A Comparison of Requests by Kuwaiti Arabic Native Speakers, English Native Speakers, and Kuwaiti Arabic speakers of English.

Nushour Alduaij

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Department of Language and Linguistics

University of Essex

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Abstract

This doctoral dissertation investigates a particular aspect of pragmatic competence, the production of the speech act of requesting, by Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) speakers of English as Foreign-Language (EFL) at two proficiency levels: intermediate and advanced. The non-native speakers' (NNS) data is compared to a control data of native-speakers (NS) of their first language (L1) and another control of NSs of the target-language (TL). The elicited requests are analyzed on two dimensions: the core request and mitigation devices. The core request is performed using one of six strategies which range from direct to conventionally indirect to non-conventionally indirect, depending on the transparency in stating the content of the request. Mitigation devices, which as the name suggests serve to soften the impositive force of the request, entail two types: external and internal. External modification is represented by utterances added outside (before or after) the request proper. Internal modification, on the other hand, is added within the request proper, and can be manifested via lexical/phrasal downgraders and/or syntactic downgraders.

The analysis showed some similarities between the NNS requests and the KA requests, represented by a higher frequency of using direct strategies and a lower frequency of employing internal modification relative to the English NSs. Comparing the NNS data to the English control data revealed similarities in the distribution of the sub-strategies of the request strategy 'Preparatory' and the use

of some external modifier types. The similarities between the L1-NNS pair seem to emphasize the role of existing L1 pragmatic knowledge in the development of TL pragmatic competence essentially through transfer as argued by Bialystok (1993). The similarities between the NNS-TL pair lend support to the import of noticing the relevant pragmatic feature(s) for achieving successful acquisition of pragmatic competence as suggested by Schmidt (1993). There were also some differences between the two proficiency levels in the NNS data. The most significant observation relates to the use of syntactic downgraders. The advanced NNSs modified their requests using this type of internal modification more frequently than did the intermediate NNSs. Such differences suggest that this aspect of request formation (syntactic modification), being structurally more complex, is acquired at a later stage and requires a higher level of proficiency in the TL. In fact, results of the present study overall conform to the findings of existing studies on requests. This contributes to the verification of the proposed features of NNS or learners' language (identified as *interlanguage IL*) from a new L1 perspective, KA. In other words, the consistency between findings of the present study and other request studies investigating other L1's strengthens the argument for the existence of some pragmatic universals shared across different languages.

Results of the present also accord with Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory. According to Brown and Levinson, the choice of request strategy and degree of mitigation used is determined by the assessments of

three social variables: (P), status power of the speaker relative to the hearer, (D), social distance or familiarity between the speaker and the hearer, and (R), ranking of the imposition of the request. In situations of superior hearer, unfamiliarity between the speaker and the hearer, and/or high imposition requests, the use of direct requests is expected to subside. Brown and Levinson argue that the use of extreme indirectness in such situations can communicate a higher level of politeness. Not explicating the content of the request directly allows room for the hearer to decline inconvenient requests. Findings of the present study revealed that participants tended to vary their choice of request strategy and use of mitigation devices depending on the combined effect of the three variables (P), (D) and (R). Another important finding is that the conventionally indirect strategy 'Preparatory' (interrogatives enquiring about conditions such as H's ability, permission, and etc., to do the requested act) was employed significantly more than the other request strategies. This particular strategy was preferred by the requesters not only in the more demanding situations, for example when requesting from a superior, but in a variety of other situations. The present study thus serves to support the universality of the politeness value of the strategy 'Preparatory' as argued in other request studies investigating speakers of other L1's.

Dedication

In loving memory of my first baby, Sarah, who experienced the writing of the final draft with me.

In Kuwait:

I would like to dedicate this doctoral dissertation to my mother, for standing by me in every possible way throughout the constant challenges of the PhD.

To my husband, I started the PhD route without you, but ever since you came into my life I could always count on your support.

To my uncle Prof. Hassan Al-Sanad who put me on the path of postgraduate studies to begin with.

To my dear family, and beloved friends (a long list that does not fit here in a single page), I cannot thank you enough for all your prayers and empathy, and your help in the hectic data collection process.

In Colchester:

I'm also greatly indebted to my supervisors Prof. Robert Borsley and Dr. Beatriz De Paiva, for their moral support and thorough feedback that helped me conduct and complete this research.

To Miss Catherine Gentry, the Graduate Administrator in the department of Language and Linguistics at University of Essex, for promptly attending to my inquiries and concerns.

And to anyone who helped me in any way make this dream come true, many thanks.

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List of Abbreviations

Advanced-Level (Non-native speaker)	ADL
British English	BE
Cross-Cultural Pragmatics	CCP
Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project	CCSARP
Discourse Completion Test	DCT
English Language Teaching	ELT
Face Threatening Act	FTA
First Language	L1
Head Act	HA
Hearer	H
Indirect Speech Act	ISA
Interlanguage	IL
Interlanguage Pragmatics	ILP
Intermediate-Level (Non-native speaker)	INL
Kuwaiti Arabic	KA
Locution Derivable	LD
Modern Standard Arabic	MSA
Mood Derivable	MD
Native Speaker	NS
Non-Native Speaker	NNS
Second Language	L2
Speaker	S
Speech Act	SA
Target Language	TL
Want Statement	WS

Introduction

Pragmatics, in a broad sense, concerns how speakers express their intended messages and how recipients comprehend these messages. A fundamental topic in the study of pragmatics is that of appropriate use of language or politeness. The scope of pragmatics thus addresses topics such as how speakers plan and execute their speech by evaluating some circumstances in the interaction such as the status of the addressee and the relationship between the speaker and the addressee. In recent pragmatic research, the topic of how learners' develop their pragmatic competence in a second/foreign language has also gained particular interest among scholars.

