swear I would not do it again, just this once, grant me an extension." (Female interviewee - Syrian participant)

"أستاذ مشان الله اجلي حلقة البحث!"

"istaaz mšaan aLLa ajjilli Halaqet il-baHis! "

"Teacher, for God's sake, postpone my seminar!" (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

In relation to the use of unsaid strategies, the British were found to employ them slightly more than Syrians (SY 12% vs. BR 16%). The main difference was reflected through members of the British group selecting alternative strategies rather than choosing to opt out like some of the Syrian respondents:

"If it's a real situation, I would e-mail them rather than speaking to their face to, kind of, save myself some embarrassment." (Female interviewee - British participant)

Interviewees in both groups explained that in having to ask for a second time, the issues of potential embarrassment, the risk of being seen as someone who isn't punctual, fear of refusal are the main reasons that prevented them from going on record and asking for an extension:

"I don't think I would dare to ask again." (Female interviewee - British participant)

“I think I would be embarrassed to ask for an extension.” (Male interviewee - British participant)

“لا اطلب منه لأنني انسان ملتزم.”

“laa aTlob minhu li-annani insaan multazem.”

“I would not ask because I am a punctual person.” (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

“لا اطلب لأنها المرة الثانية.”

“laa aTlob li-anna il-marra il-taanye.”

“I would not ask because it is the second time.” (Female interviewee - Syrian participant)

5.2.8. Situation 8 (Presentation):

A university professor asks a student to give their presentation a week earlier than scheduled.

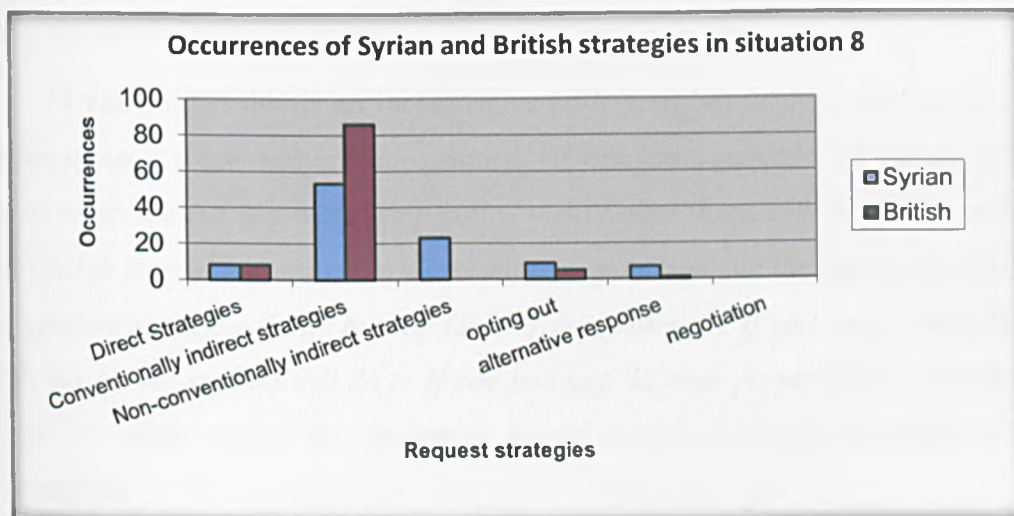


Figure 15. Occurrences of Syrian and British strategies in situation 8.

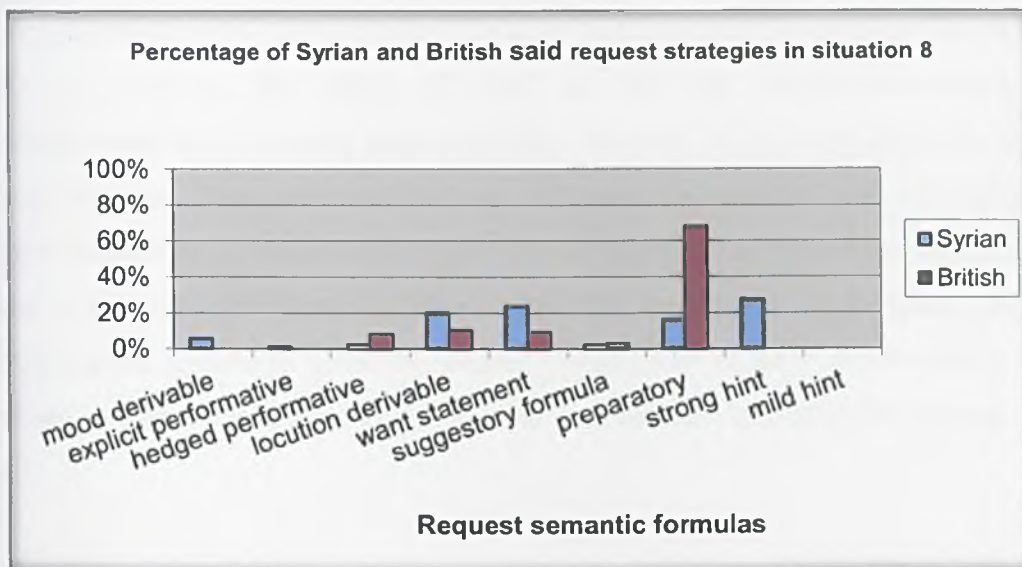


Figure 16. Percentage of Syrian and British strategies in situation 8.

Situation 8 data outlined in table 7 ($\chi^2 = 35.38$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.001$) provide us with a statistical evidence of the significant difference both the Syrian and British display in selecting request strategies. Moreover, table 8 (see section 5.2) and the figures above highlight the fact that the British and the Syrian groups exhibited big differences in the use of conventionally indirect strategies and the use of non-conventionally indirect strategies as well. The Syrian subjects, for example, did not turn to conventionally indirect strategies as frequently as the British subjects did (SY 53% vs. BR 86%). The British interviewees stressed the need to show empathy to their student addressees by using less direct forms and probably giving them some options:

“I realise that this is an inconvenience for you, but could I ask you to give your presentation a week earlier than planned? If this isn’t possible, of course, just let me know when we can sort something out! (*I would offer them some flexibility to say yes or no. I think it would be quite unfair to impose upon them. In the end of the day, it is not the student’s responsibility but the fault of the professor. If you are as nice as possible then maybe the student will do it. If you just say, ok your presentation is a week earlier, then you might cause the student a lot of trouble.*)” (Male interviewee - British participant)

Looking within the subdivision of the conventionally indirect strategies, we also found the British subjects maintained much higher frequencies of using the *preparatory* strategy in comparison to the Syrian group (SY 14% vs. BR 64%). However, Syrian

subjects used the *locution derivable* and the *want statement* strategies more than the British subjects (SY 17% vs. BR 10%), (SY 20% vs. BR 9%). When interviewed, Syrian respondents raised an interesting point regarding choosing the *locution derivable* and *want statement* formulas. They indicated that the institutional power the university lecturer has over their students helps them choose more direct strategies in spite of the high imposition involved in this situation. However, they stressed the importance of providing the student with motives and reasons to boost the student's confidence in their abilities and raise their self-esteem in order to minimize the imposition and maintain a conflict-free communication channel.

"يا فلان رح تقدم المحاضرة قبل بوقت مشان تلحق تحضر حالك من هلق لأنو غيرنا البرنامج."

"yaa flaan raH t'addem il-muHaaDara abl bwa'it mšaan tilHa' tHaDDer Haalak min halla' la-inno Xayyarna il-barnaamej."

"The student's name, you will now give the presentation earlier, so start getting ready as we have changed the timetable." (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

"حصل معنا ظرف طارئ و لازم تعطي محاضرتك قبل باسبوع ورجينا شطارتك ومهارتك. انت طالب مجتهد و ما بينخاف عليك."

"HaSal ma'na Zarf Taare' wi laazem ta'Tii muHaaDartak abl bi-isbuu' warjiina šaTaartak wi mahaartak. inte Taaleb mijtihed wi maa byinxaa'aleek."

"We've had an urgent circumstance, and you have to give your presentation a week earlier than scheduled. Show us how smart you are! You are a hard working student and there is no doubt you can do it." (Female interviewee - Syrian participant)

"محمد انت طالب متميز وانا ثقتي فيك كبيرة لهيك بدي منك تعطي محاضرتك قبل باسبوع شو رأيك؟"

"mHammad, inte Taaleb mitmayyez wi ana siqati fiik kbiire laheek bididi minnak ta'Tii muHaaDartak abl bi-isbuu' šuu ra'yak?"

"Muhammed, you are a first-rate student and I completely trust you. Therefore, I want you to give your presentation a week earlier, what do you think?" (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

As regards non-conventionally indirect strategies, only Syrian speakers used them, particularly *strong hints* (SY 23% vs. BR 0%). One could say that despite the fact that this situation was perceived to be coercive by both language speakers, the British respondents considered the imposition in this situation mild, whereas their Syrian peers considered it to be high. This fact might explain the Syrians' choice of picking more non-conventionally indirect strategies like in the following two examples:

"يا فلان أنا قربتلك وقت محاضرتك أسبوع، في عندك مشكلة؟"

"yaa flaan ana arrabtillak wa'it muhaaDartak isbuu°, fii °andak mišikle?"

"(Name of the student), I have made your presentation time a week earlier, is there any problem with that?" (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

"يا أحمد انت طالب شاطر و أكيد ما عندك مشكلة تعطي محاضرتك قبل أسبوع من الوقت اللي حددناه."

"yaa aHmad, inte Taaleb šaater wi akiid maa °andak mišikle ta°Ti muHaaDartak abil isbuu° min il-wa'it illi Haddadnaa"

"Ahmed, you are a hardworking student. I am sure you have no problem giving your presentation a week earlier than we had decided." (Female interviewee - Syrian participant)

The last disparity Syrians and British exhibited was shown very clearly in the Syrian group's higher frequencies of unsaid strategies (SY 16% vs. BR 6%). Syrian subjects were distinguished for choosing higher numbers of both alternative responses such as telling the student's friend to inform them or dropping a note in the students' board and opting out strategies. They revealed that the responsibility they hold for organizing the timetable from the very beginning prevents them from asking to change the schedule.

"لا اطلب منه ذلك لأنني كأستاذ جامعة يجب أن أكون ملتزم بمواعيدي."

"laa aTlub minhu zaalik li-annani ka-ustaaZ jaami°a yajeb an akuun multazem bi-mawaa°iidi."

"I would not ask such a thing because, as a university lecturer, I have to be committed to the times I myself set." (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

5.2.9. Situation 9 (Smoking):

A citizen asking somebody next to him to stop smoking in a non-smoking area.

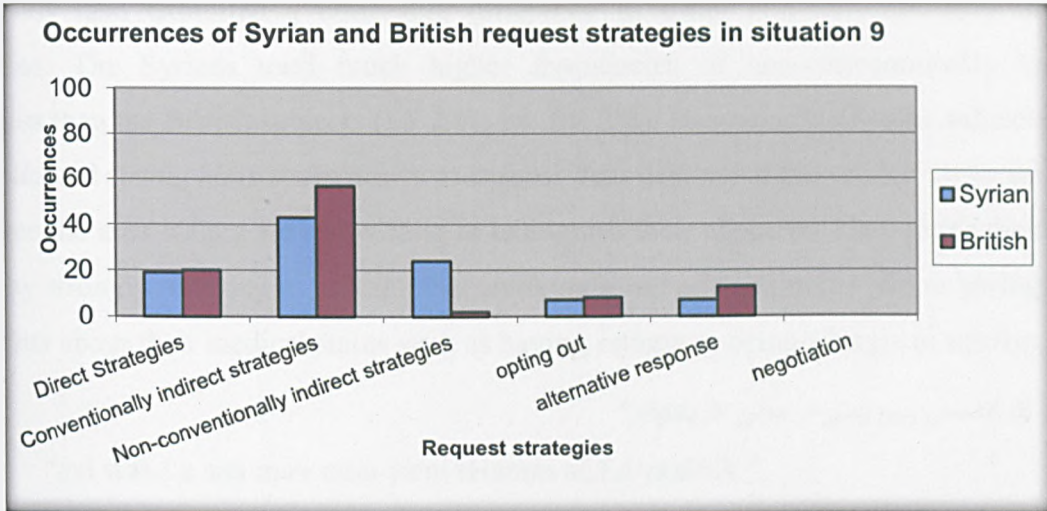


Figure 17. Occurrences of Syrian and British strategies in situation 9.

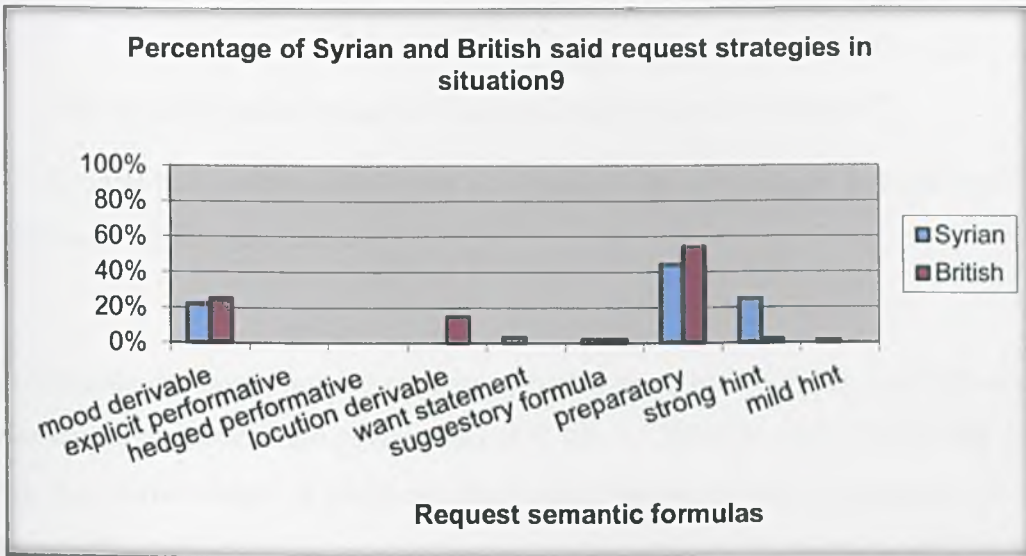


Figure 18. Percentage of Syrian and British strategies in situation 9.

Taking the results detailed in table 7 ($\chi^2 = 35.38$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.001$), one finds that there are significant differences between subject groups under study in this situation, particularly upon selecting conventionally and non-conventionally indirect strategies.

Examining the data in table 8 (see section 5.2) and figures 17 and 18, one could say that both groups display a similarity in choosing direct strategies since they both employ approximately the same numbers of mood derivable strategies (SY 19% vs. BR 20%).

However, the groups displayed disparity in using conventionally indirect strategies which proved to be more favoured by the British subjects rather than the Syrian subjects (SY 53% vs. BR 86%).

They also exhibited a noticeable difference in using non-conventionally indirect strategies. The Syrians used much higher frequencies of non-conventionally indirect strategies than the British subjects (SY 24% vs. BR 2%). However, the Syrian subjects used both *mild* and *strong hints* strategically to express their desire that the smoker stops smoking or leaves the area if they are not willing to extinguish their cigarette. They made their *hints* either by strongly referring to the sign that smoking is not allowed in the hall or giving some *mild hints* about their medical status such as having asthma or being allergic to smoke:

"أخي و الله أنا معي ربو يعني ارحمني الله يخليك."

"axi waLLa ana ma^ei rabu ya^eni rHamni aLLa yxalliik."

"Brother, I have asthma, so please have mercy on me for God's sake." (Female interviewee - Syrian participant)

"لو سمحت يا أخي، ما شفت الأرمة انو ممنوع التدخين؟"

"law samaHt yaa axi maa šift il-aarma inno mamnuu^e il-tadxiin?"

"Excuse me brother, didn't you see the sign that smoking is not allowed?" (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

As regards the use of unsaid strategies, both groups chose *opting out* and *alternative response* strategies in different proportions (SY 7% vs. BR 8%), (SY 7% vs. BR 13%). In this case, the British tended to use more *alternative responses* such as changing one's place, coughing loudly, making up a conversation with somebody on the phone about the situation and so forth rather than requesting:

"I would not ask and would most likely move seats or move altogether." (Female interviewee - British participant)

"I would cough a lot, try and make eye contact, and loudly talk about the smoking ban to someone I am with." (Male interviewee - British participant)

Moreover, upon interviewing both subjects groups they revealed a variety of motives for opting out like:

“I wouldn’t ask just in case they might be aggressive or rude.” (Female interviewee - British participant)

“I wouldn’t say anything. If they are choosing to break the rules, I doubt if they would listen anyway.” (Female interviewee - British participant)

“I wouldn’t ask because I don’t want to appear rude or judgmental.” (Male interviewee - British participant)

"ما بطلب لأنها حرية شخصية."

“maa biTlob la-inna Hirriye šaxSiye”

“I wouldn’t ask since it is a matter of personal freedom.” (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

"ما بطلب لأنني مو مسؤول عن تصرفاتو."

“maa biTlob la-inni muu mas’uul ‘an taSarrufaato”

“I wouldn’t ask because I am not responsible for his behaviour.” (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

5.2.10.Situation 10 (Money):

A person asking their colleague for money.

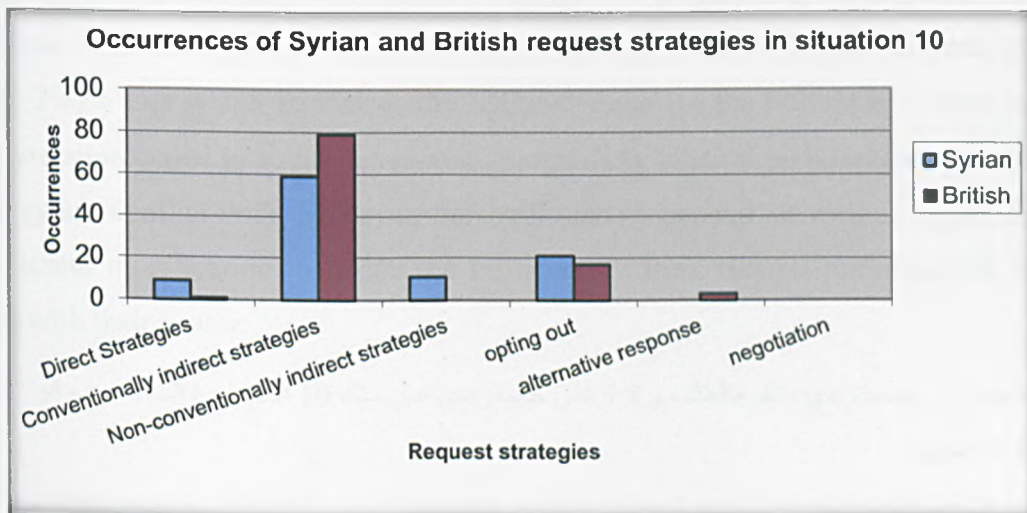


Figure 19. Occurrences of Syrian and British strategies in situation 10.

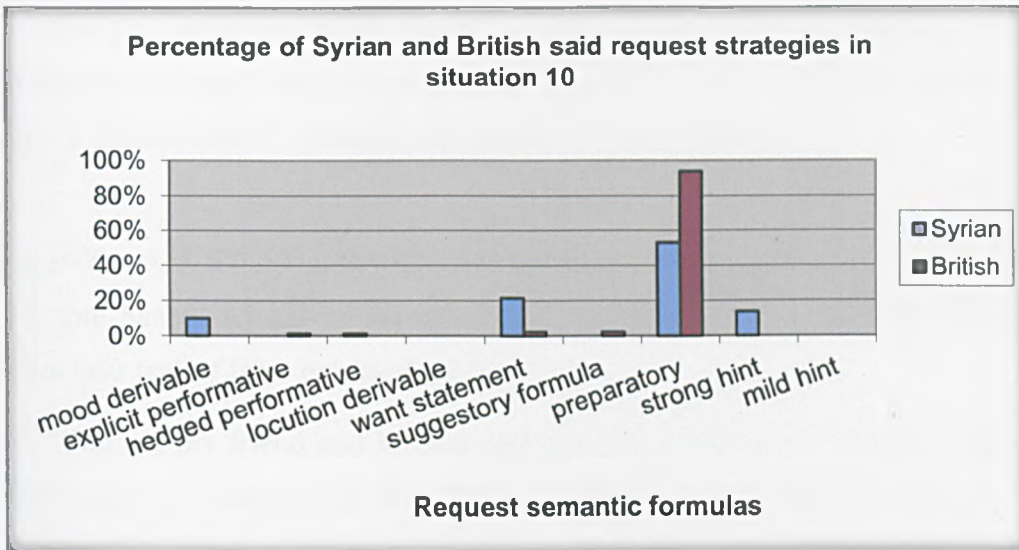


Figure 20. Percentage of Syrian and British strategies in situation 10.

In the analysis of the data yielded in this situation, it was noted that the Syrian and the British display significant differences in the use of main requesting strategies ($\chi^2 = 20.23$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.001$) (see table 7 in section 5.2). Furthermore, upon checking table 8 (see section 5.2); an interesting observation can be made concerning the said strategies. Although the conventionally indirect strategies were the most frequently used strategies across both groups of subjects, the Syrians varied their choices between the direct, conventionally indirect, and the non-conventionally indirect strategies, whereas their British counterparts exhibited an inclination to mainly use the conventionally indirect strategies in this situation (SY 59% vs. BR 79%).

Having a closer look at the types of the conventionally indirect strategies used, we found that the British employed a higher frequency of *preparatory* strategies (SY 42% vs. BR 75%), while the Syrians used more *want statements* than the British subjects (SY 17% vs. BR 2%) a fact which reinforces the Syrians' focus on the individual's wish that their wants are appreciated in social interaction, particularly when their addressee is a colleague who they are familiar with. However, they still heavily depend on various types of internal and external modification to hedge the influence of their request and establish common ground with their hearer:

"الك و لا للديب؟ لو...محت بدى منك هالطلب و لا تردني خايبة. بدى ادين منك 10 الاف ليرة انت بتعرف اتو الصديق وقت الضيق."

"ilak walla la-ddiib? law samaHt biddi minnak hal-Talab wi laa tridni xaaybe. biddi iddayan minnak 'ašir taalaaf leera inte bta'ref inno il-Sadee' wa't il-dee'."

"For you or for the wolf? Please, I need a favour from you and hope you do not turn me down. I would like to borrow from you 10000 liras. You know that the friend in need is a friend in deed." (Female interviewee - Syrian participant)

"انت صاحبي و أخي و بتعرف قديش حطيت مصاري هالشهر، بدي منك تعطيني عشر آلاف ليرة بس لأسبوع."

"inte Saahbi wi axi wi bta'ref addeeš HaTTeet maSaari hal-šahir biddi minnak ta'Tiini 'ašir taalaaf leera bas la-isbuur."

"You are my friend and brother and you know how much money I paid out this month. I want you to lend me 10000 liras, just for a week." (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

As for direct strategies, the Syrian participants used them more extensively than their British counterparts (SY 9% vs. BR 1%). This could be explained in the light of how the Syrian subjects perceive friendship. They claimed that friends, especially those having a strongly-tied relationship, should be like brothers and never hesitate to help each other.

"عادي، عطيني عشرة آلاف ليرة للشهر الجاية."

"'aadi, 'aTiini 'ašir taalaaf leera lal-šahir il-jaaye."

"[Literally: Naturally (meaning straight away), lend me 10000 liras until next month." (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

The data analysis for this situation suggests that the British group's inclination to mainly use *preparatory* strategies rather than varying their choices describes the way they evaluate the imposition degree of their requests. They highlighted that borrowing money is a very sensitive matter that requires more politeness and skills on the part of the requestor. They also resorted to internal and external modifiers to soften the impact associated with their requests.

As regards the unsaid strategies, table 7 (see section 5.2) reveals no big discrepancies between the British and the Syrian subjects in this situation (SY 21% vs. BR 20%). The only comment one can make is that the British were notable for making *alternative responses* such as asking parents or family members for money instead of asking a colleague, whereas none of the Syrians made any alternative response. Moreover, subjects in both groups provided various reasons for opting out like not wanting to ask for a big sum of money,

feeling uncomfortable and disapproval of the idea of being in debt, and highlighting the personal responsibility to get the money needed rather than asking for it:

“I wouldn't ask. I would feel too uncomfortable asking them for money and I would not like to be in debt to them.” (Male interviewee - British participant)

“I would never ask a non-family member for money.” (Female interviewee - British participant)

“ما بطلب منو مشان ما اخرجو و اخرج حالي.”

“maa biTlob minno mšaan maa iHirjo wi iHrej Haali.”

“I would not ask him to avoid embarrassing him and myself.” (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

“ما بحب الدين أبدا بعدين الإنسان لازم يعتمد على حالي.”

“maa bHib ildeen abadan ba'deen il'insaan laazem yi'timed 'ala Haalo.”

“I don't like debts at all and people should depend on themselves (for getting money).” (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

Upon asking interviewees in both groups to pick the most difficult situation they came across in the questionnaire, they showed an agreement for highlighting this situation as the most difficult one.

5.2.11.Situation 11(Photocopy):

A boss asking his/her secretary to photocopy the minutes of the last meeting he had.

Looking at the findings presented in table 7 (see section 5.2) for situation 11, we can see the statistical evidence for the significant differences the groups exhibited with respect to strategy choices ($\chi^2 = 69.49$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$). The difference is crystallized mainly in respondents' use of the direct and then the conventionally indirect strategies.