One of the most common pragmatic language functions is the production of Speech Acts (SA)s, whereby speakers carry out various actions with speech. There is an open-ended list of actions that can be performed through words. One of the most recurrent of these actions is requests, whereby the hearer is directed to do something for the speaker (request for action) or to provide the speaker with some kind of information (request for information). Despite the high frequency of requests in everyday interaction, the requestee does not always comply with the requested action, for one reason or another. Therefore, the requester has to cushion his/her request with one (or more) mitigating devices in an attempt to make the request relatively less demanding.

The present research is a contrastive study of request production and use of mitigating devices by Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) Native Speakers (NS) learning English as Foreign Language (EFL) at two proficiency levels: intermediate (INL) and advanced (ADL). The non-native speakers (NNS) data is compared to the data of a control group of NSs of the first language (L1), and another control group of NSs of the Target Language (TL). The KA control data and the NNS data represent an unprecedented database for request formation for a language variety that has not been investigated in interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) and cross-cultural pragmatics (CCP) research before. It illustrates some of the most conventional request strategies and mitigation devices used among speakers of this language population. The comparison between the NNS data and the KA data helps reveal some of the features of the interlanguage IL (a term for identifying learners' language) which draw on L1 requests. Building IL pragmatic competences on L1 competence is argued to be one of the main techniques for developing L2 pragmatics in adult learners in (Bialystok's 1993). The present data provides support for this proposal, illustrated by the request features where the learners' IL was more reflective of their L1 requestive behavior.

Comparing the NNS data with the British English (BE) control data sheds light on respects in which learners' requests fail to represent target-like language use. In fact, the present study's data revealed that even the advanced learners relied on their L1 in some aspects of request formation. For example, the learners illustrated a higher frequency of using direct requests and a limited use of internal

modifiers relative to the BE participants. Identifying the differences between the NNS data and the TL NS data is vital to the pedagogical process. It helps curriculum designers and teachers pay particular attention to these non-target-like aspects of request formation throughout the language teaching process. For instance, by providing sufficient illustrations of request formation in more varied contexts and allowing ample opportunities for practice, the learners' requests can become more reflective of English NS requests.

The present study also investigates the effect of the three social variables: power of Speaker (S) relative to hearer (H), distance between S and H, and imposition of the request, on the choice of request strategy and use of mitigation devices. This relation between the social variables and linguistic choices is another area of language use (namely *sociopragmatic* ability: the ability to select from the range of linguistic forms available for performing the request based on the social context at play) that is underrepresented in the relevant literature. The relation between these three variables and the use of request strategy and request modification in the present data reflects what is proposed by Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory. In situations addressing superior H, situations where S and H are unfamiliar, and/or situations involving high imposition requests, participants tended to employ fewer direct requests (such as imperatives) and use mitigation devices to a larger extent. However, while politeness theory proposes that the least direct request strategy *hint* is the most polite, the preset study supports the universality of the conventionally indirect

strategy 'preparatory'. It seems that this particular strategy is appropriate for request formation a variety of contexts in different languages.

The dissertation at hand starts (chapter one) with the identification of the domain of pragmatic competence and the types of abilities that could be included within it, one of which is the ability to produce various speech acts such as requests in an appropriate (polite) manner. Chapter one further discusses the theories for the development of pragmatic competence by language learners, mainly Bialystok's (1993) two-dimensional model of cognitive processing and Schmidt's (1993) noticing hypothesis. These theories draw on cognitive activities such as *transfer* of pragmatic conventions from the learners' L1 and noticing of relevant input in the TL which are perceived as some of the essential techniques in developing pragmatic competence in a second/foreign language. Chapter two focuses on the speech act of requesting which is divided into: direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect requests, based on the transparency of the target request to the addressee. Chapter three discusses how pragmatic competence can be investigated by reviewing some of the most used data collection instruments with citation of some example studies. Chapter four discusses the administration of the present study. This includes the data collection instruments used (rating questionnaire and production questionnaire namely Discourse Completion Test DCT) and the participants. Chapter five provides a description of the coding process based on a highly categorical coding manual used for coding the elicited DCT data. In the rather extensive chapter six, the coded data

is analyzed in relation to the research questions and goals specified at the beginning of the dissertation (chapter one). The conclusion chapter concludes with a summary of the results discussed in the preceding chapter. It further provides some of the limitations of the present study and suggestions for future research.

Chapter (1):

Pragmatic competence and its acquisition

1. The Concept of Pragmatics

Setting a satisfactorily comprehensive definition for pragmatics or pragmatic competence for that matter is not easy (Barron 2003; cf. Žegarac and Pennington 2000). Indeed, it is not always possible to break down language use into separate blocks of abilities (such as linguistic, pragmatic and other) as these abilities intertwine in practice (Hoffman-Hicks 1992). Still, numerous accounts are proposed as to what the scope of pragmatics can be and the kind of abilities that fall under it.