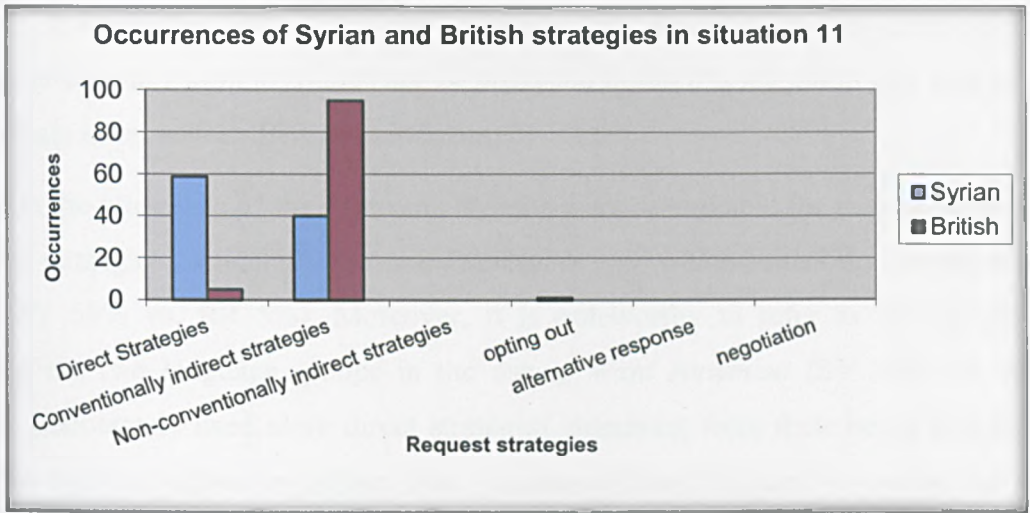


Figure 21. Occurrences of Syrian and British strategies in situation 11.

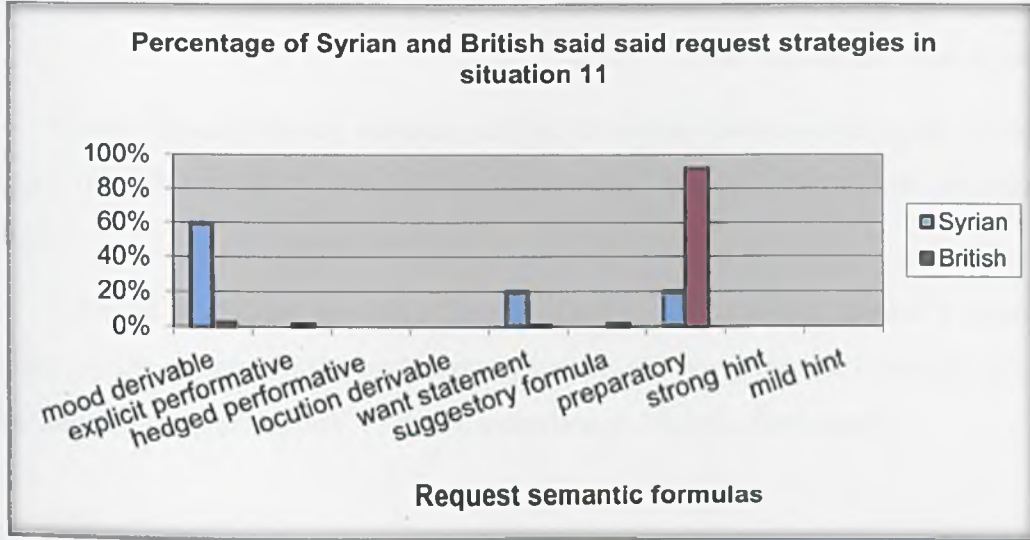


Figure 22. Percentage of Syrian and British strategies in situation 11.

Taking the results outlined in table 8 (see section 5.2) and the figures above, we noticed one major disparity between the Syrian and the British participants. The British participants have extensively used the conventionally indirect strategies, particularly the preparatory type more than 4 times more than the Syrian respondents (SY 20% vs. BR 92%). This trend is fostered by the British mild perception of imposition since the majority of them used the most conventional way in English to perform their requests. British participants, when interviewed, explained that although it is part of the secretary's job to do the photocopying the manager is still required to sound polite, friendly and maintain a good relationship with staff members:

“I would say: When you get a moment, could you photocopy these minutes for me? (*I wouldn't want to sound rude or bossy but again it is my job to give instructions.*)”
(Female interviewee - British participant)

On the other side of the spectrum, Syrians were remarkable for their predominant use of direct strategies particularly the *mood derivable* type which comes first on the directness scale (SY 59% vs. BR 5%). Moreover, it is noteworthy to refer to the big difference between the two language groups in the use of *want statement* (SY 20% vs. BR 1%). Syrians deliberately used more direct strategies stemming from their belief that they have both the right and power to perform their requests in such a direct way where the focus is either on the illocutionary point itself or the manager's want:

" بقول: صباح الخير سوسن، يعطيكى العافية. لو سمحت بدي تصوريلى النقاط اللي بحثناها بأخر اجتماع.
(بنظري هادا شغلها و عم تاخذ راتب عليه.)"

“b'uul: SabaaH il-xeer sawsan ya°Tiiki il-°aafye. law samaHti bididi tSawriili il-nu°aaT illi baHasnaaha bi-aaxer ijtimaa°. (*binaZari haada šiXla wi °am taaxod raateb °alee.*)”

“I would say: Good morning Sawsan, God give you health, please I want you to photocopy the minutes of the last meeting for me. (*In my opinion it is her job and that's what she is getting paid for.*)” (Female interviewee - Syrian participant)

" بقول: سعاد من فضلك حضريلى ملف اخر اجتماع. (لأني المدير و عندي السلطة اللازمة لاطلب مباشرة.)"

“b'uul: su°aad min faDlek HaDriili malaf aaxer ijtimaa°. (*la'inny ana il-mudiir w°andi il-SilTa il-laazmeh la 'iTlob mubaašaratan.*)”

“I would say: Suaad, please bring me the file of the last meeting. (*I am the boss and I have the power to ask directly.*)” (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

5.2.12. Situation 12 (Coffee):

A boss asking his/her secretary to prepare him a cup of coffee.

Chi-square test results shown in table 7 (see section 5.2) for this situation verify the significant difference in request strategy preferences between the Syrian and British ($\chi^2 = 33.21$, $df=3$, $p < 0.001$).

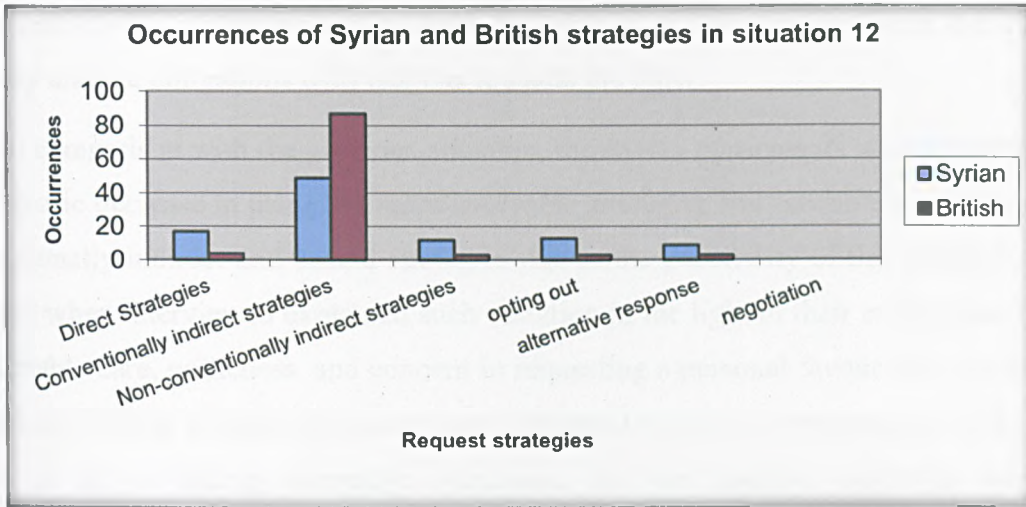


Figure 23. Occurrences of Syrian and British strategies in situation 12.

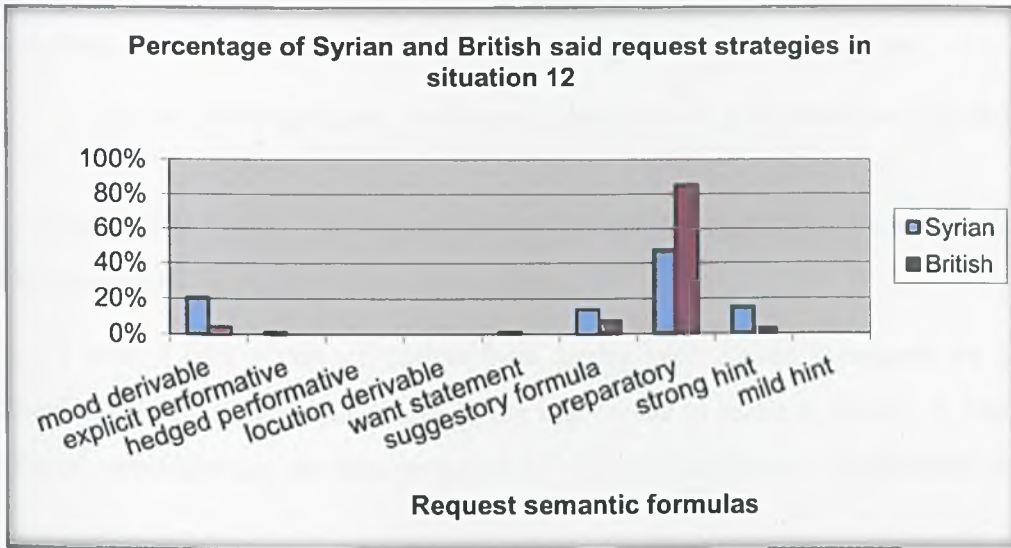


Figure 24. Percentage of Syrian and British strategies in situation 12.

Upon having a closer look at the figures above, we found an interesting point in that both groups of respondents had a tendency to mainly utilize the conventionally indirect strategies and more precisely, the *preparatory* sub-strategy (SY 37% vs. BR 80%). This tendency denotes that the *preparatory* strategy is the most familiar strategy people use in both cultures in this situation, although the British used it more than twice as much as Syrians did. The reason behind the high frequency of this strategy is that it attends to both the hearer's and the speaker's face wants and that it expresses a considerable level of politeness because of its indirect nature. In this situation, one may argue that in spite of the relative power the boss has, he/she still needs to soften and hedge their request to help avoid any potential face loss for both parties especially because it is not part of the secretary's job description to prepare the coffee. The choice of the request strategy and in line with Fraser

and Nolen (1981) is constrained by both the type of relationship between the boss and secretary and the obligations each one has towards the other.

In comparison with the previous situation, the Syrian participants were remarkable for the dramatic decrease in using the *mood derivable* strategies and recourse to variety of non-conventionally indirect and unsaid strategies due to the peculiarity of this situation. Syrian speakers when interviewed explained such variation in the light of their expectation to show considerable care, politeness, and concern in requesting a personal favour that is outside the obligation or duties of their addressee. Some achieved this either by opting out and refusing to ask at all or taking alternative responses, like for instance preparing the coffee themselves. Others implied their wish through utilizing *strong hint* strategies, either by talking indirectly about their insistent need (burning desire) to have some coffee or showing some admiration and appreciation of the idea of trying the Secretary's coffee:

"يا محلى فنجان القهوة من تحت دياتك و خاصة إذا حطيتي إصبعتك فيه . فنجان قهوة سادة او حلو مثل صاحبتي!"

"yaa maHla finjaan il-ahwe min taHit dayyatek wi xaaSSatan iza haTTeeti iSba'tek fii. Finjaan ahwe saada aw Hilu mitil SaaHibto!"

"I wish I had a cup of coffee from under your hands (prepared by you) and particularly that you put your finger in the cup (so as to make it sweet). A cup of plain coffee or sweet like the one who prepared it!" (Male interviewee - Syrian participant)

"أنا كثير مشتية القهوة بس مثل مالك شايفة المسؤول عن البوفيه مو هون و مالي عارفة كيف بدي اشرب القهوة. يا ريتني شربتھا بالبيت."

"ana ktiir mištihi il-ahwe bas mitil maalek šaayfe il-mas'uul 'an il-bufee muu hoon wi maali 'aarfe kiif biddi išrab il-ahwe. Yaa reetni šribta bil-beet."

"I really would like to have a cup of coffee, but as you see the person in charge of drinks is not here. I really don't know how to get a cup of coffee. I wish I'd had it at home." (Female interviewee - Syrian participant)

5.3. Requests data analysis by strategy:

Requests from a semantic perspective are semantic formulas used to ask or express a desire for something. Efficient implementation of such formulas gives birth to the request speech act that has a great pragmatic value and impact. As discussed in Chapter Two, different researchers have defined requests and have developed different taxonomies for request strategies. However, this study is built on Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) coding scheme for the made requests and Marti's (2006) model for the unmade requests.

Analyzing the requests' semantic formulas by strategy gives a clear picture of both similarities and differences between Syrian and British requests. It illustrates to what extent the Syrian and British speakers agree on the construction of their requestive behaviour according to a variety of different social situations.

5.3.1. Direct strategies:



Figure 25. The use of direct strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

Results in figure 25 above show that, despite the general cross-cultural agreement in the use of these strategies between the Syrian Arabic and British English speakers across the different situations, the Syrian requests using direct strategies appear with relatively higher frequencies in almost all the situations. In particular, situations 1 (kitchen), 2 (Lift), 6 (police) and 11 (photocopy) received much higher percentages of direct strategies from the Syrian participants. Looking more closely at situation 1 (kitchen), 33% of the strategies employed by the Syrian participants belonged to the most direct strategy level, whereas only

10% of the British strategies belonged to this direct level. The social variables of familiarity and power involved in this situation might explain the high percentage from the Syrian side. In spite of the high imposition involved in this situation, the Syrian participants chose the most direct strategies to perform their requests depending on their equal power as well as familiarity with their addressee. Moreover, some of the Syrian interviewees clarified this point by adding that because they are roommates there should be no boundaries in the way they make requests of each other and particularly that it is the roommates' duty or obligation to clean up after themselves. In this scenario, the way Syrians weigh the FTA differs from that of their British peers, which accounts for the large discrepancy in the frequency of the direct strategies used. As for situation 2 (lift), it is the size of imposition involved in this situation that plays an important role in both groups' choices of direct strategies (SY 40% vs. BR28%). However, in the Syrian society the moral right of the female involved in this situation to defend the family name and honour is another key factor for choosing direct strategies.

Having a closer look at situation 6 (police), we noticed that it was the Syrian participants who used more direct strategies (56%) compared to the British (19%). This fact was influenced by the stereotypical power the Syrian police officers have over car drivers who violate traffic rules. As for situation 11 (photocopy), the vast majority of the Syrian strategies were direct strategies (59%), while the British made some use of direct strategies (5%). This observation could be explained in the light of the different perception of the social variables in both the British and the Syrian cultures. The Syrians not only highlighted the type of the institutional power the boss has over his secretary, but they also stressed the point that it is part of the secretary's duty to do the photocopying, a fact that justifies their high frequency of direct strategies.

The findings that Syrian subjects in situations 1 (kitchen), 2 (lift), 6 (police) and 11 (photocopy) employed much higher frequencies of direct strategies than their British peers highlight Fraser and Nolen's (1981) "conversational-contract view" of politeness. They emphasize the point that participants in any given situation act according to a set of rules including rights and obligation of individuals involved in that situation. It is usually the social institution which determines what individuals involved in a communicative situation would expect from each other.

As for the British subjects, they seem to avoid using direct strategies and tend to use conventionally indirect strategies instead as they feel safer using the most common choice for requests in the English language.

5.3.1.1. Mood derivable:

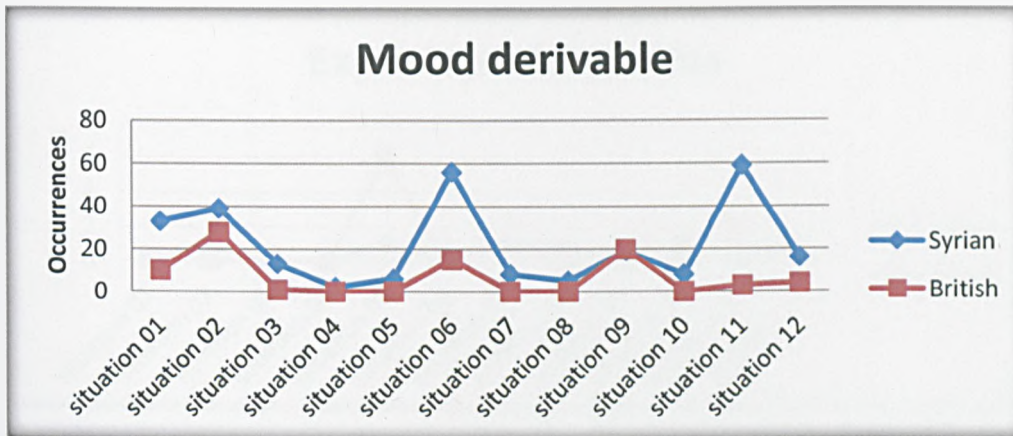


Figure 26. The use of mood derivable strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

Upon having a quick glance at figure 26 above, one could notice that it has very similar trends to that of figure 25 which represents the direct strategies. In order to test whether there are any systematic links/correlations between the participants' direct strategies and the *mood derivable* semantic formulas, statistical analyses were conducted. The Spearman Rank-Order two-tailed Correlation (Rho) test was used for this analysis. The results of Spearman's Correlations revealed that there are positive correlations between the numbers of direct strategies and the *mood derivable* semantic formulas used. More specifically results showed that:

- 1- There is a strong positive correlation between the Syrian direct strategies and the *mood derivable* strategies they picked in all situations ($r_s = 0.893, p < 0.001$).
- 2- There is a positive correlation between the British direct strategies and the *mood derivable* strategies they picked in all situations ($r_s = 0.693, p < 0.02$).

This indicates that the greater the number of *mood derivable* strategies the Syrians and British use, the more direct their requesting strategies become. This could lead us to

conclude that the *mood derivable* strategies are the most predominant type of the direct strategies used by both subject groups across all twelve situations. In other words, *mood derivables* are the most popular direct sub-strategy.

5.3.1.2. Explicit performative:

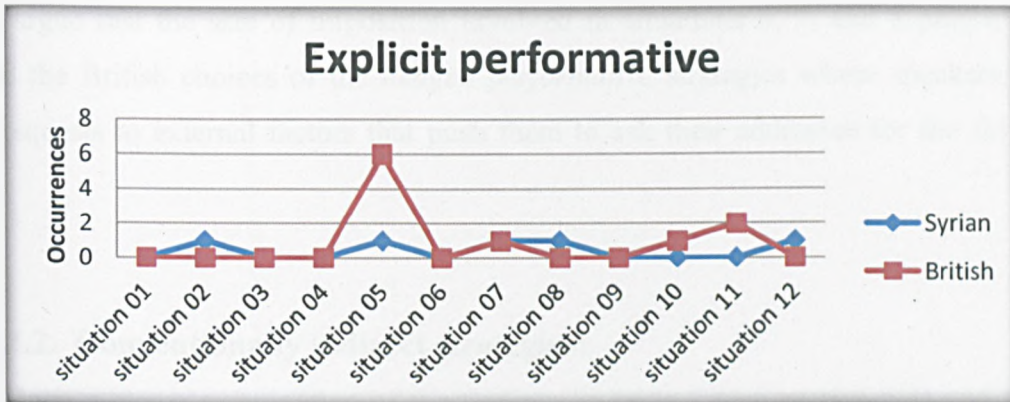


Figure 27. The use of explicit performative strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

Examining the data presented in figure 27 above, one could notice that there is a general cross-cultural agreement between the Syrians and the British in using the *explicit performative* strategies with the exception of situation 5 (phone). In that situation, the British subjects exhibited an inclination to use the *explicit performative* strategies more than their Syrian peers did (BR 6% vs. SY1%).

5.3.1.3. Hedged performative:

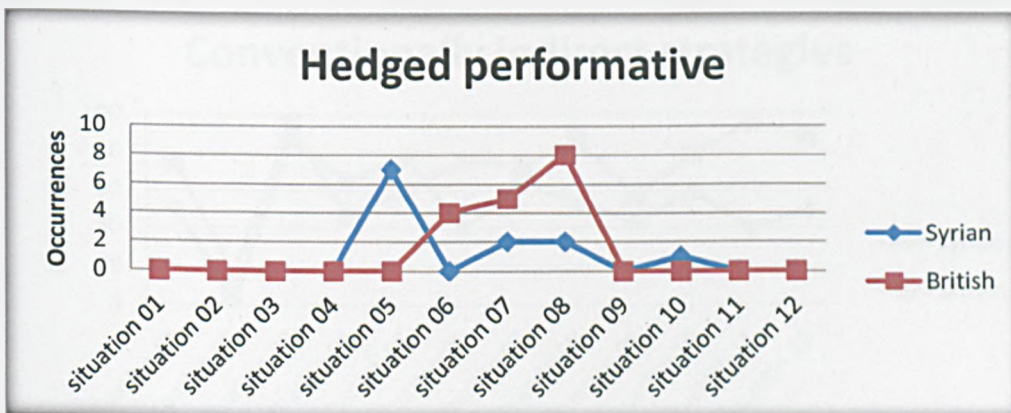


Figure 28. The use of hedged performative strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

Concerning their choices of *hedged performative* strategies, the two groups of subjects showed variation in situations 5 (phone), 6 (police), 7 (extension), and 8 (presentation). However, what is worth mentioning is that the British maintained higher frequencies in using the *hedged performative* strategies in all specified situations except that of situation 5. In that particular situation, in spite of the fact that the Syrians used more *hedged performative* strategies, the British exhibited a preference to use more indirect strategies such as *strong hints* and hence making up for the lower frequencies of this sub-strategy. One could argue that the size of imposition involved in situations 6, 7, and 8 play a key role behind the British choices of the *hedged performative* strategies where speakers attribute their requests to external factors that push them to ask their addressee for the favour they want.

5.3.2. Conventionally indirect strategies:

Upon a closer examination of the findings in table 7 (see section 5.2) and figure 29 below, one can notice that the conventionally indirect strategies were used across all situations in both languages, with the British maintaining the highest occurrences. However, in situations 4 (lift) and 5 (phone call) the Syrians used more conventionally indirect strategies than their British counterparts, who instead showed an inclination towards using more non-conventionally indirect strategies. Therefore, at this stage, it seems that the Syrians may still be more direct than the British in making requests from the pragmatic point of view. It seems that non-familiarity between the interlocutors in both situations push the Syrian participants to prefer the conventionally indirect strategies.

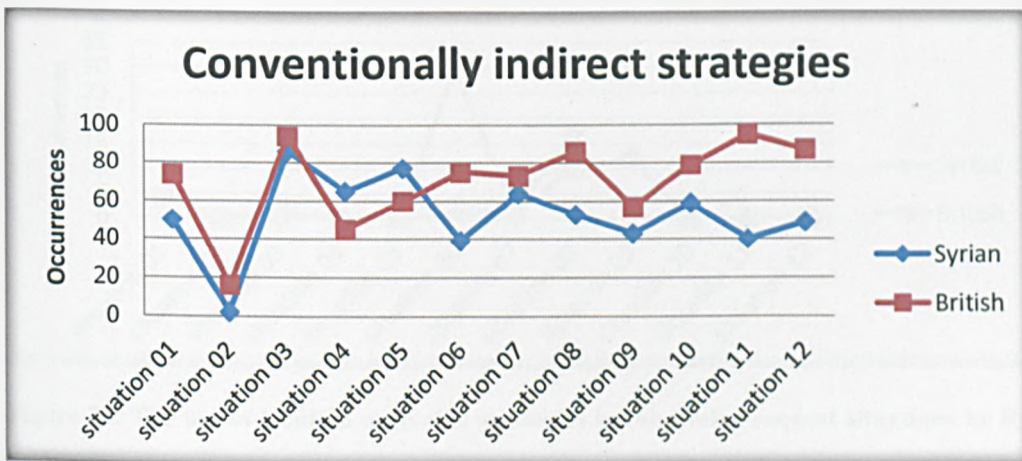


Figure 29. The use of conventionally indirect strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

The situation which received highest frequencies of conventionally indirect strategies by both subjects groups was situation 3 (notes) where the imposition involved in the request was perceived low in comparison with the imposition involved with the rest of the situations. However, situation 11 (photocopy) received a very high frequency of occurrences by the Syrian subjects only because of the way they weigh the imposition in that particular situation. The lowest usage of conventionally indirect strategies occurred in situation 2 (street) where the use of such conventional strategies was deemed inappropriate in such a coercive situation, where higher levels of direct strategies were licensed by the Syrians (SY 40% vs. BR 28%) and conventionally indirect strategies were licensed by the British (SY 2% vs. BR 16%).

5.3.2.1. Locution derivable:

From figure 30 below, we found that the locution derivable strategies were mainly used by Britons in situation 6 (police), 8 (presentation), 9 (money) among other situations, whereas Syrians utilized them mainly in situation 8 (presentation). English speakers clearly adopted them more extensively. This could be related to the English speakers' preference for using more direct conventional means of requests rather than directly performing requests like the Syrians.

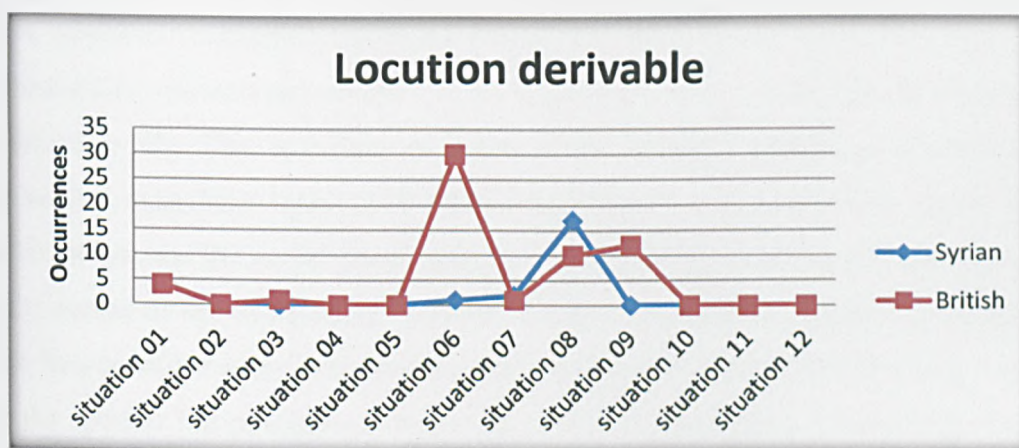


Figure 30. The use of locution derivable strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

5.3.2.2. Want statement:



Figure 31. The use of want statement strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

Having a glance at figure 31 above, it is worth noting that want statements are much more often used by Syrians than the British. Therefore, one could say that in the Syrian culture it is quite common for individuals to stress their wants when performing requests, which is not the common norm in the British culture.