Pragmatics is distinguished from the neighboring field of semantics (roughly identified as the study of linguistic meaning), which used to be the prevailing framework as far as understanding meaning is concerned, and is essentially recognized as the study of how contextual factors interact with linguistic meaning in the interpretation of utterances (Sperber and Wilson 2005:1). Pragmatics gives rise to the distinction between the context-dependent 'speaker meaning' as opposed to the purely linguistic 'sentence meaning' (Leech 1983 as cited in Thomas 1983:92), and thus 'utterance-meaning' as opposed to 'sentence-meaning' (Nino and Snow 1999:349; see also Sifianou 1999:111). A sentence can be identified as a well-formed string of words put together according to the grammatical rules of a language. An utterance, on the other hand, is the use of a particular piece of language- be it a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a sequence of sentences- by a particular speaker on a particular occasion (Huang 2007:10-11).

From a pragmatic perspective, *context* is constructed not only through the linguistic meaning of the utterance, but also by considering the other circumstances surrounding the utterance. These include elements such as the preceding utterances in the conversation, the beliefs and assumptions shared between participants to the conversation, and the social, psychological and physical setting where the conversation takes place (Levinson 1983:23; see also the three components of context including physical context, linguistic context and general knowledge context in Huang 2007:13-4; also De Paiva and Foster-Cohen 2004:283 and De Paiva 2007 on what constitutes context). The most important criterion for utterance interpretation is that these elements of the context (linguistic, physical, psychological and etc.) are accessible to the hearer, that s/he is able to process them.

2. Exploring Pragmatic Competence

2.1. The Cognitive Perspective and the Social Perspective

Pragmatics can be perceived from a cognitive perspective and a social perspective (Žegarac and Pennington 2000:1). The cognitive approach explains the cognitive mechanisms governing communication, how interlocutors produce and comprehend each other's speech. A major example of this approach is Sperber and Wilson's cognitive psychological theory Relevance Theory (RT) which argues that human communication is essentially governed by expectations of relevance from the speaker (S) by the hearer (H). *Relevance* is defined in terms of positive cognitive effects and processing effort as follows: (a) the greater the positive cognitive effects resulting from processing a given input, the more relevant it is, and (b) the

greater the processing effort required for processing a given input, the less relevant it is. The processing effort is determined by elements such as the length of the utterance, the frequency of use of the lexical items being employed (for example, using a term such as *'condiments'* evokes more processing effort than using the more common *'salt and pepper'* (Sperber and Wilson 2004) and the accessibility a necessary contextual assumptions. As such, relevance serves to both guide H to comprehend what S means and guide S in producing his/her utterances based on expectations of relevance.

The social approach addresses how sociocultural parameters affect communication, for example, how speakers take into account variables such as the social status and age of the addressee as they produce their speech. An example of a socially oriented approach is Leech's (1983) *politeness principle* (Leech 1983 as cited in Spencer-Oatey and Žegarac 2002:85). The dominant principle was Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) and its four conversational maxims of 'quality', 'quantity', 'relation' and 'manner', which provide general guidelines for efficient speech production to maintain cooperation with the other interlocutors in the conversation. The CP states "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged". The four maxims urge interlocutors to make their contributions to the communication true (quality maxim), adequately informative (quantity maxim), relevant (relation maxim), and expressed in a short and clear manner (manner maxim) (Grice 1989 in Spencer-Oatey and Žegarac 2002:80). Leech's politeness principle proposes that politeness is

often the most compelling motive for breaching the CP and its maxims. According to the politeness principle, the necessity to demonstrate oneself as a polite interlocutor is equally important in communication as the need to deliver the message efficiently as set by the CP and its subsequent maxims. In fact, RT also acknowledges considerations of politeness as one of the possible motives for choosing an utterance which is not the most *optimally relevant*[1] choice.

> "There may be relevant information that they [speakers] are unable or unwilling to provide, and ostensive stimuli that would convey their intentions more economically, but that they are unwilling to produce or unable to think of at the time" (Sperber and Wilson 2004:7).

Brown and Levinson (1978) propose a similar account whereby politeness is perceived as fundamental in speech planning and execution. Their politeness theory delineates hierarchical strategies for speech production and specifies the sociocultural variables that speakers consider when choosing from these strategies. Politeness theory will be discussed in more detail in chapter (2).

2.2. Pragmatic Competence as part of the Communicative Competence (CC) Model:

One of the key terms when identifying pragmatic competence is that of Communicative Competence (CC). In the CC model, first introduced by

[1] A stimuli is *optimally relevant* if:

a. It is relevant enough to be worth the audience's processing effort.
b. It is the most relevant one compatible with communicator's abilities and preferences.

(Sperber and Wilson 2004:5)

Abilities in this sense refer to the kind of information S is able to produce and provide, while preferences denote issues such as the need to demonstrate oneself as a polite interlocutor.