It is also noticeable that the Syrian expression of *want statements* reached their peak in situation 5 (phone call) where it is the duty of the hearer to answer phone calls providing answers, situation 8 (teacher) where the teacher has institutional power over their students, and situation 11 (photocopy) where it is the secretary's job to deal with all aspects of their administrative role. This is a clear evidence of the stronger institutional hierarchies in the Syrian society than those found in its British counterpart. This might be due to the nature of the situations and the social power speakers have over their addressees. This power stems from the nature of the relationship between speakers and hearers and the social expectation that the hearer will comply with the speaker's request. The data indicates that in situations where the speaker has power over the hearer, Syrian subjects tend to adopt *preparatory* and *want statements* formal strategies while the British tend to use *preparatory* and *hint* formal strategies.

5.3.2.3. Suggestory formula:

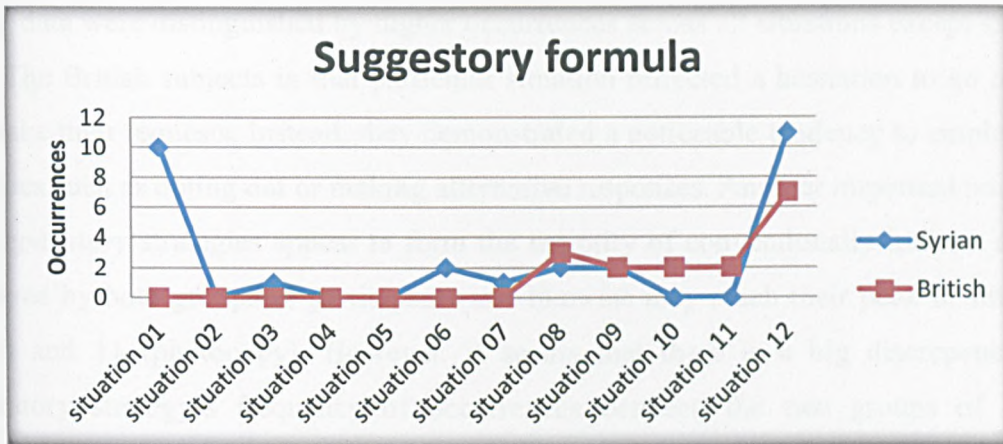


Figure 32. The use of suggestory formula strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

Semantic formulas expressing suggestions were used sporadically by subjects of the two languages, with the Syrians generally maintaining a higher percentage than the Britons overall. The fact that suggestions were used in some situations and disappeared in others demonstrates they are situation-specific sub-formulas. They are mostly used in coercive situations where the type of favour requested is perceived of high imposition. By having a quick look at graph 32, one can see that situation 1 (kitchen) and 12 (coffee) received most occurrences of *suggestory formulas* across the twelve social situations. However, situation 1 (kitchen) was unique for receiving only Syrian *suggestory formulas*.

5.3.2.4. Reference to preparatory condition:

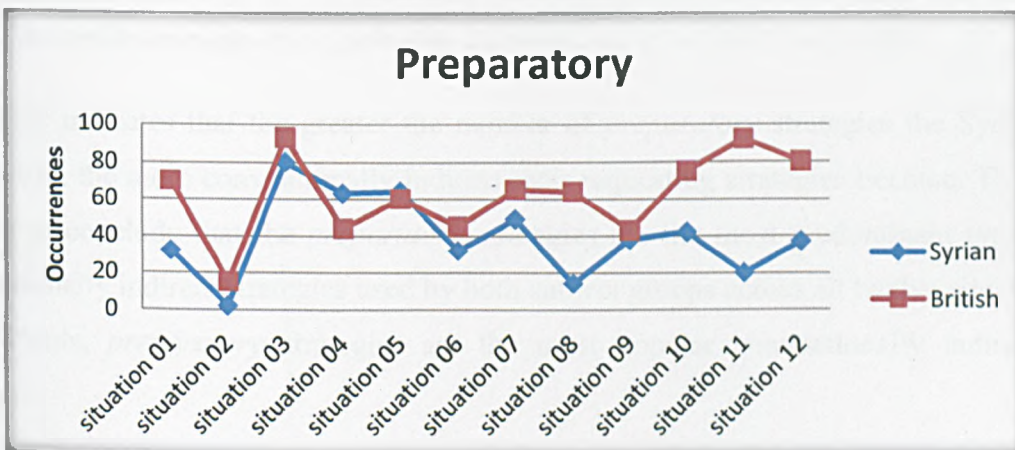


Figure 33. The use of preparatory strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

Preparatory strategies had a high incidence in both Syrian and British data, yet the British data were distinguished by higher occurrences across all situations except situation 4 (lift). The British subjects in that particular situation reflected a hesitation to go on record and make their requests. Instead, they demonstrated a noticeable tendency to employ unsaid strategies such as opting out or making alternative responses. Another important point is that the *preparatory* strategies appear to form the majority of conventionally indirect strategies employed by both groups of participants and likewise they reach their peak in situations 3 (notes) and 11 (photocopy). However, it seems that there is a big discrepancy in the preparatory strategy's frequency of occurrences between the two groups of language speakers in situation 11 (photocopy) due to the different ways people in the Syrian and British cultures assess the imposition involved in that context.

Upon having a quick glance at figure 33 above, one could notice that it has very similar trends to that of figure 29 which represents the conventionally indirect strategies. In order to test whether there are any systematic links/correlations between the participants' use of conventionally indirect strategies and the preparatory formulas, statistical analyses were conducted. The Spearman Rank-Order two-tailed Correlation (Rho) test was used for this analysis. The results of Spearman's Correlations revealed that there are positive correlations between the conventionally indirect strategies and the preparatory formulas. More specifically results showed that:

- 1- There is a positive correlation between the Syrian conventionally indirect strategies and the preparatory strategies they picked in all situations ($r_s = 0.847, p < 0.002$).
- 2- There is a positive correlation between the British direct strategies and the mood derivable strategies they picked in all situations ($r_s = 0.888, p < 0.001$).

This indicates that the greater the number of *preparatory* strategies the Syrians and British use, the more conventionally indirect their requesting strategies become. This could lead us to conclude that the *preparatory* strategies are the most predominant type of the conventionally indirect strategies used by both subject groups across all twelve situations. In other words, *preparatory* strategies are the most popular conventionally indirect sub-strategy.

5.3.3. Non-conventionally indirect strategies:

What is interesting about non-conventionally indirect strategies is that there is a marked disagreement between their usage by the two groups across the different social situations. The only situations which witnessed agreement between the two groups were situation 3 (notes), 4 (lift), 6 (police), 11 (photocopy). Interestingly, the results of situations 2 (street), 5 (phone) revealed that British subjects adopted many more non-conventionally indirect strategies than their Syrian counterparts.

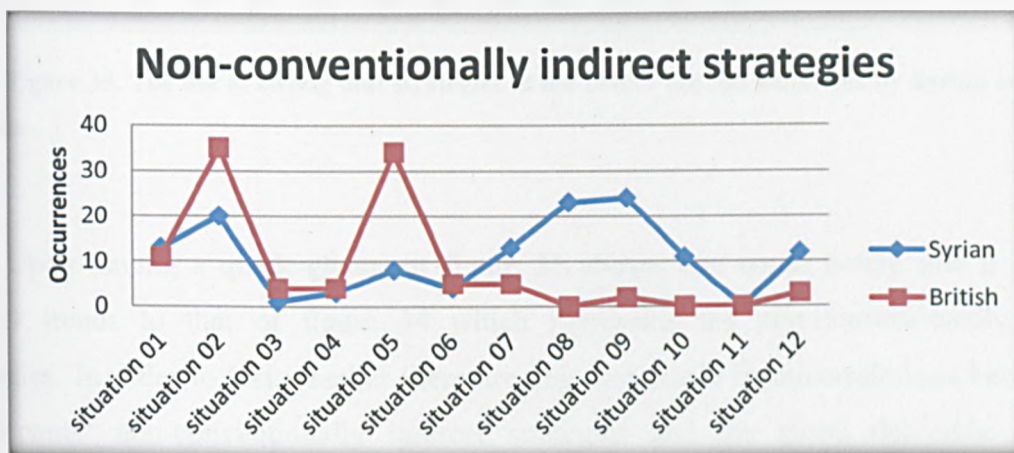


Figure 34. The use of Non-conventionally indirect strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

On the other side of the spectrum, Syrian speakers appear to apply such strategies with higher frequencies in situations 7 (extension), 8 (presentation), 9 (money), 10 (smoking), and 12 (coffee) as a safer (face-saving) way to form their requests in such coercive situations. Their British peers, on the contrary, mostly employed conventionally indirect strategies in those very same situations. It seems that non-familiarity between interlocutors in situations 2 (street) and 5 (phone) push the British respondents to choose more non-conventionally indirect strategies.

5.3.3.1. Strong hint:

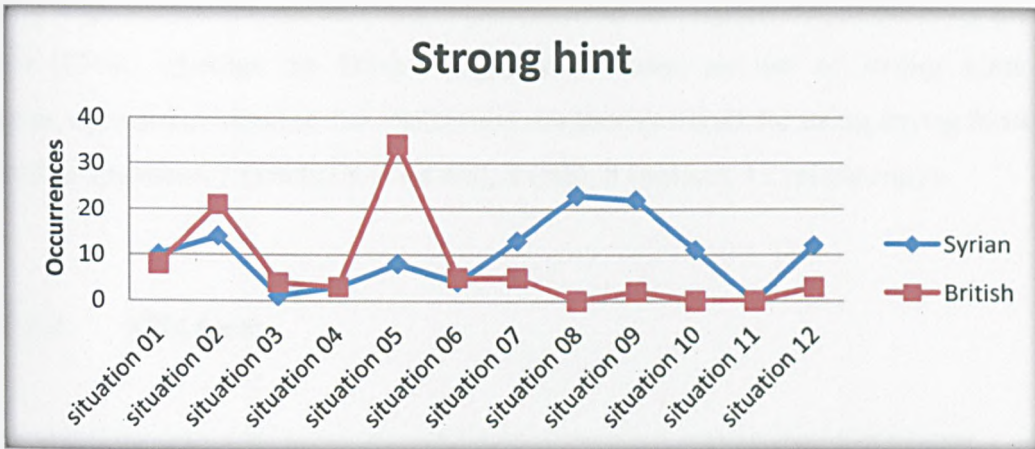


Figure 35. The use of strong hint strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

Upon having a quick glance at figure 35 above, one could notice that it has very similar trends to that of figure 34 which represents the non-conventionally indirect strategies. In order to test whether there are any systematic links/correlations between the participants' non-conventionally indirect strategies and the mood derivable semantic formulas, statistical analyses were conducted. The Spearman Rank-Order Correlation (Rho) two-tailed test was used for this analysis.

The results of Spearman's Correlations revealed that there are positive correlations between the numbers of direct strategies and the *mood derivable* semantic formulas used. More specifically results showed that:

- 1- There is a very strong positive correlation between the Syrian direct strategies and the *mood derivable* strategies they picked in all situations ($r_s = 0.998, p < 0.001$).
- 2- There is a strong positive correlation between the British direct strategies and the *mood derivable* strategies they picked in all situations ($r_s = 0.994, p < 0.001$).

This indicates that the greater the number of *strong hints* strategies the Syrians and British use, the more direct their requesting strategies become. This could lead us to conclude that the *strong hints* strategies are the most predominant type of the non-conventionally indirect strategies used by both subject groups across all twelve situations. In other words, *strong hints* are the most popular non-conventionally indirect sub-strategy.

The data in figure 35 indicate that situation 5 (phone) received the highest occurrences of *strong hints* by the British subjects (34%) compared to (8%) of their Syrian peers. Situation 8 (presentation), on the other hand, received the highest occurrences by the Syrian subjects (23%), whereas the British respondents made no use of *strong hints* at all. Moreover, agreement between the Syrian and the British trends for using *strong hints* can be observed in situations 1 (kitchen), 3 (notes), 4 (lift), 6 (police), 11 (photocopy).

5.3.3.2. Mild hint:

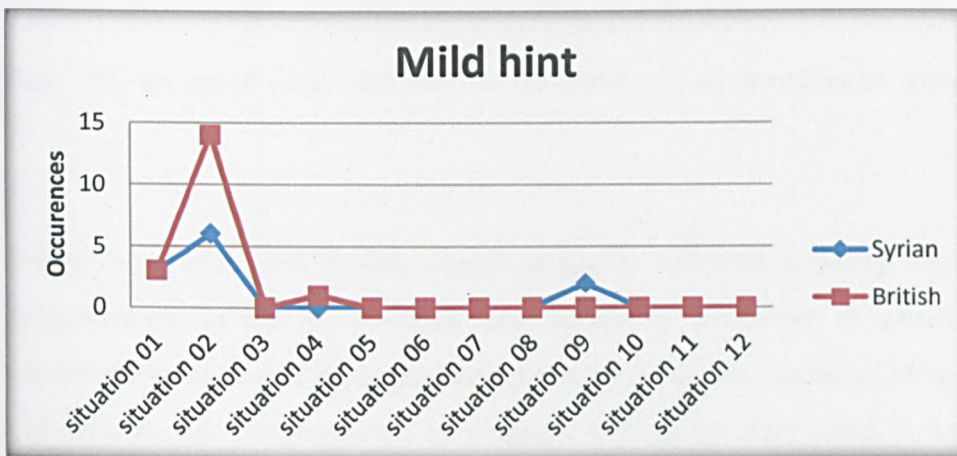


Figure 36. The use of mild hint strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

The Syrians and British reflected high level of cross-cultural agreement in using the mild hint strategies. However, looking more closely at situation 2 (street), it was the British participants who used more mild hints (14%) compared to the Syrians' (6%). Therefore, one can obviously notice the British preference to be less direct than their Syrian peers.

5.3.4. Unsaid Strategies (Do not do FTA):

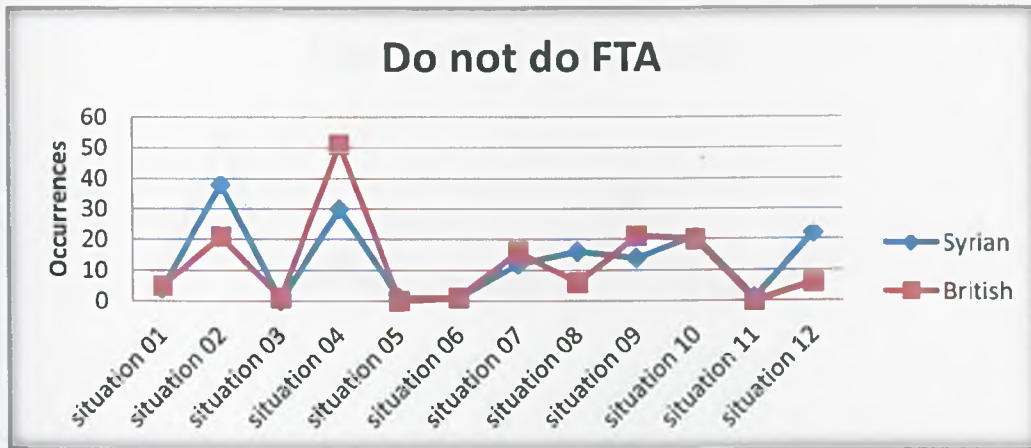


Figure 37. the use of unsaid strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

Trends for Syrian and British unsaid strategies reflected a strong degree of cross-cultural agreement, as can be observed from figure 37. However, in situation 2 (street) higher occurrences of unsaid strategies were licensed by Syrian subjects (38%) compared to (21%) of their British counterparts. In situation 4 (lift), on other hand, it was the British who maintained higher levels of unsaid strategies (51%) compared to (30%) of their Syrian peers. This difference could be related to cultural factors because both situations are parallel in terms of social variables and the size of imposition involved. In situation 2, unlike the British community that does not mind communication between females and male strangers, in the Syrian conservative community, females are culturally expected not to communicate with male strangers unless there is a necessity to do so. As for situation 4, it is the cultural expectation in the Syrian community that people maintain good relationships with their neighbours. The Syrian culture stresses harmony among people, particularly those of neighbourhood bonds and regardless of whether there was any previous communication or not. However, in the British culture it is perceived to be quite risky to get into a stranger's car.

5.3.4.1. Alternative response:

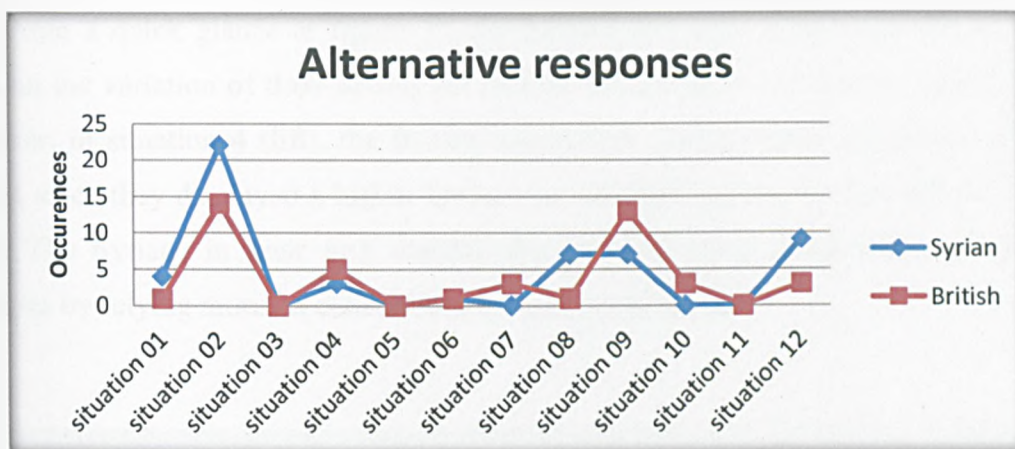


Figure 38. The use of alternative response strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

Data in figure 38 suggest that both Britons and Syrians exhibited an agreement on using *alternative responses* in most situations except that in situation 2 (street), where the Syrians used more *alternative responses* (22%) than the British did (14%). It is also worth noting that the social distance in this particular situation is mainly behind the subjects' choice of alternative responses. Situations 8 (presentation) and 9 (smoking), as well, witnessed disagreement between both groups. Syrians in situation 8 reflected more preference for making alternative responses (7%) in comparison to the British subjects (1%), while it was the British who had a higher frequency of alternative solutions (13%) compared to that of the Syrians (7%). The *alternative responses* used in this study imply that in real life situations, speakers are not restricted to performing said requests. On the contrary, they have a variety of choices as to how to deliver their message. For example, in situation 2 (street), informants provided some alternative responses such as walking faster, making a phone call, walking into a nearby shop in order to get rid of the person pestering them, staring at, or completely ignoring the person.

5.3.4.2. Opting out:

From a quick glance at figure 39, we noticed that both Syrian and British subjects agree on the variation of their *opting out* choices according to the twelve social situations. However, in situation 4 (lift), the British respondents display more reluctance to make a request since they displayed a higher *opting out* rate than did the Syrians (BR 42% vs. SY 26%). The Syrians in their turn compensated for the lower frequencies of *opting out* strategies by relying more on conventionally indirect strategies.

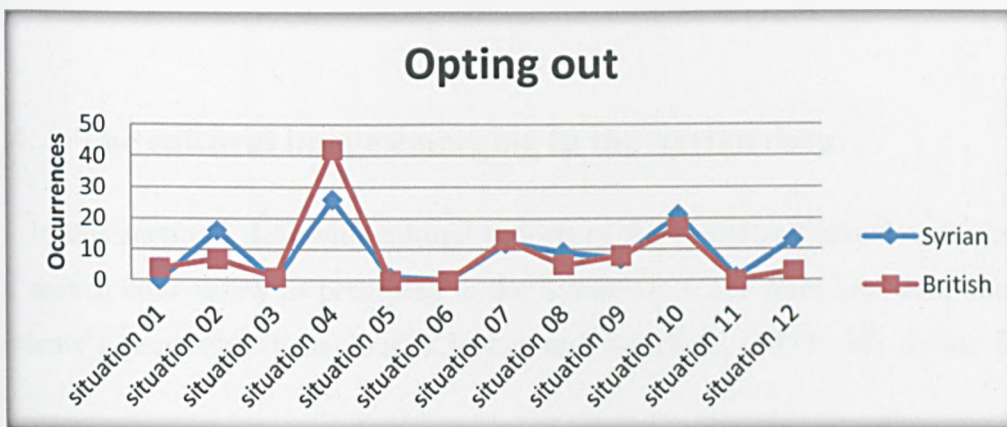


Figure 39. The use of opting out strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

The high tendency of both language groups to opt out in situation 4 (street) might be explained in the light of unfamiliarity between the interlocutors involved in this situation, particularly given that they have not spoken to each other before, which makes performing the request even more difficult.

5.3.4.3. Negotiation:

The most important point to make concerning the use of negotiating strategies is that respondents in both groups exclusively used them in situation 4 (lift). They used their discourse skills and utterances such as “Hello, how are you doing?”, “Are you shopping?” to get their addressee gradually to their requesting point in the time they are taking their addressee’s reaction into consideration. The unfamiliarity between the interlocutors in this situation in addition to the type of the favour requested have a key role behind subjects’ use of this strategy exclusively in this context.

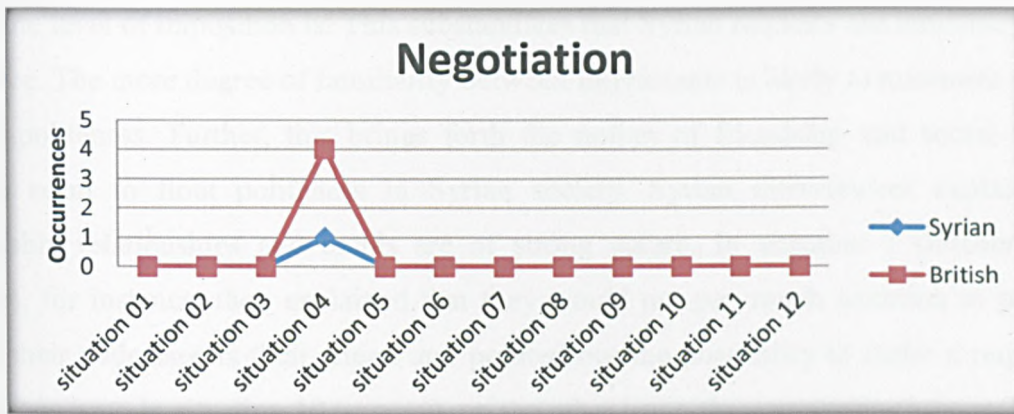


Figure 40. The use of negotiation strategies in the twelve request situations by Syrian and British subjects.

5.4. The cultural image emerging in the Syrian data:

In this section I deal with cultural aspects of the social and situational norms in the Syrian speech community as presented in the Syrian DCT and interview data that underlie respondents’ requestive behaviour. Kroeber and Kluckoln (1952: 52) define culture as follows:

“The culture of a society is the way of life of its members; the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share, and transmit from generation to generation”.

Taking the above definition of culture into account, I will try to sketch out some of the most prominent phenomena that occurred in the Syrian data from a cultural perspective. Accordingly, I analyze the behaviour of the Syrian participants upon performing their requests in the twelve social situations in the DCT.

I found that when the speaker S and the hearer H are equal in power and the social distance between them is rather small like in situations 1 (kitchen), 3 (notes), 10 (money) Syrian speakers were likely to use conventionally indirect strategies particularly the *preparatory* subcategory for making their requests and strategically mitigate the force of their requests by means of mitigating supportive moves. However, they were also remarkable for using direct strategies in these situations and particularly the *mood derivable* strategies that come on the top of the directness level. Through analysing the data in the specified situations, the general impression is that Syrians are likely to choose direct strategies when requesting their friends, roommates, classmates, and colleagues no matter

what the level of imposition is. This substantiates that Syrian requests are sensitive to social distance. The more degree of familiarity between interactants is likely to minimize concerns about politeness. Further, this brings forth the notion of friendship and social harmony which seem to flout politeness in Syrian society. Syrian interviewees explained that friendship relationships and bonds are of strong nature. In situation 1 (kitchen) and 3 (notes), for instance, they explained that they would not pay much attention to politeness since their addressee is their friend and pointed out the possibility to make a request in a humorous way. In situation 10 (money), on the other hand, they emphasized the influence of friendship ties on individuals claiming that real friends should not hesitate to help one another particularly in hard times.

Other cultural phenomena that emerged in the Syrian data are the notion of neighbourhood and neighbourly sentiments addressed in situation 4 (lift). In spite of the high imposition attached to this situation due to the nature of the service requested as well as the considerable social distance between interlocutors, the largest proportion of Syrian respondents (70%) went on record and verbally performed their request. This tendency could be explained in the light of the social and religious norms and traditions the Syrian society holds about neighbourhood relationships which are largely influenced by Islam (the prevailing religion in Syria). Islam has focussed on respecting the ties of neighbourhood, or what is called in Syrian Arabic “al- jeera”. Hence, Muslims are urged to maintain good relations with their neighbours regardless of their religion or faith beliefs. Moreover, it is worth noting that in Islam as was explained by Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) a “neighbour” is not just the one who lives next door but includes all those up to forty houses in all directions — effectively a whole neighbourhood. Muslims are obliged to serve the rights of their neighbours including sharing their happiness and sorrow, respecting their privacy by not gossiping about them, making sure that they have their basic necessities, and helping them in their needs. These values were clearly manifested in the Syrian data where participants emphasized the neighbourhood sentiments that tie members of the Syrian society and how neighbours are expected to help each other. Further, it is important to highlight that the notion of neighbourhood is not only restricted to those sharing the same street or building, but extends to include roommates, classmates, and colleagues. This fact contributes to the explanation of the Syrian subjects’ uses of direct strategies in situations 1 (kitchen), 3 (notes), and 10 (money).

Another prominent cultural aspect in the Syrian data is the notion of hierarchical power in the Syrian community. The data analysis in the current chapter indicates that situations 6 (police), 7 (extension), 8 (presentation), 11 (photocopy), 12 (coffee) are marked for power asymmetries between participants in these situations. The power/authority interactants have in these situations is due to the institutional roles they play. In the Syrian culture obedience to authority is not only positively perceived by the society but also regarded as sign of good practice. For example in situation 4 (police), the police officer is the authority figure who represents the government. Therefore, in general, car drivers are expected to follow his commands without questioning and particularly if they are clearly breaking traffic rules. This fact underlies the high frequency of the *mood derivable* subtype of direct strategies licensed by Syrian subjects who consider that police officers have both the power and right to ask car drivers directly without paying much attention to politeness in such cases.

As for situations 7 (extension) and 8 (presentation), the University lecturer is the authority figure not only because of his/her institutional role but also because he/she is perceived by the society to be superior in terms of knowledge, experience and judgements, whereas learners are 'lesser' partners in interaction. A good student is expected to accept the decisions of his/her teachers as well as follow their advice and recommendations. Moreover, teachers are widely respected and highly thought of in the Syrian culture as they are the "builders of the generations" and have the paternalistic type of power. The above mentioned considerations in addition to the high imposition attributed to the situation 7 (extension) play a crucial role behind the Syrian subjects' extensive uses of conventionally indirect strategies alongside a variety of internal and external modifiers. As for situation 8 (presentation), the Syrians subjects used considerable number of *locution derivable* and *want statement* strategies. When interviewed, they revealed that being a teacher with higher institutional hierarchy enables them to express their requests in more direct ways. However, they stressed the importance of maintaining a conflict-free communication with their students by means of providing the students with a range of mitigating supportive moves such as *grounders, encouragement, sweeteners...etc.*

With regards situation 11(photocopy), the boss in the Syrian culture is seen to have a higher institutional level which endows him/her with power that enables him/her to request directly from those lower than him/her in the hierarchical structure of the institution. Interview data reflected the Syrian respondents believe that the boss in the photocopy

situation has both the power and the right to make a direct request from the secretary provided that the job he/she is asking for is included in the secretary's job description. Some of them pointed to the fact that it is the secretary's job to do the work the boss requests and that is what they are getting paid for. Such beliefs explain the prominent use of *mood derivable* sub-category of direct strategies in the Syrian data in this situation. Situation 12 (coffee), on the contrary, witnessed a dramatic decrease in using the *mood derivable* strategies. Syrian participants mainly utilised conventionally indirect strategies for performing their requests in this situation. Syrian speakers when interviewed explained such decrease in the light of their expectation to show considerable care, politeness, and concern in requesting a personal favour that is outside the obligation or duties of their addressees.

The final cultural aspect to draw attention to in the Syrian data is the notion of family honour and reputation that emerged in situation 2 (street). The vast majority of the Syrian said requests came under the *mood derivable* strategy the most direct category of said strategies. With regards the uses of unsaid strategies, 38% of Syrian speakers chose not to verbally perform their requests. These preferences indicate that Syrian subjects attached a high degree of offence to this situation due to the imposition they felt on both the individual's freedom and the community's traditions and social habits. People in the Syrian conservative society pay special care to family's reputation and honour issues. The honour of the family and its men depends largely on that of their women including wives, daughters, sisters ...etc. Consequently the social conduct and behaviour of women are expected to be modest and virtuous. The slightest indication of impropriety on the part of women could destroy the honour of the family which individuals cherish and protect above anything else. Hence, a clearly defined pattern of behaviour has been developed to protect women and help them avoid situations similar to situation 2 (street) that give rise to false impressions or unfounded gossip that might affect their family's name or honour. For example, the social contact between males and females should be very limited. Women do not talk to male strangers without having a clear reason. Therefore, Syrian respondents in such a coercive situation mainly utilised *mood derivable* strategies and intensified the effect of their request by the use of aggravating supportive moves. When interviewed they explained that their main concern is their public image and family name rather than being nice or polite with their addressee. On the other hand, 38% of Syrian subjects were hesitant to make a request and establish any communication with male strangers in the street as to maintain their dignity and family's reputation.

5.5. Summary and conclusions:

The present chapter's main goal was to explore request strategies from a cross-cultural perspective, examining its realization patterns in British English and Syrian Arabic. The results of the data obtained have been analyzed and reported in the light of the research questions and their associated hypotheses. The analysis involved two levels, namely analyzing the requests data by situation and then analyzing it by strategy in order to compare and contrast situational and cross-cultural requestive behaviour of Syrian and British speakers. The following table summarizes the main findings in this study:

Occurrences of Syrian and British request strategies in all situations					Chi-square results		
Request strategy	Syrian		British				
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage			
Direct Strategies	281	23%	108	9%	$\chi^2 = 76.94$	df = 1	p < 0.001
Conventionally indirect strategies	627	52%	841	70%	$\chi^2 = 31.20$	df = 1	p < 0.001
Non-conventionally indirect strategies	132	11%	103	9%	$\chi^2 = 0.91$	df = 1	p > 0.10 NS*
Unsaid Strategies	160	13%	148	12%	$\chi^2 = 0.47$	df = 1	p > 0.10 NS*
Grand Total	1200	100%	1200	100%			

Table 9. Occurrences of Syrian Arabic and British English request strategies in all situations.

The data indicated that the conventionally indirect strategies are the most frequently used strategies in the British and Syrian requests, and particularly the *preparatory* strategy. The table above demonstrates that the vast majority of the British strategies were conventionally indirect strategies (70%), whereas only (52%) of the Syrian strategies were conventionally indirect.

Furthermore, Syrian subjects resorted to using direct strategies approximately three times more than their British peers (SY 23% vs. BR 9%). Such a finding points to an interesting cross-cultural difference, namely that Syrians were found to be more direct than their British peers.

The data also revealed that the unsaid strategies were the least used strategies in both the British and the Syrian culture. Both groups used similar numbers of unsaid strategies across the twelve situations.

The analysis of the distribution of the main request strategy types in the twelve situations examined revealed that:

- 1- Syrians and British speakers reflected cross-cultural agreement for trends of situational variation, namely relatively higher levels of Syrian directness in almost all situations across both cultures and higher levels of English conventional indirectness in all situations except that of situation 4 (lift) and 5 (phone), where the British compensated for this low number by choosing higher frequencies of less direct strategies such as unsaid strategies in the lift situations and hints in the phone situation.
- 2- Syrian and British participants in the study reflected disagreement in the trends of non-conventionally indirect and unsaid strategies, where the British maintained higher frequencies in the first six situations and lower frequencies in the last six situations.

CHAPTER SIX: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL MODIFICATION OF REQUESTS.

6.1. Introduction:

In Chapter Five, the head act of requests which is the minimal unit that realizes the speech act of request was investigated and dealt with in detail.

In this chapter the main focus will be on the modification parts of the request sequences that occur in the discourse completion task. Modification is that part of a request other than the head act. Its function is to modify the force of the request. Examining modification is important since the performance of requests might be accompanied by loss of face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 65), requests are speech acts which are intrinsically 'face threatening'. Therefore, people may try to avoid or reduce the potential unwelcome effects of their request utterances through modification by softening the impact of their requests.

Using such modification eases communication and helps the speaker in the task of conveying meaning and avoiding misunderstanding. Hence, by the use of appropriate modification, communication flows smoothly.

In this chapter, request modification findings are presented using all the modification descriptive categories found in both the Syrian and the British data (see section 4.4.5.1 for full details). The findings are analysed with regard to internal and external modification in order to answer the research questions:

- What are the main modification categories used in the requests of the British and Syrian participants?
- Do patterns of internal and external modification vary cross-culturally between Syrian and British speakers?
- What contextual factors involved in the request situation affect the choice of internal and external modifiers?

6.2. Main findings of modification:

Modification Type	Syrian 1040 requests		British 1052 requests		Chi-square results		
	No.	Per.	No.	Per.			
A. Internal modification	846	81.35%	890	84.60%	$\chi^2 = 91.55$	df = 3	p < 0.001
1. Syntactic modification	575	55.29%	843	80.13%	$\chi^2 = 31.13$	df = 1	p < 0.001
2. Lexical modification	549	52.79%	483	45.91%	$\chi^2 = 11.38$	df = 1	p < 0.001
3. Upgraders	152	14.62%	59	5.61%	$\chi^2 = 49.05$	df = 1	p < 0.001
B. External modification	794	76.35%	785	74.62%	$\chi^2 = 125.4$	df = 2	p < 0.001
1. Mitigating supportive moves	705	67.79%	778	73.95%	$\chi^2 = 0.1$	df = 1	p > 0.10 NS*
2. Aggravating supportive moves	139	13.37%	9	0.86%	$\chi^2 = 125.3$	df = 1	p < 0.001

Table 10. Overall distribution of main modification types in Syrian Arabic and British English requests with chi-square test results.

* p > 0.10 NS: not significant

Results from the table above show that both Syrian and British participants favour internal modifiers over external supportive moves. The table also demonstrates that while British subjects use slightly more internal modification than their Syrian peers (SY 81.35% vs. BR 84.60%), the Syrians adopt a few more external modifiers than the former (SY 76.35% vs. BR 74.62). Non-parametric procedures were used in the analysis since the choices of modification categories are nominal scale variables. Chi-square tests of independence were conducted in order to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant level of difference between the Syrian and the British groups. The statistical analysis results as demonstrated in table 10 showed that there was a significant difference in the choice of various types of internal modification and the *aggravating supportive moves* between the Syrian and the British groups. However, no significant difference was observed in the way British and Syrian subjects choose mitigating supportive moves.

In order to get a better understanding of the similarities and differences between the two language groups, we will look at more specific distribution of the subcategories of internal and external modification in sections 6.3 and 6.4.

6.3. Analysis of internal modification:

6.3.1. Analysis of main internal modifiers:

Internal modifiers which include syntactic downgraders, lexical and phrasal downgraders, and upgraders are non-essential elements of the request utterance within the head act. Blum-Kulka (1989: 60) clarifies this by saying that their presence is “not essential for the utterance to be understood as a request”. In other words, the pragmatic force of the utterance will still be there without these non-essential elements. The choice of internal modifiers creates a variation in the configuration of request acts. The following sub-sections provide analysis for internal modifiers in the requests of both the Syrian and the British subjects.

6.3.1.1. Analysis of internal modifiers for all situations combined:

Following the analysis and the coding scheme of request sequences, occurrences and percentages of internal modification main types were calculated for each group. Results in table 10 (see section 6.2) suggest that the groups are very close in the amount of internal modification they use in their requests. However, the British used internal modification slightly more than the Syrians (SY 81.35% vs. BR 84.60%).

The striking feature of table 10 is that syntactic downgraders are the most widely used type of internal modification for both groups of subjects. However, the British used syntactic downgraders 24.84 percentage points more than their Syrian peers. On the contrary, upgraders were the least favoured type for both groups. The Syrians, though, maintained a significantly higher percentage of upgraders than the British participants (SY 14.6% vs. BR 5.61%). One could also notice that there is a difference between both language groups in the use of lexical and phrasal modifiers (SY 52.79% vs. BR 45.91%). Having looked at inter-group variation, we shall now proceed to look at intra-group variation of internal modification distribution. Concerning the British group, the frequency distribution shows that participants in this group have used a much higher percentage of syntactic modifiers (80.13%) compared to that of the lexical modifiers (45.91%). On the contrary, the difference between the syntactic and the lexical modifiers' frequency distribution of the Syrian subjects is very small (55.29%) vs. (52.79%).

Keeping this overall analysis in mind for all situations combined, the next section will explore in more detail the distribution of internal modifiers by language group in each situation separately.

6.3.1.2. Analysis of internal modifiers by situation and by language group:

Mod. type	Internal modifiers				Syntactic downgraders				Lexical downgraders				Upgraders			
	Syrian		British		Syrian		British		Syrian		British		Syrian		British	
Language group	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.
Situation	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.
sit. 01	77	7.40%	86	8.17%	45	4.33%	77	7.32%	50	4.81%	54	5.13%	29	2.79%	38	3.61%
sit. 02	51	4.90%	29	2.76%	16	1.54%	20	1.90%	16	1.54%	17	1.62%	40	3.85%	5	0.48%
sit. 03	99	9.52%	98	9.32%	81	7.79%	97	9.22%	73	7.02%	47	4.47%	2	0.19%	0	0.00%
sit. 04	68	6.54%	47	4.47%	68	6.54%	47	4.47%	38	3.65%	19	1.81%	0	0.00%	1	0.10%
sit. 05	88	8.46%	73	6.94%	83	7.98%	72	6.84%	43	4.13%	47	4.47%	1	0.10%	0	0.00%
sit. 06	71	6.83%	79	7.51%	36	3.46%	66	6.27%	49	4.71%	54	5.13%	19	1.83%	6	0.57%
sit. 07	74	7.12%	72	6.84%	56	5.38%	71	6.75%	53	5.10%	37	3.52%	8	0.77%	1	0.10%
sit. 08	50	4.81%	83	7.89%	36	3.46%	78	7.41%	27	2.60%	25	2.38%	2	0.19%	2	0.19%
sit. 09	67	6.44%	58	5.51%	40	3.85%	55	5.23%	44	4.23%	30	2.85%	13	1.25%	3	0.29%
sit. 10	57	5.48%	76	7.22%	44	4.23%	76	7.22%	34	3.27%	31	2.95%	5	0.48%	0	0.00%
sit. 11	83	7.98%	99	9.41%	25	2.40%	96	9.13%	74	7.12%	75	7.13%	30	2.88%	3	0.29%
sit. 12	61	5.87%	90	8.56%	45	4.33%	88	8.37%	48	4.62%	47	4.47%	3	0.29%	0	0.00%

Table 11. Overall distribution of internal modifiers by situation and by language group.

Note: The number of Syrian said requests is 1040 and the British said requests is 1052.

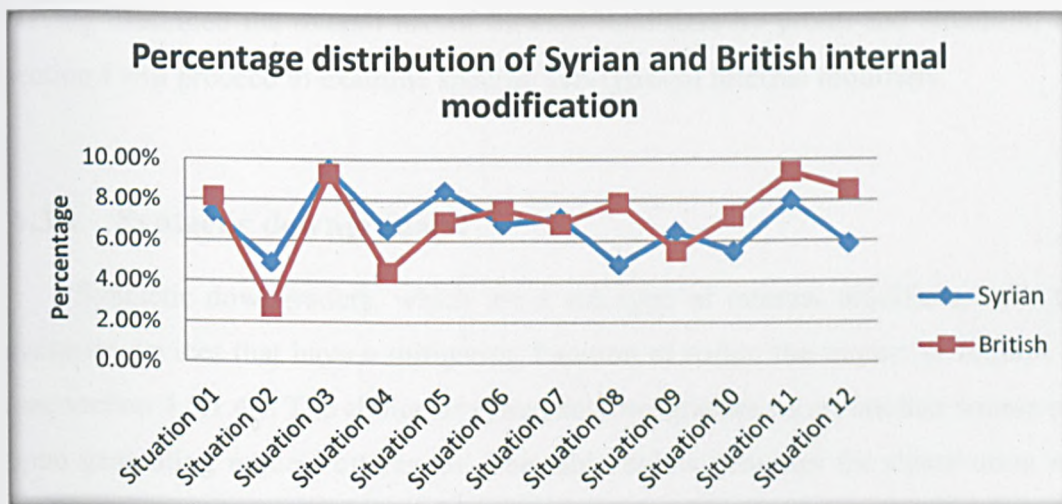


Figure 41. Percentage distribution of Syrian and British internal modification across the twelve situations.

Figure 41 above illustrates both inter-group and cross-situation variation of internal modifiers between the two groups of subjects. The British participants used relatively more

internal modifiers in most of the situations except for situation 2 (street), 4 (lift), 5 (phone) where the speaker is unfamiliar with his addressee. Syrian speakers in these situations maintained higher percentages of internal modification. This reflects Syrians' tendency to use more internal modification in requesting from unfamiliar addressees.

Keeping this general pattern in mind, the focus will next be on each group's internal modification distribution by situation. Concerning the British group, the percentage distribution shows that situations 1 (kitchen), 3 (notes), 11 (photocopy) elicited higher percentages of internal modification in comparison to the rest of the situations. In contrast, situations 2 (street) and 4 (lift) elicited the least percentages of internal modifiers. Unlike the Syrian group, the British subjects used more internal modifiers in situations of familiarity between interlocutors and less internal modifiers in situations of unfamiliarity between interlocutors. As for the Syrian group, their data distribution demonstrates that situation 3 (notes) witnessed the peak percentage of internal modifiers, whereas situation 8 (presentation) had the least percentage. This trend can be explained in the light of the power variable that plays an important role behind Syrians' choices of internal modifiers. In situation 3 (notes) there is no power differential and that is why Syrian speakers tend to employ more internal modifiers. On the contrary, in situation 8 (presentation) the speaker is a university lecturer who has institutional power over their students and in this context the use of internal modifiers to hedge the influence of the request is kept to the minimum.

Having examined the overall use of internal modifiers by group and situation, in the next section I will proceed to examine specific sub-types of internal modifiers.

6.3.2. Syntactic downgraders:

Syntactic downgraders, which are a sub-type of internal modifiers, refer to optional syntactic devices that have a mitigating function to soften the impact of request illocutions (see section 4.5.1.4.). The choice of syntactic downgraders forms another source of variation upon generating request utterances. The table below provides the distribution of both the Syrian and British syntactic downgraders in all the situations.

Table 12 below shows that the Syrians and British use syntactic downgraders in different proportions. The British appear to employ a much higher percentage of syntactic devices than the Syrians do (SY 55.29% vs. BR 80.13%). In other words, the great majority of

British participants mitigate the force of their request head acts by means of syntactic downgraders.

Syntactic Downgraders	Syrian		British	
	No.	Per.	No.	Per.
Interrogative	394	37.88%	639	60.74%
Negation of preparatory condition	0	0.00%	24	2.28%
Subjunctive	77	7.40%	14	1.33%
Conditional	48	4.62%	30	2.85%
Aspect	0	0.00%	16	1.52%
Tense	0	0.00%	10	0.95%
Combination	56	5.38%	110	10.46%
Total number of syntactic downgraders	575	55.29%	843	80.13%
Total number of said requests	1040		1052	

Table 12. Overall distribution of syntactic downgraders by language group in all situations combined.

Furthermore, the British used a variety of all the syntactic downgraders listed in the coding scheme, whereas the Syrians limited their uses of syntactic devices to the interrogative, subjunctive, conditional categories and some combinations. It should be noted that the *interrogative* sub-type of syntactic downgraders was the most popular one used across the two language groups. However, the British maintained much higher percentages of *interrogatives* when compared with their Syrian peers (SY 37.88% vs. BR 60.74%). One could also notice that the *tense* subcategory proved to be the least favoured type of syntactic modifiers for both the Syrians and British.

“Excuse me, no parking here, *you’ll have to move* on I’m afraid.” (*Tense*) (Female British participant)

“*Would you mind* clearing up your stuff from last night?” (*Interrogative*) (Female British participant)

“مرحبا، ممكن استعير محاضرتك لأنني ما حضرتها مشان الله؟”

“marHaba, *mumken* ista’iir muHaaDartak la’inni maa HDirta mšaan aLLa?”

“Hello, *can I* borrow your lecture notes since I did not attend the lecture, for God’s sake (please)?” (*Interrogative*) (Male Syrian participant)

6.3.3. Lexical and phrasal downgraders:

Lexical downgraders are a sub-type of internal modifiers. They are optional lexical and phrasal devices to soften the impositive force of request illocutions (see section 4.4.5.1.5). They include elements such as *politeness markers, understaters, hedges, cajolers* and so forth. Table 13 below provides the distribution of lexical and phrasal downgraders used by each language group under study for all situations combined.

Lexical Downgraders	Syrian		British	
	No.	Per.	No.	Per.
Politeness marker	397	38.17%	289	27.47%
Understater	23	2.21%	37	3.52%
Hedge	2	0.19%	5	0.48%
Subjectivizer	3	0.29%	42	3.99%
Downtoner	57	5.48%	13	1.24%
Cajoler	5	0.48%	0	0.00%
Appealer	19	1.83%	44	4.18%
God wish	3	0.29%	0	0.00%
Combination	40	3.85%	53	5.04%
Total number of lexical downgraders	549	52.79%	483	45.91%
Total number of said requests	1040		1052	

Table 13. Overall distribution of lexical and phrasal modifiers by language group in all situations combined.

Chi-square test results indicated in table 10 (see section 6.2) suggest that there is a statistically significant difference between the Syrian and the British in their use of lexical and phrasal downgraders ($\chi^2 = 11.38$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$). Unlike table 12, table 13 shows that Syrian subjects appear to have a higher percentage of lexical and phrasal downgraders (SY 52% vs. BR 45.91%). It further illustrates that out of all possible categories of lexical and phrasal downgraders, only *politeness markers* have been extensively used by both groups of subjects. The difference lies in the fact that Syrians tend to use more *politeness markers* than the British (SY 38% vs. BR 27.47%). A new lexical downgrader designated

as *God wish* emerged in the Syrian data. However, its frequency of use is too low to show any trends.

Looking in more detail at each group's performance, one can notice that there is a cross-category variation in both the Syrian and the British data. That is, with regards to the Syrian data, *politeness markers* account for 38.17% of the data, *downtoners* account for only 5.48 %, *combinations* account for 3.85%, and *understaters* account for 2.21%. Percentages of the rest of Syrian lexical and phrasal downgraders are very low. Concerning the British data, *politeness markers* account for 27.47%, combinations account only for 5.04%, *appealers* account for 4.18%, subjectivizers account for 3.99%, understaters account for 3.52%. Percentages of the rest of the British lexical and phrasal downgraders were very small. Here are some examples from the questionnaire data in order to illustrate the use of common lexical and phrasal downgraders across both language groups such as *politeness markers* and *combinations*:

"دكتور، لو سمحت ممكن آخر حلقة البحث لبكرة؟ لأنو مبارح صار عندي ظرف طارئ."

"diktoor, *law samaHit* mumken axxer Halaqet il-baHis la-bukra? la-inno mbaareH Saar 'andi Zarif Taare'."

"Dr, *please* can I postpone the seminar paper till tomorrow because I've had an emergency situation?" (*Politeness marker*) (Female Syrian Participant)

"Can you *please* clean up after yourself?" (*Politeness marker*) (Female British participant)

"فلانة، إذا ما فيها إخراج، ممكن تساويلنا فنجانين قهوة من بعد إنك؟"

"flaane, *iza maa fiha iHraaj*, mumken tsaawiilna finjaaneen ahwe *min ba'id iznek*?"

"[to female addressee], *if there is no embarrassment*, could you prepare us two cups of coffee, *after your permission*?" (*Combination*) (Male Syrian Participant)

"Would you mind tidying up in here *a bit, please*? It's gross!" (*Combination*) (Female British participant)

6.3.4. Upgraders:

Upgraders are the request's head internal elements the speaker uses to intensify the force of the request illocution (see section 4.4.5.1.6). Another source of variation in the formulation of requests lies in the choices speakers make with respect to upgraders. This section deals with the analysis of upgraders for all situations combined. Table 14 below introduces the frequency distribution of upgraders used by each group.

Upgraders	Syrian		British	
	No.	Per.	No.	Per.
Intensifier	4	0.38%	2	0.19%
Commitment indicator	11	1.06%	5	0.48%
Expletive	0	0.00%	2	0.19%
Time intensifier	48	4.62%	10	0.95%
Lexical uptoner	26	2.50%	31	2.95%
Determination marker	2	0.19%	0	0.00%
Repetition of request	11	1.06%	0	0.00%
Orthographic/suprasegmental emphasis	27	2.60%	0	0.00%
Emphatic addition	11	1.06%	0	0.00%
Pejorative determiner	5	0.48%	6	0.57%
Combination	7	0.67%	3	0.29%
Total number of upgraders	152	14.62%	59	5.61%
Total number of said requests	1040		1052	

Table 14. Overall distribution of upgraders by language group in all situations combined.

Table 10 (see section 6.2) indicating the results of the Chi-square test of independence shows that there is a significant statistical difference between the Syrian and British group in both the choices and percentage distribution of upgraders in all situations combined ($\chi^2 = 125.4$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$). Concerning the overall frequency of upgraders by language group, table 10 presents a wide variation between the British and Syrian data. The Syrian group appears to have a significantly higher frequency of upgraders than their British counterparts (SY 14.62% vs. BR 5.61%). This is interesting because the British group also used much lower frequencies of lexical and phrasal downgraders.

It is also worth noting that the Syrian participants reflected a tendency towards using a wider variety of sub-types of upgraders in the course of intensifying their request sequences than their British peers. They varied their choices between *time intensifiers* which had the highest percentage among the Syrian upgraders (4.62%) and *determination markers* which had the least percentage of Syrian upgraders (0.19%). In addition to that, *orthographic/suprasegmental emphasis* account for (2.60%) which forms the second highest percentage of Syrian upgraders. *Lexical uptoners* comes next in terms of percentage (2.50%). *Expletives* were the only sub-type of upgraders which the Syrians refrained from using.

"لو سمحتي يا آنسة، صوريلي اهم نقاط الاجتماع و بعيتيلي ياهن على مكتبي بأسرع وقت."

"law samaHti yaa aanse, Sawriili aham ni'aaT il-'ijtimaa° wi b°atiili yaahon °ala maktabi bi'asra° wa 'it."

"Please Miss, photocopy the most important minutes of the meeting and send them to my office *as soon as possible*." (*Time intensifier*) (Male Syrian participant)

"ياريت تظفي السيجارة فوراً لأنو التدخين هون ممنوع."

"yaa reet tiTfi il-siigara fawran la-inno il-tadxeen hoon mamnuu°."

"I hope you put that cigarette out *immediately* because smoking is prohibited here." (*Time intensifier*) (Male Syrian participant)

"شو بدك مني؟ وين ما بروح بتلحقني حل عني بقى خلص!"

"šuu biddak minni ween maa bruuH btilHa'ni Hil °anni ba'aa xalaS!"

"What do you want with me? Wherever I go you follow me ... Go away from me and *that's that!* (meaning...*'and stay away!'*)" (*Determination marker*) (Female Syrian participant)

Unlike the Syrian respondents, the British limited their choices to seven sub-types of upgraders, namely *lexical uptoners*, *time intensifiers*, *pejorative determiners*, *commitment indicators*, *combinations* and *intensifiers*. However, most of the British upgraders cluster around *lexical uptoners* (2.95%). In contrast, *expletives* and *intensifiers* are the least used sub-category of British upgraders as they accounted only for (0.19%). Table 14 above also demonstrates that the British did not resort to using the following upgraders, namely *determination markers*, *repetition of request*, *orthographic / suprasegmental emphasis*, and *emphatic addition* for increasing the effect of their requests.