Hymes (1972 as cited in Aguilar 2008:59), the ability to use language appropriately (in a manner that generates positive attitudes towards the speaker, in other words *politely*) is bound with the ability to produce grammatically correct forms. The CC was introduced at a time when the topic of appropriate language use was markedly marginalized in linguistic research in general and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research in particular (Djigunovic 2006; Malaz *et al.* 2011). The CC concept of Hymes was adapted by Canale and Swain (1980 as cited in Aguilar 2008:59-60; also Canale 1983 as cited in Barron 2003:9) who developed a model of communicative competence that is built up of three types of competence, grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic[2], and extended the application of this model to foreign language learning (see Aguilar 2008:59-60; also Malaz *et al.* 2011; also Thomas's 1983 treatment of communicative competence; also Djigunovic 2006 on the dominance of other language skills over the ability to produce socially and culturally appropriate language until Canale's 1983 modal of Communicative Competence; also Cziko 1984 on language skills involved in communicative competence).

Bachman (1990 as cited in Yamashita 2008:202; see also Bachman 1990 and Bachman and Palmer 1996 as cited in Barron 2003:9-10) proposes a similar model of communicative language ability which comprises three major competence types: *language competence*, *strategic competence* and

[2] The most relevant competence types to the discussion here are *grammatical* competence (which includes the knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar, semantics and phonology) and *sociolinguistic* competence (which includes two sets of rules: sociocultural and discourse). *Sociocultural* rules are mainly concerned with determining the extent of appropriateness of certain propositions for certain sociocultural contexts.

physiological mechanisms[3]. The most relevant competence type for the discussion here is language competence. Under language competence, Bachman enfolds two types of competence: *organizational competence* (which entails grammatical competence and textual competence) and *pragmatic competence. Pragmatic* competence is divided into two subtypes: *illocutionary competence* and *sociolinguistic competence*.

Illocutionary competence in Bachman's model (ibid) features knowledge of speech acts and language functions. The term *illocutionary* was first introduced by Austin (1962; 1975 as cited in Huang 2007) who identifies three types of acts that speakers perform in their speech: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary. Illocutionary act concern's the speaker's intentions realized in producing the utterance, e.g. request, complaint, and many more as will be discussed in chapter two. On the other hand, *sociolinguistic* competence concerns sensitivity to language and context; that is speakers' sensitivity to the social variables in context such as the relation with the addressee (familiarity vs. distance), the addressee's social status (greater, less than or equal to the speaker) and the addressee's age which altogether affect how speakers formulate their utterances (see chapter (4) on how these variables are demonstrated in the research design of the present study).

Strategic competence is recognized differently in Bachman's model (ibid). While in the abovementioned models of Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale

[3] Aguilar (2008:60-1) cites Van Ek's (1986) as another model which builds from Hymes CC, and comprises the following competences: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic, sociocultural and social.

(1983) strategic competence denotes a set of compensatory strategies to repair communication breakdown such as non-verbal gestures and paraphrasing, Bachman establishes strategic competence as the ability to assess the situation, to plan an utterance verbally and perform (or utter) it.

According to Bachman (ibid), his model consists of both knowledge or competence and the capacity to execute this competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use, thus postulating a distinction between *knowledge* and *ability*. While *language competence* (consisting of both grammatical and textual competence and pragmatic competence, see above) is posited as knowledge, *strategic competence* is demonstrative of ability. Consistent with this dichotomy of knowledge vs. ability, Færch and Kasper (1984 as cited in Barron 2003) propose a distinction between *declarative* and *procedural* pragmatic knowledge. Declarative knowledge refers to knowledge of pragmatic issues, thus reflecting Bachman's 'knowledge'. Procedural knowledge draws on parts of declarative knowledge necessary for achieving the targeted communicative goal(s). The types of abilities encompassed in procedural knowledge include the ability to carry out goal-formation, context analysis, verbal planning as well as monitoring feedback from the other conversational co-participants and the like. Færch and Kasper argue that in instances where a speaker cannot access his/her declarative knowledge due to factors such as fatigue, stress, pressure or complex cognitive content of the message, the resulting performance would not be accurately representative of his/her declarative knowledge (Barron 2003:10).

Bachman's model (ibid) is of particular relevance here because the illocutionary competence it proposes highlights the vital 'functional' aspect of language competence, whereby language is used to perform actions. Identified as such, illocutionary competence helps set the theoretical framework for Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) research, allowing studies to focus on a particular aspect of the learner's pragmatic competence, namely the production of speech acts (Yamashita 2008:202). This is indeed the dominant trend in ILP research (Yates 2010), especially considering that the realization of illocutionary forces is one of the aspects of pragmatic competence where languages vary from each other. The present study follows the same trend, investigating the production of the speech act of requesting in two languages: Kuwaiti Arabic and British English, and the interlanguage of Kuwaiti learners of English. Furthermore, the distinction Bachman draws between illocutionary competence (i.e. knowledge of speech acts and functions they serve) and sociolinguistic competence (i.e. knowledge of social parameters that govern speech act production) is also found in another approach to pragmatics that brings to the table key terms in pragmatic research, *pragmalinguistic* vs. *sociopragmatic* knowledge (Barron 2003).

2.3. Pragmalinguistic vs. Sociopragmatic Knowledge

The distinction between sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge was introduced by Leech (1983 as cited in Spencer-Oatey and Žegarac 2002:85). Pragmalinguistic knowledge involves knowledge of the linguistic strategies that are used to convey a given pragmatic meaning (or function).

Sociopragmatic knowledge concerns knowledge of the socially based assessments, beliefs and interactional principles that underlie interlocutors' choice of strategies (cf. Cohen (1996:22-3) who proposes a similar set of pragmatic-related abilities, *sociolinguistic* ability which corresponds to pragmalinguistic knowledge and *sociocultural* ability which concerns the kind of knowledge involved in sociopragmatic knowledge).