“Hey, could you clean up your *mess* sometime, please?” (*Lexical uptoner*) (Male British participant)

“Stop *pestering* me!” (*Lexical uptoner*) (Female British participant)

“Hey, is it ok if you clean up the kitchen’s *bloody* mess?” (*Expletive*) (Male British participant)

“Hey, the kitchen's a *big* mess; want to help me clean it later?” (*Intensifier*) (Male British participant)

6.4. Analysis of external modification:

6.4.1. Analysis of main external modifiers:

External modifiers or supportive moves are external elements to the request head act (nucleus) that serve to mitigate or aggravate the force of the request illocution. They come either before or after the head act of the request (Edmondson, 1981, Faerch and Kasper, 1989). What is more, external modifiers affect the context in which the request is embedded. Hence, they indirectly adjust the force of the request illocution.

There are two main categories of external modifiers, namely mitigating supportive moves and aggravating supportive moves. A range of various modifiers come under each of these two main categories (see section 4.5.1.7). Subjects upon choosing external modifiers generate another source of variation in the configuration of their requests. The following subsections present an analysis of external modifiers in the Syrian and British data.

6.4.1.1. Analysis of external modifiers for all situations combined:

Following the analysis and the coding scheme of request sequences, occurrences and percentages of external modification main types were calculated for each group. Table 10 (see section 6.2) shows that both subject groups extensively used external modifiers. However, the Syrians used slightly more external modification than the British (SY 76.35% vs. BR 74.62%).

Table 10 (see section 6.2) also demonstrates that most of the Syrians (67.35%) and the British (73.95%) use mitigating supportive moves to modify the effect of the requests they produce. In other words, the great majority of participants soften the force of their request rather than boosting it. As regards the use of aggravating supportive moves, one may conclude that although both language groups did not use aggravating supportive moves very frequently, the Syrians did use them much more extensively than did their British peers (SY 13.37% vs. BR 0.86%) (For further discussion please refer to section 6.4.3.1).

Further, Chi-square statistical tests of independence were carried out in order to identify which of the differences between the two groups are statistically significant. Results in table 10 (see section 6.2) refer to the fact that while there is no statistical significance between the Syrian and British use of mitigating supportive moves ($\chi^2 = 0.1$, $df = 1$, $p > 0.10$), there is a big significant difference in the way the two groups employ aggravating supportive moves ($\chi^2 = 125.3$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$).

Taking these overall results for all situations into account, the next section will look into the distribution of external modifiers by situation and by language group.

6.4.1.2. Analysis of external modifiers by situation and by language group:

Mod. type	Supportive moves				Mitigating supportive moves				Aggravating supportive moves			
	Syrian		British		Syrian		British		Syrian		British	
Language group	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.
Situation	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.	No.	Per.
Sit. 01	86	8.27%	64	6.08%	64	6.15%	62	5.89%	43	4.13%	2	0.19%
Sit. 02	57	5.48%	53	5.04%	6	0.58%	50	4.75%	53	5.10%	4	0.38%
Sit. 03	80	7.69%	70	6.65%	80	7.69%	70	6.65%	1	0.10%	0	0.00%
Sit. 04	50	4.81%	45	4.28%	50	4.81%	45	4.28%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Sit. 05	76	7.31%	79	7.51%	76	7.31%	79	7.51%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Sit. 06	90	8.65%	96	9.13%	79	7.60%	95	9.03%	31	2.98%	2	0.19%
Sit. 07	82	7.88%	83	7.89%	82	7.88%	83	7.89%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Sit. 08	50	4.81%	72	6.84%	50	4.81%	72	6.84%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Sit. 09	83	7.98%	70	6.65%	78	7.50%	69	6.56%	11	1.06%	1	0.10%
Sit.10	70	6.73%	75	7.13%	70	6.73%	75	7.13%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Sit.11	6	0.58%	15	1.43%	6	0.58%	15	1.43%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Sit.12	64	6.15%	63	5.99%	64	6.15%	63	5.99%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

Table 15. Overall distribution of supportive moves by language group by situation.

Note: the number of Syrian said requests is 1040 and the British said requests is 1052.

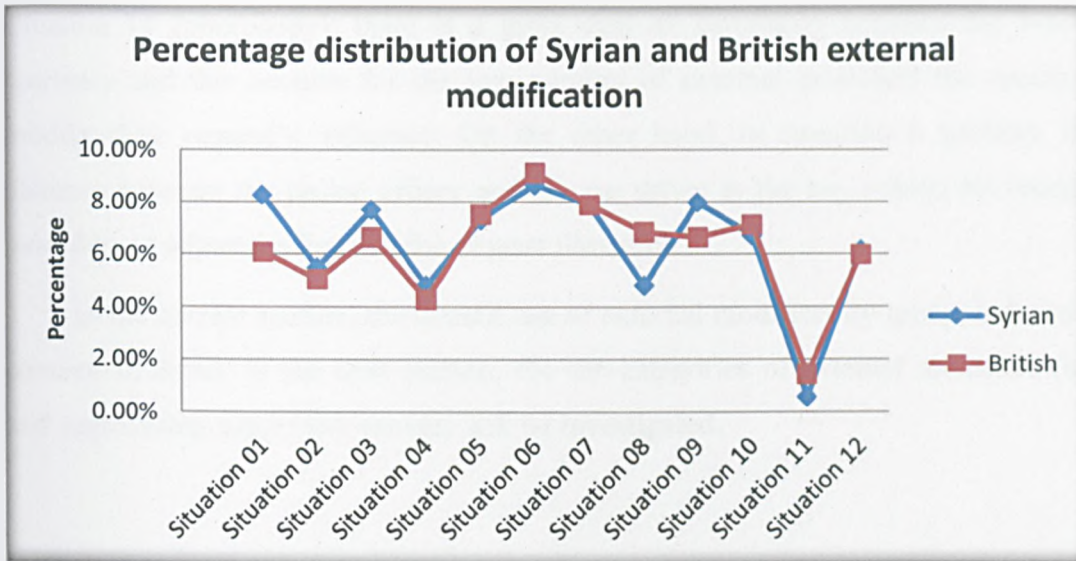


Figure 42. Percentage distribution of Syrian and British external modification across the twelve situations.

Table 15 and figure 42 above indicate inter-group and cross-situation variation of external modifiers between the Syrian and the British respondents. It is clear from figure 42 that both language groups reflected a cross cultural agreement in the percentages of external modifiers they used. However, situations 1 (kitchen) and 8 (presentation) witnessed approximately 2 percentage points disagreement between the two language groups. It was the Syrian group who had a higher percentage of external modifiers in situation 1 (kitchen) rather than the British group. On the contrary, in situation 8, (presentation) it was the British group who used a higher percentage than their Syrian peers. Situation 9 (smoking) witnessed a slight disagreement in the degree to which the two groups under study employed external modifiers.

Having looked at this general pattern, the percentage distribution of the Syrian and British external modifiers will next be discussed. As regards the Syrian data, situation 6 (police) elicited the highest percentage number of external modifiers (8.65%) while situation 11 (photocopy) had the smallest percentage numbers of external modifiers. Similarly, the British group's highest percentage of external modifiers (9.13) was noticed in situation 6 (police), whereas the least percentage number of external modifiers was observed in situation 11 (photocopy). Such a trend can be explained in the light of the familiarity social variable as it represents the key difference between the two situations 6 and 11 for both groups under examination. In both situations, the speaker has the social power to make their request and the size of imposition involved in these situations is quite parallel as well. In

situation 11 (photocopy), there is a great deal of familiarity between the boss and the secretary and this accounts for the low number of external modifiers the speaker uses to modify their request's influence. On the other hand, in situation 6 (police), the social distance between the police officer and the car driver is the key reason for using external modifiers to adjust the force of the request illocution

In the current section, the overall use of external modifiers by group and situation was covered in detail. In the next section, the sub-categories of external modifiers (mitigating and aggravating supportive moves) will be investigated.

6.4.2. Mitigating supportive moves:

Mitigating supportive moves, as was previously explained (see section 4.4.5.1.7), are external elements to the request's head which the speaker uses to hedge and soften the impact of the requests they produce.

The following sections will provide two sets of analysis for mitigating supportive moves; the former is by situation and the latter is by category.

6.4.2.1. Analysis of mitigating supportive moves by situation:

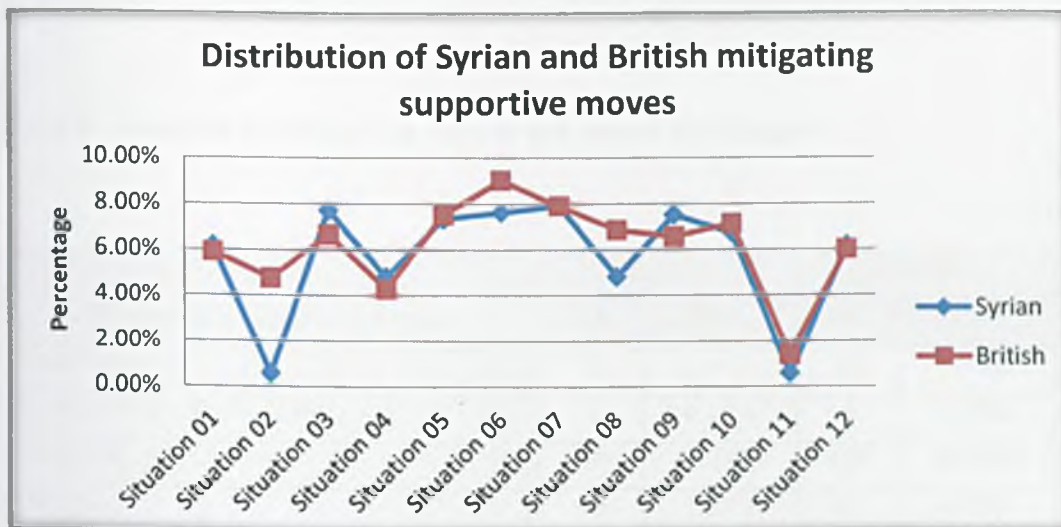


Figure 43. Percentage distribution of Syrian and British mitigating supportive moves across the twelve situations.

From figure 43 above, we notice that there is a general pattern of agreement between Syrian and British speakers except for situation 2 (street), where there was a big divergence

between the subject groups involved. The British maintained a much higher percentage of mitigating supportive moves than the Syrians in this coercive situation (SY 0.58% vs. BR 4.75%). In other words, the British tended to soften the impact of their requests in this particular situation while the Syrians, according to table 11, exhibited a tendency to enhance the effect of their requests. This discrepancy is related to the cultural difference between the Syrian and the British speech communities as well as to the way people in both communities weigh the size of imposition associated with this situation. Situations 6 (police) and 8 (presentation) were perceived to have higher percentages of British mitigating supportive moves rather than Syrian ones: (SY 7.60% vs. BR 9.03%), (SY 4.81% vs. BR 6.84). It seems that unlike the Syrian culture, and in spite of the fact that British respondents have the institutional power to ask their addressees, they still employ considerably higher percentages of mitigating supportive moves to hedge their requests.

Concerning the Syrian data, one should point out the fact that situation 3 (notes) was remarkable for having the highest percentage of mitigating supportive moves (7.69%). On the other side of the spectrum, situation 2 (street) and 11 (photocopy) had the lowest percentage of mitigating supportive moves.

As regards the British data, table 15 above reveals that the highest percentage of mitigating supportive moves was identified in situation 6 (police) (9.03%). In contrast, the lowest percentage of mitigating supportive moves occurred in situation 11 (photocopy) (1.43%).

6.4.2.2. Analysis of mitigating supportive moves by category:

Mitigating supportive moves	Syrian		British	
	No.	Per.	No.	Per.
Preparator	15	1.44%	12	1.14%
Getting a pre-commitment	5	0.48%	5	0.48%
Grounder	426	40.96%	458	43.54%
Disarmer	19	1.83%	51	4.85%
Promise of reward	1	0.10%	1	0.10%
Imposition minimizer	21	2.02%	33	3.14%
Sweetener	14	1.35%	21	2.00%
Offer to help	7	0.67%	0	0.00%
Promise of return	13	1.25%	8	0.76%

Mitigating supportive moves	Syrian		British	
	No.	Per.	No.	Per.
Appreciation/thanks	0	0.00%	1	0.10%
Apology	4	0.38%	0	0.00%
Encouragement	4	0.38%	0	0.00%
Promise of improvement	1	0.10%	0	0.00%
Promise to be the last time	6	0.58%	0	0.00%
Combination	169	16.25%	188	17.87%
Total number of mitigating supportive moves	705	67.79%	778	73.95%
Total number of said requests	1040		1052	

Table 16. Overall distribution of mitigating supportive moves by language group in all situations combined.

Overall, table 16 above demonstrates the distribution of the mitigating supportive moves sub-types in all situations combined. From a closer look at the results indicated, we found that the mitigating external modifier that accounts for most of the Syrian and British data involves *grounders* (SY 40.96% vs. BR 43.54%). The following examples illustrate the uses of *grounders* by the Syrians and British.

“Oh, I would be so grateful if you could make a drink for me, *as the person who does is away at the moment.*” (*Grounder*) (Male British participant)

“أنا مزنونق كثير هالفترة، دخيلك تديني عشرة آلاف ليرة لأنو علي التزامات كثيرة؟”

“*ana maznuu' ktiir hal-fatra, daxiilak tdayyinni ʿašir taalaaf leera la-inno ʿalayyi iltizaamat ktiire?*”

“*I am very tight on money these days, could you please lend 10000 liras since I have many commitments?*” (*Grounder*) (Male Syrian participant)

The *combinations* sub-category in which subject choose to combine one or more mitigating supportive moves appears to have the second highest percentage after *grounders* across both languages (SY 16.25% vs. BR 17.87%). However, there is a slight tendency for the British speakers to mitigate their request using the previously specified sub-categories more than

their Syrian counterparts. Table 16 once again shows that percentages of other types of mitigating supportive moves were very low.

“Hi (name of lecturer), *I have had a really big family problem this week so could I get an extension for my seminar work? I know this is the second time it’s happened and it would not happen again.*” (Combination of a grounder, disarmer and promise of refrain) (Female British participant)

"مرحبا. اذا بتريدي دكتور، و الله انا آسفة بس ظروفي بكل مرة عم تكون ضدي و هي تاني مرة رح اطلب منك انو تأجيلي موعد تسليم حلقة البحث، والله بوعدك انو تكون حلقة البحث ممتازة، بس عطيني وقت."

“marHaba iza bitriidi diktoora, waLLa ana aasfe bas Zuruufi bkil marra °am tkuun Diddi wi hai taani marra raH iTLob minnek inno t°ajliili maw°ed tasliim Halqet il-baHis, waLLa bwi°dek inno tkuun Halqet il-baHis mumtaaze, bas °aTiini wa°it.”

Hello, if you wish (please) Doctor, *I swear by God that I am really sorry but my circumstances are against me every time and this is the second time I have to ask you to postpone the seminar submission date. I swear by God (really) promise you that the seminar paper will be excellent, just give me more time.*” (Combination of an apology, grounder, disarmer and promise of improvement) (Female Syrian participant)

In the end, what is worth noting is that the Syrian group was distinguished for using all sub-categories of mitigating supportive moves except the *appreciation/thanks* category which was exclusively used by the British, whereas the latter limited their uses to *preparator, getting a pre-commitment, grounder, disarmer, promise of reward, imposition minimiser, sweetener, promise of return, and appreciation/thanks* categories which form two thirds of the total types of mitigating supportive moves. Some of these sub-categories newly emerged in my data and were not available in Blum-Kulka et al.’s (1989) coding scheme particularly the Syrian Arabic data which was rich with new mitigating supportive moves (please refer to section 4.5.1.7 for further details). This explains why the Syrian group used all the mitigating sub-categories of external modifiers.

The following request utterance sets a good example of the use of *appreciation* by the British subjects:

“Would you be able to do the presentation a week early, *it would be greatly appreciated.*” (*Appreciation*) (Female British participant)

6.4.3. Aggravating supportive moves:

Aggravating supportive moves are external elements to the request’s head. Speakers use these elements to promote the pragmatic force of the request’s illocution. In the current study these items will be analysed at two levels, namely by situation and by category group.

6.4.3.1. Analysis of aggravating supportive moves by situation:

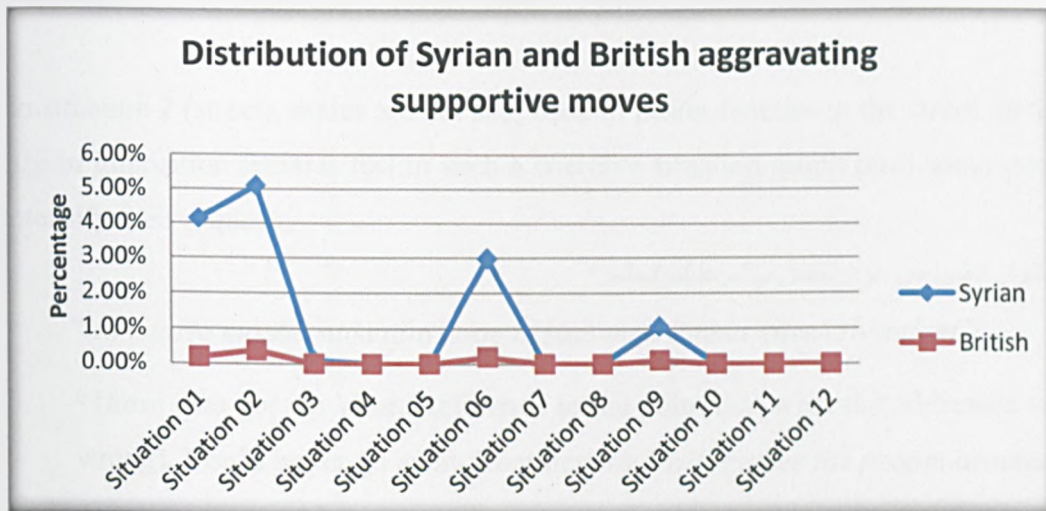


Figure 44. Percentage distribution of Syrian and British aggravating supportive moves across the twelve situations.

Results of Chi-square statistical test for significance displayed in table 10 (see section 6.2) reveal that there is a significant difference in the way the Syrian and the British subjects use aggravating supportive moves ($\chi^2 = 125.3$, $df=1$, $p < 0.001$). As is shown in figure 44, the British participants did not make use of many aggravating supportive moves modifiers in situations 1 (Kitchen), 2 (street), 6 (police), 9 (smoking) while, on the other hand, the Syrian participants tended to extensively use such modifiers in these situations in comparison with their British counterparts. Table 15 demonstrates that the percentage distribution for using these aggravating supportive moves by both groups was (SY 4.13% vs. BR 0.19%), (SY 5.10% vs. BR 0.38%), (SY 2.98% vs. BR 0.19%), (SY 1.06% vs. BR 0.10%) respectively. Syrian subjects, in the specified situations, relied on external rules whether social or institutional which are supposed to control the interlocutors’ behaviour in

the given situations. Accordingly, their addressee is expected to adhere to such rules so that in case of any violation, speakers consider that they not only have the right to ask their addressees to abide by the rules but can also use aggravating supportive moves to enhance their requests. This fact was the key motivation behind choices of the aggravating supportive moves used. For example, in situation 1 (kitchen) the social rule for sharing a house with other people is to respect the rule of cleanliness and good hygiene.

"النظافة من الإيمان . شو رأيك تقومي بتنظيف المطبخ مثل ما وسختيه مبارح؟"

"*il-naDaafe min il-iimaan. šuu ra'yek t'uumi tnaDfi il-maTbax mitil maa wassaxtii mbaareH?*"

"*Cleanliness is next to godliness, how about cleaning up the kitchen as it was you who made it dirty yesterday?*" (*Moralising*) (Female Syrian participant)

In situation 2 (street), males are not supposed to pester females in the street. In addition, the size of imposition females feel in such a coercive situation might push some respondents to intensify their requests.

"اللى استحووا ماتوا. امشي من هون أحسن ما لم عليك العالم."

"*illi istaHu maatu, imši min hoon aHsan maa limma 'aleek il-'aalam.*"

"*Those who got shy died* (Reference to the point that what the addressee was doing is wrong). You'd better go away from here *or I will gather the people around you* (I will get you into trouble, i.e. I will cause you public embarrassment.)" (*Combination of moralising and a threat*) (Female Syrian participant)

In situations 6 (police) and 9 (smoking), it is the institutional law of traffic or health standards in public places the individuals are expected to follow. Therefore, some speakers exhibited some inclination toward employing aggravating supportive moves.

"يا أخي، اركب سيارتك و غير مكانها لأنو مكانها غير مسموح بالوقوف و إلا و الله بخالفك."

"*yaa axi rkaab sayyaartak wi Xayyer makaana la-inno makaana Xeer masmuuH bil-wu'uuf wa illa waLLahi bxaalfak.*"

"*Brother, get in your car and change its place because you are not allowed to park there . Otherwise I swear I will fine you.*" (*Threat*) (Male Syrian participant)

"أخي، مو شايف الإعلان؟ لا تدخن و الله فتصنا."

"axi muu šaayef il-i'laan? Laa tdaxxen waLLahi fTiSna."

"Brother, *can't you see the sign?* Stop smoking I swear we are almost perished. (this is really very annoying.)" (*Rhetorical question*) (Female Syrian participant)

6.4.3.2. Analysis of aggravating supportive moves by category:

Aggravating supportive moves	Syrian		British	
	No.	Per.	No.	Per.
Insult	24	2.31%	1	0.10%
Threat	34	3.27%	6	0.57%
Moralizing	36	3.46%	2	0.19%
Rhetorical question	10	0.96%	0	0.00%
Additional imperative	2	0.19%	0	0.00%
Combination	33	3.17%	0	0.00%
Total number of aggravating supportive Moves	139	13.37%	9	0.86%
Total number of said requests	1040		1052	

Table 17. Overall distribution of aggravating supportive moves by language group in all situations combined.

Having a quick glance at table 17 above, we see that the aggravating supportive move that accounts for most of the British data involves *threats*. However, it seems that the Syrians use *threats* in their requests much more than their British peers (SY 3.27% vs. BR 0.57%).

"خلص! بدك تضل تلاحتني بدي جبلك اخوي يكسر راسك."

"xalaS biddak DDal tlaaHi'ni biddi jiblak axwyi ykasser raasak."

"Stop it! If you keep following me, *I will get my brother to smash your head.*" (*Threat*) (Female Syrian participant)

On the other side of the spectrum, *moralising* appears to be the aggravating supportive move that accounts for most of the Syrian data (SY 3.46% vs. BR 0.19%).

"هي انت، عيب عليك شو ما عندك أخوات بنات تخاف عليهن؟ حل عني بقى."

"hey inte 'eeb 'aleek šuu maa 'andak ixwaat banaat txaaf 'aleehon? Hil 'anni ba'a."

"Hey you, shame on you, *don't you have sisters you care about?* Leave me alone!"

(Moralising) (Female Syrian participant)

Another interesting point to raise is that Syrian participants heavily used all the aggravating supportive moves described in the coding scheme and more often combined more than one aggravating supportive moves for boosting their requests. The discussion in the previous section provides us with insights that explain the higher frequencies of aggravating supportive moves in the Syrian data.

"شو هالشرشحة يللي تاركينها بالمطبخ مبارح؟ و الله عيب عليكم يعني العنزة بتتضف تحتها قبل ما تقعد. قوموا نضفوا عالسريع."

"šuu hal-šaršaHa yalli taarkiina bil-maTbax mbaareH? waLLa 'eeb 'aleekon ya'ni il-'anze bitnaDDef taHta abil maa ti'od uumu naDfu 'al-sarii."

"*What's that mess you left behind in the kitchen yesterday? I swear it is a shame on you. I mean even the goat cleans after itself before it settles down. Go clean quickly.*"

(Combination of rhetorical question and moralising) (Male Syrian participant)

We should also note the Syrians' exclusive usage of two new categories that were not already established in Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) coding scheme, which are: *rhetorical questions* and *additional imperatives* (please refer to section 4.4.5.1.7 for further details).

"يعني يا فلان روح و شوف المطبخ هلق هاد منظر مطبخ بني آمين؟ نظف دخيل الله!"

"ya'ni yaa flaan ruuH wi šuuf il-maTbax halla' haada manZar maTbax bani aadmiin? naDDef daxiil aLLa!"

"[male addressee], I mean to say, go and check the kitchen... *does it look like a human being's kitchen?* Clean it, for God's sake!" (Rhetorical question) (Female Syrian participant)

"حرك السيارة من هادا المكان لأنك إذا بقيت رح تعمل عجة هون ولا عد توقف هون مرة ثانية!"

“Harrek il-sayyara min haada il-makaan la-innak iza b’iit raH ta’mel ‘aj’a hoon, *wi laa ‘ad twa’ef hoon marra taanye!*”

“Move the car from this place because if you stay you will be blocking the traffic, and *do not park here again!*” (*Additional imperative*) (Male Syrian participant)

6.5. Alerters:

An alerter is an opening element which the speaker uses to alert the attention of their hearer to the following speech act (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 277). Alerters also indicate the level of distance between interlocutors. They could also be taken to be expressions of linguistic politeness because, according to Gu (1990: 249), the inappropriate use of these terms might be taken as a marker of impoliteness. Blum-Kulka et al. classify alerters into 8 sub-categories: *roles/titles, first names, nicknames, endearment terms, offensive terms, pronouns, attention getters, and combinations*. However, participants in this study used some extra alerters that were not specified in Blum-Kulka et al.’s coding scheme like *greetings* and *God wishes*. Participants used these new terms strategically to fulfil more polite and stronger pragmatic acts.

Alerters	Syrian 1040 requests		British 1052 requests	
	No.	Per.	No.	Per.
Role/title	72	6.92%	8	0.76%
First name	45	4.33%	30	2.85%
Nickname	6	0.58%	0	0.00%
Endearment term	62	5.96%	19	1.81%
Offensive term	5	0.48%	2	0.19%
Pronoun	1	0.10%	2	0.19%
Attention getter	264	25.38%	160	15.21%
God wish	11	1.06%	0	0.00%
Greeting	98	9.42%	147	13.97%
Combination	88	8.46%	75	7.13%
Total number of alerters	652	62.69%	443	42.11%
Total number of said requests	1040		1052	

Table 18. Percentage distribution of Alerters by language group in all situations combined.

In table 18, it is clear that Syrian participants use more alerters than the British group (SY 62.69% vs. BR 42.11%). Table 18 also shows that both the Syrians and British reflected a cross-cultural similarity in their interest in using *attention getters* as the most common way to attract their hearers' attention (SY 25.38% vs. BR 15.21%).

"Excuse me, I'm in a hurry, bye." (*Attention getter*) (Female British participant)

"Hey, can I grab the notes for last lecture?" (*Attention getter*) (Male British participant)

"عفوا، إذا ما في إز عاج فيني استعير دفترك اليوم؟"

"afwan, iza maa fiiha iz'aaaj fiini ista'iir daftarak il-yoom?"

"Excuse me, if this does not bother you, could I borrow your notebook today?"

(*Attention getter*) (Male Syrian participant)

Greetings had the second highest percentages across both groups' data (SY 9.42% vs. BR 13.97%). It is not clear how Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) would analyse greetings in their data. It is possible that either they did not have any *greetings* in their data or that would have been included as attention getters. However, in the current study, I believe that they should be treated separately and labelled as *greetings* because speakers in both languages used *greetings* not only to attract their addressee's attention but also as to render the request speech act more polite and establish some common ground with their addressees.

"Hello there, I'm ringing about the job you've advertised. I was wondering if you could give me a bit more information." (Male British participant)

"السلام عليكم، رايحين عالحرارة؟ إذا ما فيها سنلة ممكن توصلوني على طريقكن؟"

"assalaamu alaykum, raayHiin alHaara? iza maa fiiha si'le mumken twaSluuni ala Tarii'kun?"

"Peace be upon you, are you going to our home street? If this does not bother you, could you take me with you on your way home?" (Male Syrian participant)

"يسعدني صباحك! فينا نعرف شو الشروط و الأوراق المطلوبة و المؤهلات اللازم تكون في الشخص المتقدم و قديش في معنا وقت؟ أو كي شكراً إلك."

"*yis'idli SabaaHak! fiina na'eref šuu il-šuruuT wil awraaq il-maTluube wi il-mu'ahhilaat il-lazem tkuun fil-šaxis il-mit'addem wi addeš fii ma'na wa'it? ookee šukran 'ilak.*"

"*Have a nice morning! Could you tell us what are the required papers, conditions, and prerequisites for the job and how much time do we still have to apply? Ok, thank you.*"
(Greeting) (Male Syrian participant)

The third highest percentage of alerter types across both language groups was for using *Combinations* (SY 8.46 % vs. BR 7.13%).

"*Sorry mate, but there's no parking allowed here, I'm going to have to ask you to move.*"(Male British participant)

"*Hi Janet, could you photocopy these minutes from the last meeting? Thanks.*"
(Combination of greeting and a first name) (Female British participant)

"كيفك معلم؟ حضرت المحاضرة الماضية؟ و الله أنا كنت غايب لهيك حابب اسالك عنها."

"*kiifak m'ellem? HDirit il-muHaaDara il-maaDye? waLLa ana kint Xaayeb la-heek Haabeb is'alak 'anha.*"

"*How are you mate? Did you attend the last lecture? I swear I was absent and that is why I would like to ask you about it.*" (Combination of greeting and a kinship or endearment term) (Male Syrian participant)

"من فضلك يا استاذ، ممكن أعطيك حلقة البحث بوقت تاني؟"

"*min faDlak istaaz, mumken a'Tiik Halaqet il-baHis biwa'it taani?*"

"*Excuse me teacher, can I give you the seminar paper another time?*" (Combination of attention getter and a role or title) (Female Syrian participant)

As far as differences are concerned, it is clear that the Syrians showed a variation in using a wide range of alerter types unlike their British peers. The *nicknames* and *God wishes* were exclusively used by the Syrians and their percentage distribution was (SY 1.06% vs. BR 0%), (SY 0.58% vs. BR 0%) respectively.

"أبو علي ، إلك و لا للديب؟ متل ما كان المطبخ رجعو مشان الله! قاعدين لحالنا بالبيت و ما في سرلينكية تنضف و رانا."

"*abu 'ali ilak walla laddiib? mitil maa kaan il-maTbax raj'o mšaan aLLa! aa'diin laHaalna bil-beet wi maa fi siralankiye tnaDDef waraana.*"

"*Ali's dad, for you or for the wolf? Tidy up the kitchen again as it was before, for God's sake! We live on our own in the house, and there is no maid or anyone to clean up after us.*" (*Nickname*) (Male Syrian participant)

"رورو، بعتيلى عشر آلاف ليرة بسرعة أنا كثير مدايقة."

"*ruru, b'atiili 'ašir taalaaf leera ana ktiir midday'a.*"

"*Ruru, send me 1000 liras quickly, I am in a real need.*" (*Nickname*) (Female Syrian participant)

"الله يوفقك ، عطيني المحاضرة اللي راحت عليي."

"*aLLa ywaf'ak, 'aTiini il-muHaaDara illi raaHet 'alayyi.*"

"*God grant you success, give me the lecture that I missed.*" (*God wish*) (Female Syrian participant)

"يعطيك العافية، بدي اسأل عن إعلان انتو حاطينوا بالجريدة."

"*ya'Tiik il-'aafye bididi is'al 'an i'laan into HaaTTiino bil-jariide.*"

"*God give you good health, I want to ask you about an advertisement you put in the newspaper.*" (*God wish*) (Female Syrian participant)

6.6. Summary and conclusion:

Chapter Six has reported the analyses of internal and external modification in Syrian Arabic and British English. The first section of the analysis, which was concerned with internal modification, is divided into two phases. The first phase is devoted to the analysis of the main types of internal modification. It looked at the overall distribution of main types of internal modifiers in all the situations combined in order to provide us with an overview, showing that there are significant statistical differences between the two groups in their choices of all main types of internal modification. Next, the main types of internal modifiers were analysed by language group and by situation in order to explore patterns of internal modification at the situation level and cross-situation variation of internal modifiers between the two groups of subjects. The second phase of analyses was carried out for specific sub-categories of internal modifiers, including syntactic downgraders, lexical and phrasal downgraders, and upgraders. With regards to syntactic modification, the analyses showed that the British group used syntactic modifiers more extensively than the Syrian group and that *interrogatives* stand out as the most frequently used syntactic modifier. With respect to lexical and phrasal downgraders, the analysis showed that contrary to syntactic downgraders, it was the Syrian group which used lexical and phrasal modifiers with higher frequencies. Further, *politeness markers* predominated in both groups' data. Finally, the analysis of upgraders showed that the Syrian group's use of upgraders significantly outnumbered those of the British one. Moreover, *time intensifiers* proved to be the favoured upgraders' type used by the Syrians, whereas *lexical uptoners* were predominant in the British data.

The second section of the analysis is concerned with external modification and is divided into two phases. The first phase deals with analysis of the overall distribution of the main types of external modifiers both in all situations combined and next by language group and situation. The analysis revealed that the overall use of mitigating supportive moves for all situations combined showed no significant inter-group differences. On the other hand, the overall distribution of aggravating supportive moves reflects a significant divergence between both groups. The second phase of the analysis is dedicated to looking at the sub-types of external modifiers, namely mitigating supportive moves and aggravating supportive moves. In relation to the former, the two groups were found to be largely similar in their performance. In line with other studies (Kasper 1981, Faerch and Kasper 1989), *grounders*

were found to be the most extensively used mitigating supportive move. Faerch and Kasper (1989: 239) explain that providing a reason for an action implies an 'empathetic attitude' on the part of the speaker to give their motives behind the action, and is thus 'an efficient mitigating strategy'. As for aggravating supportive moves, the analysis strikingly suggests a significant difference between Syrian Arabic and British English. While *threats* appear to be the predominant aggravating supportive move in the British data, *moralising* and *threats* account for most of the Syrian data. However, the Syrian used higher frequencies of *threats* than their British peers did (see section 6.4.3.2).

Finally, the last section looks into the alerters' distribution in the respondents' data. Results indicate that *attention getters* are the most popular alerter type across both languages.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION AND POLITENESS ORIENTATION

7.1. Introduction:

The present study involves an attempt to examine the universality of Brown and Levinson's theory (1987) and it addresses the following broad questions:

- 1- What similarities and differences are there between the Syrian and British requests in strategy and modification preferences?
- 2- What is the validity of Brown and Levinson's categorization in relation to the Syrian Arabic and British English cultures?
- 3- What contextual constraints influence the choice of request components?

In order to answer these research questions, data were collected from the two groups of subjects, namely British English and Syrian Arabic speakers. Upon collecting a database of request sequences from both groups, each request utterance was analysed according to strategy selection, internal modifiers, supportive moves, and alerters or terms of address, and the group performances were compared and contrasted. A summary of the main findings of this study will be presented before the general discussion.

Based on the observations made throughout the previous chapters, this chapter sets out to discuss in detail:

- 1- The requesting strategies employed and modification types selected by Syrian and British subjects and the categorization of the Syrian and the British cultures from the perspective of strategy and modification selection.
- 2- The politeness orientation or direction that operates in each of the cultures under study.
- 3- The relationships between the contextual parameters involved in a request situation and the choice of requesting strategies and modification.

7.2. Main findings:

This section presents a summary of the main findings from the data analysis reported in Chapters Five and Six. First, findings related to requesting strategies will be introduced.

Then, results concerning modification types used in request sequences including internal modification, external modification and alerters will be reviewed.

7.2.1. Requesting strategies:

Requesting strategies were analysed at two levels. The first level involved the analysis of requesting strategies by situation (see section 5.2), whereas the second level involved an overall analysis of both the main types and sub-types of strategies across all the situations. Concerning the first level of analysis, the results suggested that the Syrian and British group exhibited significant differences in their choices of main strategies across all situations excluding situation 7 (extension). As for the second level of analysis, results suggested that both the Syrian and British requesting strategies relied heavily on conventionally indirect strategies. However, Syrians were significantly more direct than the British, whereas the British were significantly more conventionally indirect than their Syrian peers.

7.2.2. Internal modifiers:

Overall, the analysis of internal modifiers suggested that although both subject groups differ significantly in their use of internal modifiers, syntactic downgraders were the predominant type of internal modification across both groups' requests while upgraders were the least used type of internal modification across both languages. The British subjects proved to use syntactic downgraders more extensively than the Syrians, particularly the *interrogative* type, which was favoured by both language speakers. With respect to lexical and phrasal downgraders, Syrian subjects employed higher frequencies of them in comparison to their British peers. Likewise the *interrogative*, *politeness markers* appeared in both groups' requests. Although upgraders were the least popular form of modification, the analysis indicated that the Syrian group used significantly more of these elements than the British group. Both groups displayed variation with regards the type of upgraders they favour. While Syrians mainly used *time intensifiers* to aggravate the force of their requests, Britons primarily used *lexical uptoners* to serve the very same purpose.

7.2.3. External Modifiers:

External modifiers were analysed at two levels. The first level which deals with the analysis of the overall incidence of external modifiers suggested no significant differences between Syrians and Britons regarding their use of mitigating supportive moves. On the

other hand, the data analysis revealed significant differences in the way both groups used aggravating supportive moves. It appears that Syrian subjects used significantly more aggravating supportive moves than their British counterparts. The second level of analysis focuses on the examination of the sub-types of mitigating and aggravating supportive moves employed by the Syrian and British respondents. Both groups demonstrated a cross-cultural similarity in their extensive use of *grounders* as a popular mitigating supportive move; and a cross-cultural disparity upon using aggravating supportive moves. The Syrian group tended to use *moralising* and *threats* in their requests, while the British mainly employed *threats*.

7.2.4. Alerters:

The analysis of alerters in this study, which is in line with the findings of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), confirms that *attention getters* are commonly selected by speakers in both languages under study in order to attract the hearer's attention to the following request.

7.3. The choice of requesting strategies and modification:

In this section, the main focus will be on discussing the choices of requesting strategies and modification types employed by the Syrian and British respondents. In the light of this analysis, the aim is to relate the findings to existing literature, provide potential explanations for the choices made by each group, and on that basis, consider the validity of Brown and Levinson's categorisation for requests.

7.3.1. Strategy selection:

The results of request strategies presented in Chapter Five seem to partially support the claim that the three main levels of requesting strategies, namely the direct, conventionally indirect, non-conventionally indirect are manifested universally (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Olshtain and Blum-Kulka, 1985; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

7.3.1.1. Direct strategies:

The analysis of the data for the main requesting strategies shows that there were significant differences in the choice of direct requesting strategies by the Syrian and the

British subjects. The Syrian group used significantly more direct strategies than their British peers. Indeed, table 9 (see section 5.4) showed that 23% of the Syrian requests are accounted for by the direct strategy. In contrast, only 9% of the British requests fall into this category. Moreover, the analysis of the direct strategies (see section 5.3.1.) indicates that the *mood derivable* strategies are the most predominant type of the direct strategies used by both subject groups across all twelve situations. In other words, *mood derivables* are the most popular direct sub-strategy.

Further, the results in table 7 (see section 5.2) indicate that the Syrians used more direct strategies than the British respondents in ten situations out of twelve as follows: Situation 1 (kitchen), 2 (street), 3 (notes), 4 (lift), 5 (phone), 6 (police), 7 (extension), 10 (money), 11 (photocopy), 12 (coffee). However, situations 1 (kitchen), 6 (police) and 11 (photocopy), in particular, received much higher percentages of direct strategies from the Syrian participants; whereas situation 4 (lift) received the least percentage of direct strategies because of the high imposition associated with that particular situation and the social distance between the interactants involved.

What seems to account for Syrians' preference to employ direct strategies could be particularly attributable to the social variables of power or distance involved in particular situations and the perceived rights of the participants. As for situation 1 (kitchen), 10 (money) and 12 (coffee), the social variable of familiarity involved in these situations might explain the Syrians' choice of direct strategies. In spite of the high imposition involved in these situations, the Syrian participants chose the most direct strategies to perform their requests because of their familiarity with their addressee. In situation 3 (notes) as well, the Syrians chose a very direct level for formulating their requests. These findings are in line with those of Eslamirasekh (1993) who works on Persian. She notes that direct speech acts emphasize in-group membership and solidarity and develop from the value of group orientation in Iranian culture.

With regards to situations 6 (police) and 11 (photocopy), the type of institutional power the speaker has over their addressee is the key point underlying the Syrians' preference for direct strategies. According to Holmes and Stubbe (2003: 34), "people typically use explicit and direct pragmatic forms when they hold a higher position in the institutional hierarchy than their addressee(s), and the addressee's obligations are clear". What is added to this notion of power is the concept of legitimate right to exert influence as

suggested by Leichthy and Applegate (1991: 481). They proposed that “legitimate power” might stem from social status, rank or institutionalized role in a particular situation.

Situation 5 (phone) demonstrates that not all requests in the Syrian culture are perceived to be face-threatening, contrary to Brown and Levinson’s theory (1987). The current study’s findings, and in line with other research done in the Greek context (Sifianou 1992a, 1992b), imply that in particular contexts the Syrian participants have fixed culturally and situationally specific roles. It is this reason that justifies the Syrian choices of direct strategies.

The highest percentage usage of Syrian direct strategies was observed in situation 2 (street). The Syrians reflected a tendency towards the most direct requesting strategy not only because of the high imposition involved, but also because it is deemed completely inappropriate in the Syrian culture for a man to pester a woman in the street. It is conceived of as interfering with the female’s honour and the family’s name. This finding confirms Meiers’s (1997) view of politeness as appropriateness. Hence, what is considered to be appropriate varies from situation to situation and culture to culture. In spite of the fact that this situation was also perceived to be highly coercive in the British culture, it did not have the same degree of social unacceptability. In contrast to the Syrian group, the British group’s use of direct strategies was generally low. This avoidance is well documented in the literature (House and Kasper, 1987; Blum-Kulka and House, 1989). In the next section, we will discuss the British avoidance of direct strategies.

7.3.1.2. Conventionally indirect strategies:

As demonstrated in Chapter Five, conventionally indirect strategies made up the majority of overall responses made by both the British and Syrian subjects. This in its turn verifies the findings of Blum-Kulka and House (1989) that the conventionally indirect strategy is the most frequently used strategy across cultures. Further, the analysis of the conventionally indirect strategies (see section 5.3.2.) indicates that the *reference to preparatory condition* strategies are the most predominant type of the conventionally indirect strategies used by both subject groups across all twelve situations. In other words, *reference to preparatory condition* is the most popular conventionally indirect sub-strategy.

Moreover, according to the results of this study, the British subjects chose more conventionally indirect strategies than the Syrian group in almost all situations (with the

exception of situations 4 (lift) and 5 (phone), to be discussed later in this section). While the Syrian speakers varied their requesting strategies according to the situation, British speakers did not reflect a similar degree of variation. The British respondents' uses of conventionally indirect strategies do not seem to be very sensitive to situational constraints. One potential reason might be related to the fact that in English, conventionally indirect strategies are "conventionalized". Such routinized requesting behaviour of the British speakers is extensively documented in the literature (Brown and Levinson, 1987; House and Kasper, 1987; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Fukushima, 2000). Brown and Levinson (1987: 248) explain this behaviour:

..in a given society particular techniques of face redress may become highly favoured as strategies, and therefore conventionalized. In English for example conventional indirect requests are so common that is rare to hear a completely direct request even between equals (and in the middle class, it is even surprisingly rare from mother to child, unless she is angry).

Scollon and Scollon (1995: 134) contend that this conventionalized behaviour has its roots in the British individualist culture. They claim that "In an individualist society, groups do not form the same degree of permanence as they do in a collectivist society. As a result, the ways of speaking to others are much similar from situation to situation". However, Blum-Kulka (1987) associates the consistent use of conventionally indirect strategies to its property of pragmatic clarity and non-coerciveness.

With reference to the Syrian data, and as was previously mentioned in this section, in spite of the fact that both groups' requests clustered around the conventionally indirect level, Syrian subjects appeared to have lower frequencies of conventionally indirect strategies in the majority of situations except situations 4 (lift) and 5 (phone), where they proved to have considerably higher numbers of conventionally indirect strategies than their British peers. The social variable of familiarity between interlocutors plays a key role in Syrians' higher frequencies of conventionally indirect forms in these two contexts. Unfamiliarity between the requester and their addressee is the main motivation behind Syrians' preference for using more formal and conventionalised ways to perform their requests. The British subjects, on the hand, chose to employ more indirect forms of request such as the *opting out*

strategies in situation 4 (lift) or *hints* in situation 5 (phone). This is an indication that Syrian speakers are more direct than their British counterparts.

7.3.1.3. Non-conventionally indirect strategies:

The analysis of the data in Chapter Five showed that *strong hints* strategies are the most predominant type of the non-conventionally indirect strategies used by both subject groups across all twelve situations. In other words, *strong hints* are the most popular non-conventionally indirect sub-strategy. Moreover, non-conventionally indirect strategies are the least frequently used strategies in both language groups. This finding reinforces the findings of Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) study that there is a cross-cultural tendency to use relatively few non-conventionally indirect strategies. Weizman (1989: 92) explains some possible reasons behind speakers' avoidance of the requestive hints that make up non-conventionally indirect strategies as follows:

For, sure enough, the speaker risks being genuinely misunderstood, in which case his or her request would turn out to be most inefficient; but even if the request is correctly interpreted, the effort invested by the hearer and the time wasted by both interlocutors would make the exchange too costly. Hints, therefore, can hardly be considered the most effective and least costly way to attain the requestive end.

Further, Blum-Kulka (1989), in her study, revealed that the most indirect requestive strategy that comes under the non-conventionally indirect level is not universally considered as polite. She clarified that "While conventional indirectness (as in Can you/ Would you strategies) correlates with politeness, non-conventional indirectness (as in Hints) does not" (Blum-Kulka, 1989: 92).

Finally, both language groups' results revealed that there was not a statistical difference in the overall use of the non-conventionally indirect strategies and, as was discussed before, speakers in both languages under study maintained low frequency of the non-conventionally indirect strategies in their requests. However, situations 2 (street) and 5 (phone) witnessed higher frequencies of British rather than Syrian non-conventionally indirect strategies. Non-familiarity between participants involved in these two situations is the main reason behind the British speakers' choice to employ less direct strategies such as

hints. Syrian speakers, on the hand, appear to apply such strategies with higher frequencies in situations 7 (extension), 8 (presentation), 9 (money), 10 (smoking), and 12 (coffee) as a safer (face-saving) way to form their requests in such coercive situations.

7.3.1.4. Unsaid strategies:

In the light of the analysis presented in Chapter Five, unsaid strategies appear comparatively rarely in both the British and the Syrian data. However, subjects in this study and in line with Marti's (2006) findings used unsaid strategies including opting out, alternative responses, and negotiation to lead up to a requestive speech act which reflect the dynamic nature of requests. It is also noted that subject groups in both languages do not show significant statistical differences in their overall use of unsaid strategies. Moreover, trends for Syrian and British unsaid strategies reflected a strong degree of cross-cultural agreement. However, situations 2 (street) and 4 (lift) witnessed a noticeable variation in the number of unmade requests between the participants involved. In situation 2 (street), higher occurrences of unsaid strategies were licensed by Syrian subjects compared to their British counterparts; whereas, in situation 4 (lift), it was the British who maintained higher levels of unsaid strategies compared to their Syrian peers.

Such variation can be linked to the cultural differences associated with the Syrian and British speech communities. For example in situation 2 (street), the focus in the Syrian culture is on the notion of female purity and family honour. Therefore, Syrian respondents were more reluctant than the British to make requests which would involve having some contact with their addressee. This would go against the social norms of the Syrian community. The British community does not mind communication between females and male strangers. Therefore, British participants employed fewer unsaid strategies in the context of the (street) situation. As for situation 4 (lift), the higher frequencies of unsaid strategies licensed by the British participants have connections with the cultural expectation prevailing in the British community that taking lifts with strangers might be quite risky. It would also be seen as rather impertinent to ask for a lift from someone you don't know. Hence, the British subjects exhibited some degree of reluctance to go on-record and make requests. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), avoidance of an FTA is more indirect than a 'verbalized' off-record strategy. In contrast, the cultural expectation in the Syrian community that people maintain good relationships with their neighbours plays a key role in

Syrians' preference to use more said rather than unsaid strategies in the lift situation. The Syrian culture stresses harmony among people, particularly between those in the same neighbourhood and regardless of whether there had been previous communication or not.

7.3.2. Modification selection:

The analysis in Chapter Six revealed that respondents in both groups varied their choices of internal modification through the addition of mitigating or aggravating modality markers, and their choices of external modification by means of mitigating or aggravating supportive moves. These dimensions are quite similar to the dimensions which constitute "the means available for indexing politeness of speech acts" (Blum-Kulka 2005 [1992]: 266). Moreover, the analysis in Chapter Six indicates that the force of the request does not only depend on the requesting strategy employed since "mitigation can index politeness regardless of levels of directness" (Blum-Kulka 2005 [1992]: 266).

7.3.2.1. Internal modification:

Returning to the results in table 10 (see section 6.2.) and figure 41 (see section 6.3.), we found that the British English and Syrian Arabic respondent groups were statistically different in their overall use of internal modifiers. The analysis of internal modifiers by situation shows that the use of direct strategies in both cultures are likely to trigger more use of mitigating internal modification, and this observation is quite evident in situations 1 (kitchen), 3 (notes), and 11 (photocopy). It could also be said that in situations where participants use more direct strategies they try to compensate for that and signal politeness by employing more mitigating markers as a key source for face protection.

Having looked at the overall distribution of internal modifiers, further analysis will be taken to the sub-types level. As far as syntactic modifiers are concerned, it is noted that the British requests contained significantly higher percentages of syntactic modification markers than the Syrian requests. Thus, the great majority of British participants mitigate the force of their requests' head acts by means of syntactic downgraders. Further, table 12 (see section 6.3.2.) suggests that there is a tendency towards syntactic overcomplexity in the British data as compared to the Syrian one. Accordingly, the British seem to call for more tentative verbal behaviour which could be seen as a sign of negative politeness.

With regards to lexical and phrasal modification, subjects in both groups revealed a statistically significant difference in the overall uses of the lexical and phrasal markers. Having a look at the frequency distribution of internal modifiers by situation (see table 11 section 6.3.1.1.), one could see that situations 3 (note), 7 (extension), and 9 (smoking) witnessed clear discrepancies between the language groups under study. It was the Syrians who maintained higher percentages of lexical and phrasal downgraders in all the given situations. The Syrians' use of lexical and phrasal downgraders is a response to situational prompts. It suggests a strong association with social variables and the size of imposition involved in the requesting situation. In situations 7 (extension) and 9 (smoking), for example, the Syrians' frequency of using lexical and phrasal downgraders is affected by the seriousness of the situation. Further, in situation 7 (extension), the students' lower institutional status plays a key role in this context where they target their request upwards in the institutional hierarchy towards their lecturer. Holmes and Stubbe (2003: 44) state that when directives such as requests are made towards someone with higher power or greater authority "politeness considerations weigh more heavily". Therefore, such requests would typically require more use of mitigation markers. With reference to situation 9 (smoking), in addition to the high imposition associated with the requestive illocutionary point, the social distance between the interlocutors has a vital role in the choice of mitigating lexical and phrasal items. As regards situation 3 (note), the Syrians used a considerably higher percentage of lexical and phrasal downgraders as a way to mark their in-group membership and this in its turn appeals to positive politeness. According to Blum-Kulka (2005 [1992]: 267), "internal modifiers can easily index affect and involvement". Finally, it is worth noting that the Syrians' use of conventional and religious lexical mitigating expressions such as, 'aLLa yxalliik' (God keep you), 'Zakaatak' (Your charity: lexical downgrader used for urging the good nature of the addressee by referring to the religious concept of charity), and 'maa tiSXar' (I wish you don't be underestimated: reference to high esteem criteria) is a strong suggestion that their choices of lexical and phrasal downgraders is driven by cultural expectations that focus on group harmony and in-group membership rather than individual freedom. Such semantic expressions and lexical items verify the requester's wish to be accepted and approved of by their addressee.