Though pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics entail different types of knowledge their domains overlap in practice (Kasper 1992:210). The following is an example of the relation between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics and how each knowledge type operates in a request situation (the speaker is trying to get the salt placed at the other side of the table). Obviously, there is a wide range of linguistic forms available to achieve this goal:

a. "Pass the salt"

b. "Can you pass the salt, please?"

c. "My food is not salty enough"

Such linguistic forms, among many others, range from most direct (a) where the speaker explicitly state his/her request, to least direct (c) where the speaker points to some fact which can be understood by means of common sense as a need to have more salt (classification of directness levels in requests will be treated in detail in chapter two). There is also the strategy of not saying anything, instead the speaker could stand up to and reach for the salt by him/her-self. All these strategies represent the pragmalinguistic aspect of this communicative event (request). The sociopragmatic facet, on the other

hand, lies in the socially and contextually-bound assessments which the speaker considers before selecting a certain strategy over the other available strategies. For example, strategy (a) is less expected when requesting from a hearer of greater social status than the speaker[4].

Having discussed how pragmatic competence can be conceptualized, the following section identifies the types of language abilities that can be included within pragmatic competence.

3. What Kind of Language Abilities are Included under Pragmatic Competence

It is evident from the various approaches to understanding pragmatics discussed above that pragmatic competence is not a single thing. It involves both general inferential processes of the kind Grice and RT focuses on and conventions of the kind that Morgan discusses (as illustrated in chapter two when discussing the distinction between conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect speech acts). Thus, there is a wide range of language abilities that pertain to pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig 2010), which mainly boil down to the use and interpretation of language in context. These include for example the ability to deal with phenomena such as conversational implicatures, reference in general (as in deictic expressions such as place deictic, for example *here* and *there*, temporal deictic, for example *today* and

[4] The pragmalinguistics vs. sociopragmatics paradigm is also adopted for pedagogical applications. Seeking to identify the nature of non-target-like performance that language learners are likely to fall in when developing their pragmatic competence in the Target Language (TL) to helping language teachers rectify them accordingly, Thomas (1983) identifies two types of pragmatic failure in learner's interlanguage; pragmalinguistic vs. sociopragmatic failure.

tomorrow, verbs, for example *come* and *go,* and the like, see Nino and Snow 1999:348-9), and other inferential processes whose interpretation lies outside the scope of linguistic competence (cf. Carston 1999 on Discourse Competence).

Another important ability that is most relevant to the present study is the ability to use language to achieve certain functions, namely the production of Speech Acts (SA). SAs include an extensive range of functions such as requests, refusals, apologies, complaints, invitations, compliments, expressions of gratitude and many others. Equally important is the ability to realize (interpret) speech act functions, especially in cases where the intended function is not straightforwardly (directly) mapped onto the linguistic form being used, as in the case of indirect requests where a question is used to make a request (see chapter two)

Pragmatic competence also accounts for the ability of both interlocutors to abide by conversational rules such the operation of politeness rules and other socially and culturally bound conventions[5] in speech that determine the appropriateness of certain linguistic forms in certain situations or contexts (cf. Bialystok 1993).

[5] In this respect, Culy (1996 as cited in Bender 1999:16) advocates the concept of 'user's manual', which recommends the addition of knowledge of socially-bound meaning as "second module" to linguistic competence (see the discussion above on sociolinguistic competence). Culy thus seems to separate this type of knowledge from the ordinary grammatical knowledge (unlike Bender 1999 who posits this type of knowledge within linguistic knowledge).

Having reviewed some of the most influential accounts on pragmatics, it is due to settle on a definition of pragmatic competence that is most compatible with the purposes of the research at hand. As will be illustrated in the upcoming chapters, the present study focuses on a specific aspect of pragmatic competence, the production of the speech act of requesting in a variety of contexts. Therefore, the definition of pragmatic competence that best aspires to the goals of the present research is put forward by Barron (2003) as "knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a given language for realizing particular illocutions, knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts and finally, knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular language's linguistic resources". (Barron 2003:10; see also Koike 1989:279). Apparently, this definition does not account for the inferential processes that are the concern of Grice and RT, which clearly play a role in the interpretation of speech acts. This is because the data elicited for the present study and the consequent analysis does not concern the interpretation but rather the production of requests.

4. How does Pragmatic Competence Develop?

Theories on the Acquisition of Pragmatic Competence in the Second/Foreign Language:

As will be illustrated in chapter (3), which discusses how the pragmatic component of learners' language (identified henceforth as *Interlanguage* (IL)[6] can be empirically investigated, the topic of how pragmatic competence is

[6] The term *interlanguage* is introduced as alternative to the perception that learner's language is some deviated version of the TL. Learner's language is instead perceived as some transitional developmental stage between the L1 and TL (cf. Færch and Kasper 1989). The term *Interlanguage* is also utilized as a larger field of investigation (Interlanguage Pragmatics ILP, see chapter three).

developed by second or foreign language learners is underrepresented in the literature (Bardovi-Harlig 1999). On the one hand, the broader Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research tends to concentrate on the morphosyntactic, grammatical or lexical features of the IL (cf. Schmidt 1993; Woodfield 2008; also Thomas 1983 on the dominance of research addressing learners' grammatical errors). Furthermore, existing literature on the pragmatic component of IL is dominated by *contrastive* (comparative) studies, comparing learners' pragmatic behavior to that of NSs of the TL, rather than explaining how these learners have come to develop their pragmatic competence in the first place, what is identified as *developmental* studies (Kasper and Rose 2002; Schauer 2006). In fact, even those studies which are designed to explore developmental issues fail to properly establish a theoretical platform as a basis for analysis. This could be attributed to the extended challenges in the methodological design of developmental studies (Kasper 1992; also see chapter three for further discussion).