Finally, examining the upgraders overall use more closely, the Syrian group appears to have significantly higher occurrences of upgraders to intensify their requests than their British peers. It is also important to note that the Syrians' use of upgraders' sub-types varied

to cover all the sub-types of upgraders. In contrast, the British participants' choice of upgraders was rather more constrained, as they did not make use of *determination markers*, *emphatic additions*, *repetition of requests*, and *orthographic/suprasegmental emphasis* sub-types of upgraders. This might indicate an orientation to positive politeness for Syrian speakers because it allows them to stress closeness to their addressees.

7.3.2.2. External modification:

Table 10 (see section 6.2.) shows that there is a clear statistical difference between both language groups in their uses of aggravating supportive moves. With regards to the use of mitigating supportive moves, the British group's higher frequencies for using them in comparison with the Syrian group points towards a negative politeness orientation, because according to Blum-Kulka (2005[1992]: 267) external modification through justifications and explanations "appeals to the interlocutor as a rational agent in need of persuasion as required by the principle of independence tenet of negative politeness". In her view "external modifiers are by definition other-oriented, deference indicating devices".

Moreover, the results for the sub-types of mitigating supportive moves reinforce the findings of previous studies (e.g. Kasper, 1981; House and Kasper, 1987; Faerch and Kasper, 1989) in that the *grounders* stands out as the most frequently used supportive move. Faerch and Kasper (1989: 239) explain this trend saying "Giving reasons, justifications, and explanations for an action opens up an empathetic attitude on the part of the interlocutor in giving his or her insight into the actor's underlying motive(s), and is thus an efficient mitigating strategy with a wide range of application".

As for aggravating supportive moves, the Syrian group used a statistically significant higher percentage of such moves than their British counterparts. They restricted their uses of aggravating moves to situations 1 (kitchen), 2 (street), 6 (police), 9 (smoking). The analysis in section 6.4.3.1 highlighted the main reason behind their choices to enhance their requests. It was the violation of social and cultural expectations and norms in the specified situations that motivated the speakers not only to make use of the direct strategies but also to boost the effect of their requests by employing aggravating moves. This fact could be interpreted as an indication of the positive politeness orientation of the Syrian speakers where the focus is not on the individual's needs and desires but on abidance by social and cultural rules that lead to social harmony and solidarity.

7.3.2.3. Alerters:

Alerters used in people's requests reflect interactants' social and cultural values, beliefs and relationships. However, alerter types vary across languages and cultures. After a brief glance at table 18 (see section 6.5.), it is evident that the Syrian and British cultures exhibited a cross-cultural similarity in their tendency to select attention getters as the most common way to attract their addressees' attention and a cross-cultural disparity in the frequency of alerters they use. The Syrians maintained considerably higher frequencies of alerters in comparison with the British respondents. Looking at the subtypes of alerters, the Syrians used noticeable higher frequencies of the *attention getters*, *titles/roles*, and *endearment terms*. The two cultures displayed a similarity in the use of *attention getters* in most of the situations. A parallel use of occupational titles was quite obvious in situation 7 (extension) where the student is addressing a lecturer at the university. As for *endearment and kinship terms*, the Syrian participants' remarkable heavy use of these terms compared to their British peers serves to strengthen solidarity, particularly when used with people who are not relatives. Such use could also be interpreted as a marker of enhancing "in-groupness" which could be seen as a positive politeness strategy where speakers demonstrate familiarity with their addressees (Brown and Levinson 1978: 112).

The Syrians employed a very wide range of *endearment and kinship* lexical items as address terms such as *axi* (brother), *'ammi* (uncle), *xaale* or *xaalti* (aunt), *ibni* (son), *binti* (daughter), *Habiibi* (love), *'eeni* (my eye), *rooHi* (my soul), *albi* (my heart), *Hilu* (sweet), *abu šriik* (mate), *SaDiiqi* (my friend), *zamiil* (colleague), *šab* (young man), *ibn il-Halaal* (literally, son of virtue, i.e. true-born fellow), *istaazi il-kariim* (my honourable teacher). These expressions help in creating some kind of harmony between interlocutors even if they are not relatives or family members. For example, in situation 8 (presentation) when the speaker uses 'son' or 'daughter' with younger non-relative students, he/she is trying to shorten the distance with them as well as expressing care and solidarity.

Furthermore, the use of kinship terms between interlocutors of asymmetrical relationships like, for instance, the use of 'uncle' or 'aunt' to address people of an older generation who are not familiar with the speaker, is an indication that the Syrians use address terms according to the social norms in the Syrian society which privileges age over

other social variables. It also indicates their awareness of the linguistic choices available to them which helps them express care and respect towards the old.

7.4. The notions of Syrian face and Brown and Levinson's face:

The intercultural analysis of strategy selection and modification choices in the course of performing Syrian and British requests indicates that these cultures differ in the way they perceive face and accordingly are different in their politeness orientation. This section will discuss this difference in the management of face. In this regard, it is important to highlight the notion of culture as understanding politeness in a particular culture entails gaining an understanding of that culture.

Cultural expectations derived from cultural norms influence politeness. Such norms provide speakers with tools to fulfil cultural expectations. Arndt and Janney (1992: 24) argue that not only do these norms form the basis of social politeness which is associated with "socially acceptable communicative forms, norms, routines, rituals, etc." but they are also important for interpersonal politeness which "relies on cultural assumptions concerning the interpretation and evaluation of communicative behaviour. And such cultural assumptions are normative ways of interpreting behaviour which establish a common base of 'communicative knowledge'" (ibid.: 30-31).

Although Watts (1992) never does explicitly state that the social norm is related to politeness, he implicitly indicates that politeness is a channel to reflect socio-cultural norms in a given society since he defines politeness as a 'marked behaviour' that is expected to be "socially and culturally appropriate in any given social activity" (ibid.: 48). In Eelen's (2001: 127-140) anatomy of the notion of 'social norms', he proposes that norms are made of four components, namely appropriateness, sharedness, normality and expectations. He explains that being polite always entails acting appropriately according to social norms that specify what is perceived of as appropriate in a particular interactional situation. Eelen describes sharedness as a sort of link between a culture and its members, a concept that was originally raised by Lakoff (1990: 24), who contends that speakers in one language act unconsciously according to social rules that are embedded in their minds.

Janney and Arndt (1992: 30) argue that people in a specific community who aim to be judged as normal are presupposed to acquire the cultural assumption of that community.

Thus, failing to do so would result in “social exclusion, being labelled abnormal, retarded, defective or deviant”. As a result, Eelen (2001: 139) adds that sharedness and normality are interrelated to the hearer’s expectations as to performing appropriate behaviour, i.e. in order for the communicative act to be rendered as polite, the hearer’s expectation should be taken into account by the speaker. Actually, deference and showing respect to the hearer are part of the communication expectations of communication partners. However, different cultures hold different conceptions of deference and expressing respect. Goffman (1956: 493-4) states that potential difficulties in intercultural communication might occur particularly when members of different cultures do not have the same concepts of deference.

Brown and Levinson (1987) define deference as a strategy of negative politeness as it is intended to redress the hearer’s negative face desires of maintaining autonomy. However, deference in the Syrian culture is perceived to be an intrusive form of social interaction. Syrians most often communicate familiarity and try to establish common ground with their addressees as a way of harmonising relationships and making them more coherent. This is quite evident in the Syrians’ high frequency of using direct strategies as well as using a very wide range of mitigating conventional, religious and ritual expressions and semantic formulas in the course of performing requests. Usually, using these terms the speaker would seek more engagement on the part of his/her addressee since direct strategies are less likely to provide the hearer with a chance of avoiding the request or not complying with speaker’s desires. The hearer is often left with neither the option to refuse the request nor the ability to resist the imposition involved in the request speech act. Moreover, the use of mitigating downgraders and expressions of familiarity and in-group identity markers, as was discussed earlier in section 7.3.2.1, helps the speaker to seek cooperation. It also signals the positive politeness orientation in the Syrian speech community.

" إي حبيب، هات ناولني ملاحظاتك عن المحاضرة الماضية، أنا كنت غايب ما حضرتها. بحياة أختك دبرني!"

"ee Habiib, haat naawilni mulaaHaZaatak ‘an il-muHaaDara il-maaDye, ana kint
Xaayeb maa HDirta biHyaat ixtak dabbirni!"

"Yeah love, come on, give me your notes of the last lecture. I was absent; I did not attend it. For the sake of your sister’s life, help me!" (Male Syrian participant)

" أبو علي، إلك و لا للديب؟ مثل ما كان المطبخ رجعو مشان الله! قاعدين لحالنا بالبيت و ما في سيريلنكية تنصف

ورانا."

“abu ‘ali, ilak walla la-ddiib? mitil maa kaan il-maTbax raj‘oo mšaan aLLa! aa‘diin laHaalna bil-beet wi maa fi sirilankiye tnaDDef waraana.”

“Abu Ali, for you or for the wolf? For God’s sake, tidy up the kitchen as it was before! We live on our own in the house and there is no maid to clean up after us.” (Male Syrian participant)

In the examples above, Syrian respondents strategically used the endearment term “Habiibi” and nickname “abu ‘ali” not only to attract their addressee’s attention to the following request, but also seek his positive cooperation. Then, they made direct requests and followed them by *grounder* supportive moves to explain the reason for making their requests, and thus making them more appealing. They also made use of conventional idiomatic expressions such as “ilak walla la-ddiib?”, and some mitigating religious or conventional lexical items and semantic formulas such as “mšaan aLLa” (for God’s sake) and “biHyaat ixtak” (for the sake of your sister’s life) in the course of performing requests as way of seeking the addressee’s commitment to doing a favour.

On the top of that, the Syrians’ higher frequencies of aggravating supportive moves, as was discussed in section 7.3.2.2, reflect how keen they are to promote the social and cultural rules that lay emphasis on the groups’ needs and social harmony rather than the individual’s desires.

"أخي مو شايف الإعلان؟ لا تدخن، والله فتصنا!"

“axi muu šaayef il-i‘laan? laa tdaxxen waLLahi ftiSna!”

“Brother, *can’t you see the sign!* Stop smoking I swear we are almost perished! (this is really very annoying.)” (Female Syrian participant)

"يخرّب بيتك شو إنك ما بتستحي! امشي من هون احسن ما لم عليك العالم."

“yixreb beetak šuu innak maa btistiHi! imši min hoon aHsan maa limma ‘aleek il-‘aalam.”

“*May God destroy your home* as you don’t feel ashamed, how unashamed you are (inconsiderate of others)! Get away from here, *otherwise I will gather people around you.*” (Female Syrian participant)

In the first example, the speaker made use of the *rhetorical question* “muu šaayef il-i‘laan?” (*can't you see the sign!*) to enhance the effect of her request and attract the hearer's attention that he is breaking an established rule. Similarly, in the second example, the speaker makes use of a combination of *insult* “yixreb beetak šuu innak maa btistiHi!” (*May God destroy your home as you don't feel ashamed*) and *threat* “aHsan maa limma ‘aleek il-‘aalam” (*otherwise I will gather people around you*) as a way for enhancing her request and also emphasizing the inappropriateness of the addressee's social behaviour.

The Syrians' inclination to highlight the concept of 'group face' poses a challenge to Brown and Levinson's (1987) claim of universality for their theory in which the focus is on individualistic face rather than the collective one. In the Syrian culture, face is judged by the collective speech community and self is seen in terms of others. This finding is in line with findings of other pieces of research conducted in many other cultures such as China, Japan, and Greece, where the link between the individual and the group is of key importance in the choice of politeness strategies (Mao, 1994; Fukushima 2000; Sifianou, 1992a). These studies echo Goffman's (1967: 10) assumption that face is seen to be assigned by society to individuals. Using Mao's words (1994: 460), this thesis suggests that Syrian face “emphasises not the accommodation of individual 'wants' or 'desires' but the harmony of individual conduct with the views and judgement of the community”. Syrians stress the in-group-relation with others in the community. Accordingly, the focus is not on the individual who is seen as the basic unit of society as Brown and Levinson (1989) claim, it is rather on the relationship individuals maintain with others in a society. Bargiela-Chiappini (2003: 1463) highlights “the need to understand and compare cultural conceptualisations of the social self and its relationship to others as an alternative and possibly more fruitful way of studying the relevance and dynamics of 'face' and 'facework' in interpersonal contacts”.

On the other side of the spectrum, the current study is in line with Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory in that British English is a culture that stresses social distance and that it is oriented towards negative politeness. Britons' extended use of conventionally indirect strategies, syntactic downgraders which reflect their tentative verbal behaviour in addition to the frequent uses of mitigating supportive moves that externally adjust the influence of the head act are all indicators that negative politeness is the predominant feature in the British society. Stewart (2005) endorses this point by describing the British English as “an avoidance based, negatively oriented culture” (ibid.: 117).

“Excuse me, can I just print your notes? I missed the lecture, cheers.” (Female British participant)

“I’m very sorry sir, but this is a no parking area because ... so I’m going to have to ask you to move your car, please.” (Male British participant)

I know it is a big ask, but would it be possible for you to give your presentation a week earlier?” (Female British participant)

In these examples, the British uses of alerter types such as *attention getters* (“excuse me”) and a combination of *apology* (“I’m very sorry”) and *title* (“sir”) along with *preparatory* strategies in the first and third examples above or the *hedged performative* strategy as in the second example demonstrate the negative politeness orientation of the British community. This point is further illustrated in employing the *disarmer* mitigating supportive move (“I know it is a big ask”) in the third example.

7.5. The effect of contextual parameters on requests:

Both the Syrian and British respondents employed different levels of directness and modification types in their requests across the twelve DCT situations. They varied their choices according to individual situations even in cases where there are significant differences between the two groups. This section is concerned with describing the main contextual parameters that influenced subjects’ choices including speaker’s rights, hearer’s obligations, social distance, power, and imposition.

7.5.1. The effect of rights and obligations:

In spite of the fact that this thesis adopts Brown and Levinson’s (1987) framework, results discussed earlier in Chapters Five and Six indicate that the rights and obligations of the interlocutors involved in a speech situation have influenced requestive strategy and modification choices. Therefore, this section is concerned with highlighting this effect.

Concerning strategy choices (see figure 25, section 5.3.1), we notice that the most direct strategies were employed by both groups in situations 1 (kitchen), 2 (street), 6 (police), 9 (smoking), and 11 (photocopy) where the notion of rights and obligations play a key role in selection of these direct strategies. In situation 1 (kitchen), the expectation is that everyone who shares the house respects the house's rules of cleanliness and hygiene. Sharing accommodation also requires taking responsibility; therefore, it is the obligation of the roommate to keep the kitchen clean and the student has the 'right' to request an action in this situation. In situation 2 (street), the speaker's right to make a request was only applicable to the Syrian responses. Interviewees explained that the social norms that value family honour in the Syrian community give Syrian respondents in this situation the moral right to protect their public image and family reputation when a male stranger tries to pester them. In situation 6 (police), part of the job description of police officers is to manage the traffic. Therefore, it is their right to tell drivers to stick to traffic rules and drivers have the obligation to obey. Similarly, in situation 11 (photocopy), doing the photocopying is an agreed secretarial responsibility. Thus, the boss has the right to ask for it and the secretary has the obligation to do it. In situation 9 (smoking), it is the law that gives the speaker the right to ask their addressee to stop smoking in public halls where smoking is prohibited. Accordingly, the addressee has the obligation to adhere to rules.

The rights and obligations of interlocutors involved in the situations discussed above also played a key role in both groups' selection of high frequencies of aggravating modification types including upgraders and aggravating supportive moves. Speakers in these situations not only have the rights to make their requests, but also enhance the effect of their requests through employing enhancing modification categories. The highest frequencies of upgraders in both groups' requests were employed in situations 1 (kitchen), 2 (street), 6 (police), and 11 (photocopy). Similarly, the highest frequencies of aggravating supportive moves were used in situations 1 (kitchen), 2 (street), 6 (police), and 11 (photocopy).

7.5.2. The effect of the social variables:

As was previously explained in section (4.4.1), the twelve request situations were selected and designed taking into consideration Brown and Levinson's (1987) social variables including power, social distance (familiarity), and imposition. These variables are

used for analysis as indications of “the reasons for choosing one strategy rather than another” (Watts, 2003: 96).

7.5.2.1. Relative power:

Brown and Levinson (1987: 77) define power as “an asymmetric social dimension of relative power”. They explain that it is “the degree to which H can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of S’s plans and self-evaluation”. They claim that when S’s power over H increases, the weightiness of the FTA decreases. With reference to the findings discussed in Chapter Five, we notice that the power variable involved in situations 6 (police), 8 (presentation), 11 (photocopy), 12 (coffee) has influenced Syrian and British choices of requestive strategies. Both groups employed higher frequencies of direct strategies in these situations. However, Syrian respondents showed more sensitivity to the power variable as they used higher frequencies of direct strategies than their British peers in situations 6 (police), 11 (photocopy), 12 (coffee).

The social power speakers have in these situations is a kind of institutional power they practice as a result of a job or role they have within an institution. Further, the analysis of the Syrian and British DCTs and interviews revealed that Syrians’ perception of power is hierarchical, whereas the British perception of power is conceived to be more egalitarian. In situation 6 (police), for example, Syrian interviewees emphasized the stereotypical institutional power police officers have over car drivers, particularly those who break traffic rules (see section 5.2.6 for further details and examples). Syrians mainly employed direct strategies in this situation, whereas the British speakers, on the other hand, mainly used conventionally indirect strategies as less direct strategies for making requests and a way to indicate their egalitarian view of power. They, most of the time, referred to the power of law that allows them to ask car drivers to move their car without any prejudice on their side.

These concepts of Syrian hierarchical power vs. British egalitarian power similarly apply to situations 8 (presentation), 11 (photocopy) and 12 (coffee) (see sections 5.2.8, 5.2.11, 5.2.12 for further details and examples).

7.5.2.2. Social distance:

Brown and Levinson (1987: 74) note that the social distance (D) of S and H is a “symmetric relation” and clarify that it is one of the most important factors involved in the assessment of an FTA.

Referring back to table 2 (see section 4.4.1) and the discussion of strategy choices in Chapter Five, we notice that where the speaker and the addressee are equal in status and familiar with each other they showed a preference to use conventionally indirect strategies. In situation 1 (kitchen), 3 (notes), 10 (money), both Syrian and British participants mainly used conventionally indirect strategies for making their requests regardless whether the imposition involved in their requests is high or low. This is clearly evident in the high percentages of conventionally indirect strategies they employed. However, they compensate for the use of the standard conventional strategies by employing high frequencies of internal modification, as well as mitigating supportive moves in these situations.

The analysis of the Syrian and British DCT and interview data showed that Syrian responses were more sensitive to familiarity than the British responses. In spite of the fact that Syrians mainly used conventionally indirect strategies in situations 1 (kitchen), 3 (notes), 10 (money), they also used considerable frequencies of direct requestive strategies. They justified their choices of direct strategies on the basis that interactants involved in these situations are friends. Accordingly, they need not worry about the way they make their requests (for further discussion and examples refer to sections 5.2.1, 5.2.3, and 5.2.10).

7.5.2.3. The effect of imposition:

Another way of looking at situations is to consider the notion of imposition. As is demonstrated in table 2 (see section 4.4.1), some situations assume a high level of imposition, whereas others assume a low level of imposition. Building on our discussion on request data analysis by strategy (see section 5.3), one could notice that the level of imposition involved in request situations has a predominant role in deciding the directness of strategies selected. In situations where imposition is perceived to be high such as situation 1 (kitchen), 4 (lift), 7 (extension), 9 (smoking), 10 (money), and 12 (coffee), participants in both languages under study used lower frequencies of direct strategies and higher frequencies of conventionally indirect strategies than in the other situations. However, this does not apply to situations 2 (street) although it is marked as a high imposition

situation. Respondents in both groups used a relatively high frequency of direct strategies in comparison to the rest of situations and a very low frequency of conventional indirect strategies in this particular situation (for further discussion see section 5.2.2).

The Analysis of Syrian and British interviews demonstrated an agreement between both groups in that the most imposition felt was in situations that require high cost on the addressee's part such as borrowing money in situation 10 (money) or in situations where cultural expectations or individual's privacy is intruded upon as in the case of situation 2 (street) and 4 (lift). On the other hand, they assigned the least imposition to situation 3 (notes) since it does not require a high cost from their addressees. The analysis also revealed that the seriousness of offence motivate speakers in both languages to employ higher frequencies of internal and external modification as was discussed earlier in sections 6.3 and 6.4.

7.6. Chapter summary:

In this chapter, the findings presented in Chapters Four and Five were revisited and subsequently summarized. Then, the discussion highlighted the requesting strategies, modification and alerter choices of Syrian and British subjects and accordingly established some links to previous literature. Further, an attempt was made to relate the overall discussion to the notion of face and discussion of politeness orientation in both cultures under study. Finally, drawing on the analysis of findings in Chapters Five and Six, the effect of contextual variables in both the Syrian and British cultures was discussed.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

8.1. Introduction:

In this work, an attempt has been made to research the speech act of request in Syrian Arabic and British English. A mixed-methods approach involving discourse completion tests and follow-up interviews was used for collecting data. DCT data were gathered from 200 undergraduate university students: 100 British English-speaking students studying at the University of Leeds in the UK, and 100 Syrian Arabic-speaking students studying at Damascus University in Syria. The interview data were gathered from a subset of 20 of subjects who had already completed the questionnaire in order to explore their motives behind strategy choices. This group was divided equally between the Syrian and the British respondents. The data were then analysed according to the coding schemes adopted in this study in order to answer the following research questions:

- 1- What similarities and differences are there between Syrian Arabic and British English in the patterns of the speech act of request (including strategy and modification choices)?
- 2- Does the requestive speech act intrinsically threaten the participants' negative face in both the Syrian and British cultures? If not, what is the direction of politeness in these two cultures?
- 3- What are the contextual factors that most influence the choice of request components in both cultures?

In this chapter, I will first provide a brief summary of the findings of the current study and conclusions drawn from these findings. Then, I will proceed to evaluate the current work on the basis of its overall features, including strengths and limitations, consider its contributions and implications, and finally, offer some suggestions for further research.

8.2. Summary of the main findings:

After the review of the relevant literature and the methodologies adopted in this thesis, I discussed the findings of this research in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. The main findings

from the analysis of the data are concerned with answering the first research question: whether there are any similarities or differences between Syrian Arabic and British English in the realization patterns of the requestive speech act. The analysis of DCTs and interviews showed that the Syrians and the British share some important features and display some differences in their requestive strategy and modification choices. For example, they both favour the conventional indirect strategies. This finding confirms the findings of the Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) that conventional indirect strategies are the most frequently used strategies across cultures. However, they exhibited significant differences in the frequency of using direct and conventionally indirect strategies.

With regards to strategy choices, the empirical results for both the discourse completion test and the follow-up interviews were presented in Chapter Five. The cross-cultural comparison of the discourse completion test and the interviews were undertaken at two levels, namely request analysis by situation and request analysis by strategy. The former analysis revealed that people in the Syrian Arabic and British English cultures are significantly different in the way they realise the requestive speech act in all the social situations involved in the study with the exception of situation 7 (extension), where the differences did not prove to be statistically significant. Request analysis by strategy showed that, although both groups' overall requests cluster around conventionally indirect strategies, Syrians were significantly more direct than Britons. Syrian respondents used direct strategies approximately three times more than their British peers. Further, in ten out of twelve situations, Syrian speakers employed more direct strategies than British speakers. On the other hand, British participants used significantly more conventionally indirect strategies. In ten out of twelve situations the British utilised more conventionally indirect strategies in their requests than their Syrian peers. However, the statistical results did not substantiate significant differences between both groups under study in the areas of using non-conventionally indirect strategies and unsaid strategies. Through the analysis of findings of request strategies, the first research question investigating what similarities and differences there are between Syrian Arabic and British English requestive patterns has been answered only in relation to strategy selection.

Concerning modification types, the distribution of internal and external modification speakers in both language groups use to modify the effect of their requests were presented in Chapter Six. The analysis suggests that Syrian Arabic and British English requests share some important features concerning their preferred choice of modification categories. Firstly,

they both favour internal modifiers over external modifiers or supportive moves. Secondly, they both exhibit a similarity in their tendency to employ syntactic downgraders as the most predominant type of internal modifiers and mitigating supportive moves as the most commonly used type of external modifiers. Thirdly, upgraders were the least favoured type of internal modification for both subject groups, whereas aggravating supportive moves are the least favoured type of external modification across both groups' requests. Finally, Syrians were distinguished for their extensive use of a variety of enhancing moves, whereas the British tried to keep using them to the minimum. The analysis also indicates that, in spite of the above-mentioned similarities, there were significant statistical differences in the frequency distribution of all types of internal modifiers and aggravating supportive moves of both groups.

Carrying the analysis one step further to investigate the subtypes of internal and external modification categories, some further similarities and differences emerged between the Syrian and British requests. They both were similar in preferring the *interrogative* subtype of syntactic downgraders and the *politeness markers* sub-category of lexical and phrasal downgraders, and *grounders* sub-category of mitigating supportive moves. On the other hand, they were different with regard to the sub-types of upgraders they favour. The Syrians mainly used *time intensifiers* to enhance the effects of their requests, whereas the Britons primarily depended on *lexical uptoners* to serve the very same purpose. As for alerter types Syrians and British speakers, both groups exhibited a cross-cultural similarity upon selecting *attention getters* as the most common way to attract their addressee's attention. Through the analysis of findings in Chapter Six, the first research question investigating what similarities and differences there are between Syrian Arabic and British English in the patterns of the speech act of request has been answered in relation to modification selection.

The second finding of this study is concerned with answering the second research question: whether the requestive speech act threatens the participants' negative face in both the Syrian and British cultures, and also examining the direction of politeness in these two cultures. Brown and Levinson (1987: 65) claim that requests belong to face threatening acts that intrinsically threaten negative face. However, the analysis of the notions of Syrian and British face and deference in Chapter Seven challenges Brown and Levinson's above cited claim. Syrians define themselves as members of one group and highlight the notion of in-groupness and relations to others, while Britons, on the other hand, adopt the notion of

individualistic face and the individual's right to having their private autonomy unimpeded. Unlike the British, Syrians pick their request strategies and modification as a tool to emphasize relationships between interlocutors and hence assume requests as FTAs that threaten the positive face. This fact constitutes a great challenge to Brown and Levinson's (1987) claim of universality for their theory in which requests are considered as FTAs that threaten the negative face. The Syrians' use of terms of address, particularly their extensive use of endearment and kinship terms, validates positive politeness orientation of the Syrian speech community.