The present study is also contrastive in principle, comparing Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) learners of English as Foreign Language (FL) to Native Speakers (NS) of the first language (L1) and NSs of the Target Language (TL). The present study further attempts to shed light on some of the developmental patterns of this learner group by drawing on some theoretical underpinnings, as in Bialystok's (1993) model and to a lesser extent Schmidt's (1993) noticing hypothesis, as will be discussed in the next section.

In a review of some of the most prominent theoretical frameworks on the acquisition of pragmatic competence in the L2 (and by extension foreign language FL)[7], Kasper and Rose (2002) distinguish the following five theories: the acculturation model, sociocultural theory, language socialization, interactional competence as goal and process of learning, and cognitive processing models (namely Bialystok's 1993 two-dimensional model of L2 proficiency development and Schmidt's 1993 noticing hypothesis).

The acculturation model is based on the findings of Schumann (1978 as cited in Kasper and Rose 2002:16) in a longitudinal case study of an adult Costa Rican learner of American English. Schumann (1986 as cited in Kasper and Rose 2002:16-7) mainly attributes the learner's pragmatic development to the extent to which s/he integrates as opposed to diverges from the TL and its NSs. Low social and psychological distance between the learner and the TL group denotes higher *acculturation* which leads to successful L2 acquisition and vice versa. The learner in Schumann's study did not integrate properly into the TL community, and therefore his IL was rather pidginized featuring insufficiently developed grammar, limited communicative functions deployable only for basic transactional purposes and a few redundant morphological and syntactic transformations. This correlation between acculturation and second language acquisition was later invalidated by Schmidt's findings (1983 as cited in Kasper and Rose 2002:18).

[7] See chapter four on the distinction between English as Second Language (ESL) learning context and English as Foreign Language (EFL).

The other three theories (the sociocultural theory, language socialization, interactional competence as goal and process of learning) differ in certain aspects but share the same fundamental principle whereby interaction functions as both the target of language learning and the tool for achieving this goal. In other words, communicative competence can be developed through the interaction between the less competent and the more competent speakers, as in children and adults or beginner and advanced learners (cf. Schmidt 1993:21 on indirect learning of pragmatic competence).

4.1. The Two Cognitive Processing Models: Bialystok (1993) and Schmidt (1993)

While the theories discusses above provide some insight into the development of pragmatic competence in the TL, the two cognitive processing models represent better candidates as theoretical platform for the research at hand. By going beyond the social aspect and exploring the cognitive aspect of the acquisitional process, Bialystok's and Schmidt's models explain learners' development by assessing issues such as *pragmatic transfer*, a recurrent phenomenon in the IL which cannot be explored under the other socially oriented theoretical models (Kasper and Rose 2002:60-1). Furthermore, and while the acculturation model was shown to be invalid by Schmidt (1983 in Kasper and Rose 2002), the other theoretical models (the sociocultural theory, language socialization and interactional competence as process and goal) were mainly implemented in research on classroom interactions (Kasper and Rose 2002:38-39), which makes the resulting data incomparable to that of the present research.

In the next sections, the two cognitive models Bialystok (1993) and Schmidt (1993) will be explored. Before doing so, the term *pragmatic transfer* will be thoroughly treated given its import in understanding how IL pragmatic competence is developed.

4.2. Pragmatic Transfer

The term *transfer* in linguistic research loosely refers to the systematic influences of existing knowledge on the acquisition of new knowledge (Žegarac and Pennington 2000:1-2). Applied to ILP research, *pragmatic transfer* refers to the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information (Kasper 1992:207).

Two types of pragmatic transfer have been identified, following Leech (1983, and later Thomas 1983) dichotomy of pragmatic knowledge into pragmalinguistic vs. sociopragmatic (as discussed in an earlier section). *Pragmalinguistic transfer* accounts for instances where the L1 influences learners' mapping of form-function in the L2 (Takahashi 1996:190). *Sociopragmatic transfer* concerns the cases where the learners' contextual assessment of the appropriateness of a certain linguistic form in a certain context is influenced by their L1 communicative norms (Takahashi 1996:189, also Takahashi 1995).

Another relevant and important distinction is made between positive and negative transfer. *Positive transfer* occurs when language-specific

conventions of usage and use are shared between L1 and L2 (Kasper 1992:212; also Takahashi 1995, Liu 2001, 2002). When such conventions are transferred to the L2 they often lead to target-like communication, hence the label *positive* (or *facilitative* in Franch terms 1998:10). For example, research has shown that certain conventionally indirect forms for requesting in English such as '*Can you VP?*' tend to be successfully performed by leaners of various L1 backgrounds (as in Danish, German, Japanese, Chinese and Hebrew), most likely because their native-languages exhibit functionally equivalent linguistic form(s) to the English construct '*Can you VP?*' (see Franch 1998 for more examples).