The third finding of the current research is concerned with the effect of contextual constraints on the choices of request components in both cultures. The analysis in Chapter Seven demonstrates that speaker's rights, hearer's obligations, interactants' relative social power and distance, and the level of imposition involved in a request situation play a key role in both groups' choices of requestive strategies and modification. However, the Syrians proved to be more sensitive than their British peers to contextual parameters.

8.3. Evaluation of the present study:

In this section the focus will be on the strengths and limitations of the present study. The strengths will be considered first, followed by the limitations.

8.3.1. Strengths:

The major strengths of this study are listed as follows:

Firstly, the way in which the choice of subjects was controlled is a strength of this research. Subjects in both groups were all undergraduate university students studying at the University of Leeds and Damascus University. This point was considered as a measure to ensure the relative homogeneity of subjects in terms of occupation, age, educational background. Further, subject choices were restricted to Syrian native speakers of Arabic as opposed to other varieties of Arabic, and to British native speakers of English as opposed to other varieties of English.

Secondly, the size of the request corpus - 2400 requests - has provided sufficient data to allow quantitative as well as qualitative methodologies to be used. This means that the results reported can be considered to demonstrate a greater degree of reliability. It also formed a basis against which the cross-cultural comparison was made.

Thirdly, adopting a mixed-methods approach including both quantitative and qualitative data adds to the strength of the study. The discourse completion test represented the quantitative side of data, while the follow-up interviews provided the qualitative data. By the use of the former, the researcher was able to look at patterns of requests across both cultures under study and compare frequency. The latter provided the basis of the qualitative depth and allowed the investigation of speakers' justifications for their strategy choices.

Further, the typicality of the situations used in the discourse completion test and careful identification of comparable situations, i.e. choosing situations the student populations in both cultures under study are quite familiar with, are considered to be another strong point in the current study. Since the subjects were all university students, situations were designed to suit the students' lives in both cultures. Accordingly, respondents did not have to put themselves in unfamiliar situations and hence, the elicited speech data would be more likely to reflect patterns of actual behaviour and everyday communication.

Fourthly, the new features of the methodology used are considered to be a point of strength. Adopting Marti's (2006) model of unsaid strategies and extending it is one strong feature. Unmade requestive behaviour, though not spoken, can still add to the pragmatic meaning and the realisation patterns of requests in a given society. Sometimes, an unmade request could more effectively convey the requestive illocutionary point even though it is not said. Silence has meaning too.

Moreover, I have undertaken some original work in combining quantitative and qualitative analysis of requests strategies in said and unsaid requests on both the situation and the strategy level. Adopting multiple ways for the analysis of internal and external modification is one more feature to emphasise. It is also worth noting that new categories of internal and external modification emerged in my data (see section 6.3. and 6.4. for further information). The new categories of mitigating supportive moves include promises of refrain or improvement, promise to return, encouragement, thanks/appreciation, offer to help and apologies. The new categories of aggravating supportive moves, on the other hand, include rhetorical questions and additional imperatives.

Finally, the comparison of the British and Syrian cultures adds to the strength of this study. So far there have been many studies comparing the requestive speech acts across a variety of cultures (e.g. Hill et al., 1986; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Sifianou, 1992a; Economidou-Kogetsidis 2010). However, to my knowledge, there have been no studies

looking at the speech act of requests or politeness in the Syrian Arabic culture. Thus, the present study, using subjects from the Syrian speech community, represents an innovation.

This study contributes to the existing body of literature on politeness and cross-cultural pragmatics as it reinforces the findings of those researchers such as Mao (1994), Fukushima (2000), and Sifianou (1992a). They challenged Brown and Levinson's (1987) assumption that requests come under the negative politeness strategies and explained how in many other cultures such as China, Japan, and Greece, requests are assumed to come under positive politeness strategies where the focus is on the relation between the individual and the group.

Another valuable contribution of this study to the field of politeness and cross-cultural studies is manifested in its contribution to the analytical framework. The current research introduces a new rigorous analytical instrument that can be applied to analyse the Arabic data in general and particularly the Syrian dialect. Although it adopts a combination of Brown and Levinson's (1987) model for the analysis of said requests and Marti's (2006) model for the analysis of unsaid requests, it originally presents new labels for Modification types including, mitigating and aggravating supportive moves as well as new alerter categories that suit and accommodate the Syrian Arabic data .

8.3.2. Limitations:

This project was limited in several ways. The most important limitation lies in the issue of representativeness of the sample subjects. Although restricting subject choices to the undergraduate student population in Syrian and British cultures is considered to be a strength in this study insofar as it limits variability in the data, it also has the limitation that it does not represent the whole of the societies under study. In other words, such variables as different age groups, occupations, educational backgrounds, social classes, and gender might affect subject responses, and accordingly the results might vary. Therefore, the findings of the current study represent only Syrian and British undergraduates, although the terms Syrians and Britons were used. Further, it is important to note that regional differences could play an important role in the choice of politeness strategies used, i.e. requests made by people living in one region or city might be different from those formed by people living in another region. Subject choices do not cover the whole of Syria nor that of Britain. However, one could argue that students at the University of Leeds broadly

represent the middle class in British society. The relatively high entry requirements of a research-intensive university like Leeds tend to result in students from a relatively narrow social demographic. Students at Damascus University also tend to represent the middle class in the Syrian community.

Another limitation of this study was the elicitation procedure. The main instrument used in this research for collecting the data was a discourse completion test. One major disadvantage of such an instrument is that it gathers data that respondents 'might say' instead of what they 'actually say'. Moreover, since no interaction occurs, other features of talk such as turn-taking mechanisms cannot be elicited. In other words, the approach is not discursive as it elicits 'one shot' speech acts rather than being co-constructed. However, discourse completion tests were adopted for exploratory reasons in Syrian Arabic. They can be useful where little is known about politeness in a particular culture. They can also be useful for the purpose of cross-cultural comparisons.

The last shortcoming of this research lies in the difficulty of classifying data. Sometimes, the job of categorising data has been challenging. Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) model for classifying different constituents of made requests is not always clearly defined and it lacked suitable categories to label the elicited data. For example, sometimes it has been very difficult to decide whether a certain mitigating or aggravating supportive move falls under any of the categories provided in the adopted model. Therefore, I have managed to overcome this shortcoming by developing new labels for the new categories appearing such as appreciation /thanks, promise of improvement, promise to be the last time (promise of refrain), promise of return, encouragement, and apologies under mitigating supportive moves.

8.4. Implications of this study:

There were some significant differences between the Syrian and the British data including differences between their choices of request strategies, internal and external modification, and alerters. These results indicate that underlying social and cultural differences play a key role in explaining politeness strategies, as shown in previous studies (e.g. Blum-Kulka and House, 1989; Sifianou, 1992a; Meier, 1997). Thus, in order to understand the meaning of a given utterance in one culture, one needs to look beyond the

literal meaning, taking into account potential interpretations an utterance could bear. This indicates the necessity for language learners to develop the communicative and pragmatic competence so that they decipher implicit messages and produce socially appropriate utterances that are in line with the social and cultural expectations of the members of a given society. Failure to recognise these expectations and social norms operating in the target language could lead to misunderstandings in communication and in some cases to communication breakdown.

Thus, this study highlights the importance of cross-cultural awareness of politeness norms operating in different cultures, so that people do not consider their social norms to be universal, as this could lead to “great potential for miscommunication and misperceptions based upon differing norms of interactions across societies and speech communities” (Boxer 2002: 150).

The most noteworthy finding concerning the request strategy choices was that Syrians were much more direct than Britons in their requesting strategies. This result has an important practical implication for Syrians learning English. Syrians may encounter problems in making requests in English since the accepted way of making requests in Syrian Arabic might influence their choices of request strategies, modification and address terms. Therefore, requests in English by Syrians might, sometimes, sound too direct and rude.

This point leads us to the pedagogical implication that teachers of English need to be aware of such problems and bring the insights of pragmatics into their teaching. In interlanguage pragmatics, Nelson et al. (2002: 164) claim that “one way to decrease instances of pragmalinguistic failure is for students to learn the pragmalinguistic aspects of the target language. These aspects cannot be taught, however, until teachers know what they are”. Accordingly, teachers need to understand the interrelationships between the use of requests and the social variables and norms underlying the use of these requests.

8.5. Suggestions for further research:

In this thesis, the discourse completion test is the main instrument for eliciting data so that requests’ realisations and politeness phenomena could be explored in further detail. However, Bayraktaroglu (1991) highlights the need to study politeness in stretches of talk. She argues that politeness is not of static nature and hence the approach used for capturing it

in single utterances is not adequate to account for politeness in conversational sequences. This point provides us with an insight for future research using more discursive approaches to politeness. Moreover, further investigation and experimentation on paralinguistic features and intonation is strongly recommended as it could enlarge our understanding of the factors affecting the individuals' perception of politeness. One possibility for further research might be analysing audio-visual data in terms of politeness, as it provides the researcher with a suitable means to study the intonation of the request utterance as well as other paralinguistic features.

Furthermore, in spite the fact that this research examined unsaid request strategies, including opting out, alternative responses, and negotiation, it would still be interesting to compare experiences of individuals in providing alternative responses and negotiation for achieving their requestive illocutionary points. Although the mixed-methods approach employed in this research promised to be fruitful, adding natural data could provide more insights into how speakers realise requests. The findings also suggest that further research focusing on unsaid requests would help us establish a more detailed account of non-spoken politeness issues.

Moreover, one should point out that this research only involved a cross-cultural analysis of Syrian Arabic and British English requests. It would add a further dimension if future research were to concentrate on the inter-language dimension through the investigation of Syrian subjects' English L2 production of requests in the given situations used in the discourse completion test. The inter-language data from Syrian participants could be compared on both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic levels in order to assess the effect of the use of mother tongue on the Syrians' English L2 requests.

Finally, having a big corpus of requests rich with lexical and phrasal expressions used as internal and external modifiers that are culturally-specific to the Syrian Arabic speech community raises a question of the translatability of these expressions from Syrian Arabic to English, taking into account the politeness dimension. Looking closely at the potential problems the translator could face upon translating such expressions, and finding the best way to translate them in a way that faithfully represents the cultural connotations and politeness aspects, is an area that has not been explored before in the context of requests and this would be worth investigating in the future.

8.6. Chapter summary:

In this chapter, after the presentation of the summary of the findings, an attempt has been made to evaluate the present study in terms of its strengths and limitations. The strengths include: adopting a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the size of the corpus used, the methodological rigour for the control of subjects and adjusting the discourse completion test's situations, the new features of the coding scheme including Marti's (2006) model for unsaid requests and the new categories arising in this research project, and finally the innovative focus on Syrian politeness. Limitations, on the other hand, include the representativeness of the sample subjects, the use of discourse completion tests as an elicitation procedure, and the difficulty encountered in categorising some data.

Then implications of this study in relation to cultural differences, cross-cultural pragmatics, intercultural pragmatics, and pedagogy or language teaching were then outlined. All these points indicate that the Syrian Arabic and British English cultures display differences in the way they encode linguistic politeness. Therefore, the best way to deal with such disparity is by familiarising language learners with the socio-cultural norms that control social interaction in the target language.

Finally, I introduced further suggestions to adopt a more discursive approach to politeness. I also drew attention to the point about further investigating the unsaid requests in order to contribute to the study of non-spoken politeness. Moreover, I suggested adding the interlanguage dimension by collecting and analysing some interlanguage data. By way of conclusion, I proposed investigating the issues involved in translating the particular cultural and religious Syrian Arabic expressions used in the requests into the English language.

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APPENDIX I: The English consent form

Consent form

Title of Research Project: A Semantic/Pragmatic Exploration of Requests: Politeness Orientation in British English and Syrian Arabic.

Name of Researcher: Ruba Khamam

Degree Programme: Ph.D.

Host department for this research: Department of Linguistics and Phonetics, University of Leeds, United Kingdom.

Aims of the project:

To do a comparative study of how people request in The Syrian Arabic and British English.

What you will be asked to do:

The questionnaire: Fill in the questionnaire providing what you think are appropriate answers to the given questions.

The Interview: Discuss and explain the answers you provided in the questionnaire.

How the data collected will be used.

The collected data will be quoted, described, and analysed with complete anonymity.

As a responsible researcher I, Ruba khamam, will keep all personal information that you might reveal completely confidential and though I may quote, describe and analyse the data, all data will be presented with complete anonymity. Additionally I will immediately withdraw your data if you should decide to withdraw from the project at any time. And you are free to withdraw from participation at any time with no need for explanation.

E-mail address: rubakhamam@gmail.com

To be completed by the participant:

I,..... agree to participate in the above research project. I have carefully read the above description of the project and understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.

Date:

Signature:

APPENDIX II: The Arabic Consent form

طلب موافقة

عنوان مشروع البحث:

دراسة دلالات الألفاظ اللغوية والبراعمانية للطلب: وجهة الكياسة والأب في كل من المجتمع الإنكليزي البريطاني و العربي السوري.

اسم الباحث: ربا خم

درجة البحث العلمي: دكتوراه

القسم المضيف للبحث: قسم الدراسات اللغوية والصوتية في جامعة ليدز ، المملكة المتحدة.

أهداف مشروع البحث:

القيام بدراسة لغوية تقارن بين كيفية قيام العرب السوريين و الإنكليز البريطانيون في صياغة طلباتهم.

ما سيطلب منك فعله:

في الاستبيان: تجنّب الاستبيان بما تعتقد أنه الجواب المناسب للأسئلة المطروحة.

في المقابلة: مناقشة و شرح الأجوبة التي كتبتها في الاستبيان.

كيف سيتم التعامل مع المعلومات المجموعة:

المعلومات المجموعة سوف يتم تحليلها ووصفها و الاستشهاد بها في هذه الدراسة دون الكشف عن هوية صاحبها.

أنا ربا خم كباحثة مسؤولة أقر بأنني سوف أحتفظ بالمعلومات الشخصية التي قد تتلون بها في هذه الدراسة سرية تماما. هذا و على الرغم من أنني سوف أقوم بتحليل و وصف و الاستشهاد بهذه المعلومات إلا أن ذلك سيتم دون الكشف عن هوية أصحابها. إضافة إلى أنني سوف أقوم بحجب كل المعلومات التي تخصكم في أي وقت تقرررون فيه الانسحاب من مشروع البحث، كما أن لديكم الحرية التامة في الانسحاب من المشاركة في المشروع في أي وقت دون الحاجة لتفسير ذلك.

البريد الإلكتروني: rubakhamam@gmail.com

ما يتم تعيلته من قبل المشارك:

أنا أوافق على المشاركة في المشروع المذكور أعلاه . و قد قرأت بتمعن وصف المشروع الأتف ذكره و أتفهم أن لدي الحرية التامة في الانسحاب من المشروع في أي وقت أشاء.

الاسم: التوقيع:

APPENDIX III: The English version of the questionnaire

The questionnaire:

A. The English request instrument:

Gender:

Education level: Undergraduate

Postgraduate

Age:

Native language:

Instructions:

You are kindly requested to go through 12 brief situations in which you need to ask the other person to do something for you. Try to imagine yourself in these situations and choose what you would say accordingly. In each case, you have the freedom to give an appropriate answer of your choice provided that you give the most complete information possible.

You can choose not to give an answer, if you think you would not say something in a situation. However, in this case please explain why you would not feel able to do so?

Situation 1:

You are a student and you want your roommate to clean up the kitchen he/she had left in a total mess the night before.

You:.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Situation 2:

You are a young woman and you want to get rid of a man pestering you in the street.

You:.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Situation 3:

You are a student and you want to borrow the lecture notes of another student as you missed the lecture.

You:.....
.....

.....
.....
.....

Situation 4:

While you were in the market you saw people living in the same street you live in but you have never spoken to before. How would you ask them to give you a ride home?

You:.....
.....
.....
.....

Situation 5:

You are an applicant calling an agency for information on a job advertised in a newspaper. How would you ask the person who answers the phone about the advertised job?

You:.....
.....
.....
.....

Situation 6:

You are a police officer asking a driver to move their car as no parking is allowed.

You:.....
.....
.....
.....

Situation 7:

You are a student and you want to ask your teacher for an extension on a seminar paper. The problem is that this is the second time you have asked for an extension.

You:.....
.....
.....

Situation 8:

You are a university professor and you want to ask one of your students to give their presentation a week earlier than scheduled.

You:.....
.....

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Situation 9:

You are a citizen waiting in a public hall where smoking is not allowed and you want to ask the person sitting beside you to stop smoking.

You:.....
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Situation 10:

You are in desperate need for money this month as you have many financial commitments. You want to ask a colleague whom you get on well with to lend you 100£. What would you say to them?

You:.....
.....
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.....
.....

Situation 11:

You are a manager in a company and you want the secretary to photocopy the minutes of the last meeting you had. How would you ask your secretary to do that?

You:.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Situation 12:

You are a manager in a company and you would like to have a cup of coffee, but the person who usually prepares the drinks is absent. How would you ask your secretary to make a drink for you?

You:.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thanks for your time and cooperation.

APPENDIX IV: The Arabic version of the questionnaire

وسيلة طلب

الجنس:.....
العمر:.....
المستوى التعليمي:.....
اللغة الأم:.....

سيطلب منك قراءة اثني عشر موقف طلب موجز في كل موقف ينبغي عليك أن تطلب من الشخص الآخر أن يفعل لك شيئاً أو أن يؤدي لك خدمة ما و إن لك حرية اختيار العنصر المناسب. يرجى الإجابة باللهجة السورية الدارجة (العامية) و بالقدر الوافي ما أمكن كما لو كنت في موقف حقيقي.
ملاحظة: إذا كنت تعتقد أنك لن تطلب من الشخص الآخر أن يفعل لك شيئاً في موقف ما يرجى منك تبرير ذلك.

الموقف الأول:

أنت طالب وتريد أن تطلب من زميلك الذي يشاركك السكن الجامعي أن يقوم بتطيق المطبخ الذي تركه في حالة برئى لها الليلة الماضية.
أنت:.....
.....
.....
.....

هل و كيف ستطلب إذا كان الشخص الذي تطلب منه من الجنس الآخر؟
.....
.....
.....

الموقف الثاني:

أنت ضالمة و تريد أن التخلص من شخص ما يقوم بلزعاجك و ملاحقتك في الشارع.
أنت:.....
.....
.....
.....

هل و كيف ستطلب إذا كان الشخص الذي تطلب منه من الجنس الآخر؟
.....
.....
.....

الموقف الثالث:

أنت طالب و تريد استعارة ملاحظات أحد زملائك عن محاضرة لم تستطع حضورها. كيف تطلب منه ذلك؟

أنت:

.....
.....
.....
.....

هل و كيف ستطلب إذا كان الشخص الذي تطلب منه من الجنس الآخر؟

.....
.....
.....
.....

الموقف الرابع:

في أثناء وجودك في السوق تصادف أشخاصاً يعيشون في الشارع الذي تعيش فيه ولكن لم يمسق لك التحدث معهم . كيف تسألهم أن يوصلوك على طريقهم إلى بيتك.

أنت:

.....
.....
.....
.....

هل و كيف ستطلب إذا كان الشخص الذي تطلب منه من الجنس الآخر؟

.....
.....
.....
.....

الموقف الخامس:

تتصل بإحدى وكالات التوظيف بنية الاستعلام عن إحدى الوظائف التي أعلتو عنها في جريدة ما. كيف تسأل الموظف الذي يجيبك على الهاتف عن الشاغر المعان عنه؟

أنت:

.....
.....
.....
.....

هل و كيف ستطلب إذا كان الشخص الذي تطلب منه من الجنس الآخر؟

.....
.....
.....
.....

.....

الموقف السادس:

أنت شرطي و تريد أن تطلب من سائق سيارة أن يحرك السيارة من مكانها لأنه وقف في مكان غير مسموح له بالوقوف. ماذا ستقول له؟

أنت:

.....

.....

.....

هل و كيف ستطلب إذا كان الشخص الذي تطلب منه من الجنس الآخر؟

.....

.....

.....

الموقف السابع:

أنت طالب و تريد أن تسأل أستاذك أن يؤخر لك موعد تسليم حلقة البحث التي بتوجب عليك تسليمها إلا أن المشكلة هي أن هذه هي المرة الثانية التي تطلب فيها التمديد.

أنت:

.....

.....

.....

هل و كيف ستطلب إذا كان الشخص الذي تطلب منه من الجنس الآخر؟

.....

.....

.....

الموقف الثامن:

أنت بروفيسور في الجامعة و تريد من أحد تلاميذك أن يقوم بإلقاء محاضرتة قبل الموعد المحدد له بأسبوع. كيف ستعلمه بذلك؟

أنت:

.....

.....

.....

هل و كيف ستطلب إذا كان الشخص الذي تطلب منه من الجنس الآخر؟

.....
.....
.....
.....

الموقف للتاسع:

لدى انتظارك في قاعة عملة حيث يمنع التدخين منعاً باتاً يجلس أحدهم بجوارك و يبدأ بالتدخين بطريقة مزعجة. كيف تطلب منه التوقف عن التدخين؟

أنت:.....
.....
.....
.....

هل و كيف ستطلب إذا كان الشخص الذي تطلب منه من الجنس الآخر؟

.....
.....
.....
.....

الموقف للعاشر:

وقعت في ضائقة مالية هذا الشهر نتيجة لنفدك الكثير من الالتزامات المالية. تريد أن تستدين مبلغ عشرة آلاف ليرة سورية من زميلك أحمد الذي تربطك به علاقة جيدة. كيف ستطلب منه المال؟

أنت:.....
.....
.....
.....

هل و كيف ستطلب إذا كان الشخص الذي تطلب منه من الجنس الآخر؟

.....
.....
.....
.....

الموقف الحادي عشر:

أنت مدير في شركة وتريد أن تطلب من السكرتيرة تصوير النقاط التي تم بحثها في آخر اجتماع لك ماذا ستقول لها؟

أنت:.....
.....

هل و كيف ستطلب إذا كان الشخص الذي تطلب منه من الجنس الآخر؟

الموقف الثاني عشر:

أنت مدير في شركة وتشعر برغبة ملحة في شرب قنجان من القهوة غير أن للشخص الذي يحضر المشروبات غير موجود. كيف تطلب من السكرتيرة أن تقوم بتحضير القهوة لك مع أن هذا ليس من ضمن نطاق عملها؟ أنت:

هل و كيف ستطلب إذا كان الشخص الذي تطلب منه من الجنس الآخر؟

أشكر لكم حسن تعاونكم.

APPENDIX V: The English translation of the Arabic questionnaire

The questionnaire:

A. The English request instrument:

Gender:

Education level: Undergraduate

Postgraduate

Age:

Native language:

Instructions:

You are kindly requested to go through 12 brief situations in which you need to ask the other person to do something for you. Try to imagine yourself in these situations and choose what you would say accordingly. In each case, you have the freedom to give an appropriate answer of your choice provided that you give the most complete information possible.

You can choose not to give an answer, if you think you would not say something in a situation. However, in this case please explain why you would not feel able to do so?

Situation 1:

You are a student and you want your roommate to clean up the kitchen he/she had left in a total mess the night before.

You:.....
.....
.....
.....

How would you make your request if the person whom you are asking is of the opposite gender?

You:.....
.....
.....

Situation 2:

You are a young woman and you want to get rid of a man pestering you in the street.

You:.....
.....
.....
.....

How would you make your request if the person whom you are asking is of the opposite gender?

You:.....
.....
.....

Situation 3:

You are a student and you want to borrow the lecture notes of another student as you missed the lecture.

You:.....
.....
.....
.....

How would you make your request if the person whom you are asking is of the opposite gender?

You:.....
.....
.....

Situation 4:

While you were in the market you saw people living in the same street you live in but you have never spoken to before. How would you ask them to give you a ride home?

You:.....
.....
.....
.....

How would you make your request if the person whom you are asking is of the opposite gender?

You:.....
.....
.....

Situation 5:

You are an applicant calling an agency for information on a job advertised in a newspaper. How would you ask the person who answers the phone about the advertised job?

You:.....
.....
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.....
.....

How would you make your request if the person whom you are asking is of the opposite gender?

You:.....
.....
.....

Situation 6:

You are a police officer asking a driver to move their car as no parking is allowed.

You:.....
.....
.....
.....

How would you make your request if the person whom you are asking is of the opposite gender?

You:.....
.....
.....

Situation 7:

You are a student and you want to ask your teacher for an extension on a seminar paper. The problem is that this is the second time you have asked for an extension.

You:.....
.....
.....
.....

How would you make your request if the person whom you are asking is of the opposite gender?

You:.....
.....
.....

Situation 8:

You are a university professor and you want to ask one of your students to give their presentation a week earlier than scheduled.

You:.....
.....
.....
.....

How would you make your request if the person whom you are asking is of the opposite gender?

You:.....
.....
.....

Situation 9:

You are a citizen waiting in a public hall where smoking is not allowed and you want to ask the person sitting beside you to stop smoking.

You:.....
.....
.....
.....

How would you make your request if the person whom you are asking is of the opposite gender?

You:.....
.....
.....

Situation 10:

You are in desperate need for money this month as you have many financial commitments. You want to ask your colleague Ahmed whom you get on well with to lend you 100£. What would you say to them?

You:.....
.....
.....
.....

How would you make your request if the person whom you are asking is of the opposite gender?

You:.....
.....
.....

Situation 11:

You are a manager in a company and you want the secretary to photocopy the minutes of the last meeting you had. How would you ask your secretary to do that?

You:.....
.....
.....
.....

How would you make your request if the person whom you are asking is of the opposite gender?

You:.....
.....
.....

Situation 12:

You are a manager in a company and you would like to have a cup of coffee, but the person who usually prepares the drinks is absent. How would you ask your secretary to make a drink for you?

You:.....
.....
.....
.....

How would you make your request if the person whom you are asking is of the opposite gender?

You:.....
.....
.....

Thanks for your time and cooperation.