While positive transfer, for the most part, aids learners' acquisition, *negative transfer* often results in non-target-like production (hence *facilitative* transfer as opposed to *interference* transfer in Franch's terms 1998:10). To be more specific, negative transfer is the inappropriate transfer of native sociolinguistic norms and conventions of speech into the TL (Eslami and Noora 2008:303). An example of negative transfer at the pragmalinguistic level is the following conversation (from Franch 1998:10) between a Japanese learner of English (JE) and English NS (E):

E: Look what I've got for you! (Maybe a gift)

JE: Oh, I'm sorry (*'thank you'* does not sound sincere enough in Japanese)

E: Why sorry?

The learner here is expected to express gratitude, at least according to English NS standards or sociocultural norms. Instead, the learner provides an

apology, a response which is based on Japanese NS assessments of the situation at hand. The resulting response thus comes off as irrelevant to the English NS addressee.

Transfer is often constrained by a number of motivating factors. To begin with, language features (such as linguistic forms, sociocultural norms and the like) perceived as language-specific are believed to be less transferrable than those features which learners perceive as language-neutral[8] (Koike 1996:258; also Kasper 1992; Franch 1998; Færch and Kasper 1989; also Takahashi 1995). For example, Takahashi (1996:202-4) found that request strategies in L1 Japanese which had functional equivalences in L2 English and are perceived in both languages as more appropriate (polite) such as questions of hearer's willingness '*Would you (please) VP?*' were more transferable than the other request strategies in her investigation. The high transferability rate of this particular request strategy in Takahashi's study is further explained in terms of appropriateness and frequency of use in the L1. It is argued that L1 features which are perceived as more appropriate in achieving a certain communicative function and are thus frequently used in the learners' L1 are more likely to be transferred to their IL (Eslami and Noora 2008; Kasper 1992).

Furthermore, transfer could be influenced by the learner's proficiency level in the L2 (Koike 1996; Færch and Kasper 1989). Whether the influence of L2 proficiency level positively or negatively correlates with increased transfer

[8] Of course, a given feature may not be language-neutral per se but it is how the learners perceived it due to some similarities in form and function between L1 and L2.

from L1 remains unresolved (Franch 1998:6). There is evidence from some studies that lower proficiency learners transfer from the L1 to a larger degree than the advanced learners. Given their limited resources at the L2, they are more prone to rely on their L1 language competence when communicating in the L2. Other studies provide evidence the contrary, arguing that the advanced level learners have a more enriched linguistic capacity at the L2 that enables them to express their L1-based conventions in the L2 (see Takahashi 1996:193-5 for studies supporting a negative correlation between proficiency and transfer and studies supporting a positive correlation; also Bardovi-Harlig 2001:27; Eslami and Noora 2008; Otcu and Zeyrek 2008; Salgado's findings 2011:183 for evidence supporting the increase of transfer with increased proficiency). There is also the argument that L2 proficiency correlates neither positively nor negatively with transfer. Takahashi's (1996) study on the transferability of request strategies from L1 Japanese to L2 English shows that proficiency had no significant effect on transfer (see also Eslami and Noora 2008).

Another possible constraint on L1 pragmatic transfer relates to the degree of imposition[9] in the case of requests (Eslami and Noora 2008). The degree of the imposition of the request is often recognizes as *context-external* social factor as opposed to *context-internal* social factors which entail the relative status as well as familiarity between the speaker and the hearer, which are also believed to have an influence on transfer (Franch 1998:5). For example, in Takahashi (1996) imposition was statistically found to have a significant

[9] Degree of imposition refers to how serious the content of the request is, for example, asking to borrow money is more impositive than asking to borrow a pen or so (see chapter (4) for further discussion).

effect on transfer. In situations with more impositive requests, participants in her study tended to fall back on their L1 conventions as means for minimizing the imposition of the request.

Other conditions under which transfer could occur as reported in the literature include length of stay in the TL community, personal traits such as age and personality of the learner (Franch 1998:5), the learning context represented mainly by classroom instruction (or teaching induced transfer[10] as Kasper (1992) puts it), the politeness and conventionality encoded in the strategy for making the request, and the degree of mitigation expected according to the imposition of the request, the status of H relative to S as well as the familiarity between the two. It is however not always clear whether a certain IL performance is a result of L1 transfer or some other process such as (over)generalization, for instance, or the operation of some other universal pragmatic principles (Kasper 1992:222). In fact, Kasper argues that some deviations from the TL norms (or negative transfer) are intentional, more or less, through which the learner sustains affiliation to his/her L1 (see Franch 1998:6 on transfer as means of disidentification from the L2 group).

4.3. Bialystok's Two-Dimensional Model (1993): The Two Cognitive Processing Components

Bialystok attempts to explain the development of pragmatic competence in adult learners in relation to how children acquire pragmatics in the L1. In

[10] Classroom instruction increases learner's familiarity with a certain linguistic form (or semantic formula or strategy choice) as most appropriate in a specified context, which in turn raises the odds of transfer if the learner encounters a similar context (see discussion above on the effect of appropriateness and frequency of use in promoting transfer).

doing so, she proposes two cognitive (or processing) components; analysis of knowledge and control of processing. *Analysis of knowledge* is the process where the learner makes explicit or *analyzes* the implicit knowledge of a domain. *Control of processing*, on the other hand, is the process where the learner *controls* his/her attention to relevant and appropriate information and integrating those forms in real time (Bialystok 1993:48). Bialystok argues that children's development of pragmatic competence pertains largely to *analysis of knowledge* component. With no prior representation of a language system whatsoever, children are faced with a larger amount of knowledge to learn. One other hand, the development of pragmatic competence in adult L2/FL learners is, for the most part, a matter of *control of processing*. Adults are developing L2/FL competence upon the already existing L1 system (cf. de Paiva and Foster-Cohen 2004:284; also Nino and Snow 1999; also Cook 1999). Therefore, the total amount of novel knowledge they are expected to learn is comparatively less than that of children starting from scratch. As Bialystok puts it:

> "Adults do, of course, need to worry about the analysis problem...In my view, this problem is relatively minor. Similarly, while children's greatest obstacle for mastering pragmatic competence is in developing analyzed representations of language, they still need to pay attention to control...The argument presented here, however, is that the greatest challenge for each group, children learning their first language and adults learning a second language, lies in a different component." (Bialystok 1993:54-55).

To illustrate the difference between children and adult L2/FL learners in relation to the two cognitive processing components, Clark (1979 in Bialystok 1993:53) draws attention to an important aspect of pragmatic competence, the interpretation of indirect meanings. An Indirect Speech Act (ISA) such as indirect request, for example, evokes two meanings. There is a *literal* meaning, embodied in the linguistic form, as well as an *intended* (or indirect) meaning, calculable from the surrounding context (as will be discussed fully in chapter two). While adults, thanks to existing L1 pragmatic system, have access to both meanings (literal and indirect), children, whose pragmatic abilities are still developing, do not (Shatz and McClosky 1984; also De Villiers 1984 both cited in Bialystok 1993:53-54).

CALLER: *Is your mother home?*

CHILD: *Yes.* (from Bialystok 1993:45)

Although the expression "*Is X home?*" is a common formula to urge the hearer on the other end of the line to get person *X* to come and answer the phone, the child here could not work out this *conventionally* assigned function as indirect request, and simply attended to its literal meaning as 'yes/no' question (see Morgan 1978 in chapter two on the distinction between literal vs. conventional meaning). Adult L2/FL learners in such a context are still faced with an attentional task. They have to evaluate the two available meanings (literal and indirect) based on the surrounding contextual clues and consequently direct their attention towards the meaning which sounds more relevant (see discussion of Cognitive Principle of Relevance under Relevance Theory pointed above). This demonstrates how controlled attention is a more

challenging task for adult learners than it is for children who do not have simultaneous meanings competing for their attention.

Bialystok (ibid) further contends that adult L2/FL learners still need to undertake some analytical tasks such as the formation of TL form-function relations (i.e. pragmalinguistic knowledge), the identification of TL sociocultural conventions (i.e. sociopragmatic knowledge) such as those involving the social status, age and/or gender of the addressee, learning the conversational rules in the TL such as turn-taking, interrupting and opening/closing of conversations, and recognizing the situations where TL communication promotes the use of (in)directness to express a speech act such as requesting, for instance (Bialystok 1993:53, also Barron 2003:44). By the same token, children are also expected to master selective attention. As illustrated in the telephone conversation example above, the child needs to control his/her attention as to which of the possible meanings (i.e. 'yes/no' question vs. indirect request) is more relevant in the given context (Bialystok 1993:55).

4.3.1. Testing Bialystok's Model: Discussion of Findings of Studies

A number of ILP studies attempted to verify the validity of Bialystok's model by testing the role of each of the two cognitive processing components (analysis of knowledge and control over attention) in the acquisition of pragmatic competence by adult L2/FL learners. Hassall (2008) investigated the acquisition of address terms in the TL by two groups of Australian learners of

Indonesian. The low-intermediate group comprised learners of low proficiency level acquiring Indonesian in Australia in the traditional classroom FL setting. The other group, the high-intermediate, comprised high proficiency level learners who after studying Indonesian in FL setting spent a year abroad in the TL environment, thus studying the language as SL. All learners engaged in four video-taped Role Play situations (2 eliciting requests, 2 complaints) with an Indonesian NS, featuring different power relations between the two interlocutors (see chapter (3) on eliciting data via Role Plays (RP) in interlanguage pragmatic research). The researcher then played the video-recordings of what each participant has produced asking him/her to comment on what s/he was thinking exactly while taking part in the role play situation. In general, Hassall's findings are consistent with Bialystok's position on the importance of the control of attention component in adults developing pragmatic competence in the L2/FL. Hassall concludes that "all the learners face a constant task of gaining better control over ever-changing states of knowledge" (Hassall 2008:89). In some cases in his study, Hassall observes that learners would report using the pragmatically appropriate form according to the status of their interlocutor, whereas in their actual performance they have used the inappropriate form. For example, one of the low-level learners reported twice that she has produced the appropriate address term, even after watching her own recording session where she in fact does not use that specific term, and uses the inappropriate address term instead. This demonstrates that while the learner here has developed the relevant declarative knowledge on the use of address terms, she has not yet mastered how to access and utilize this knowledge in actual production (i.e. procedural

knowledge, see discussion of declarative vs. procedural knowledge above). In other words, it is not a matter of lacking the knowledge of the appropriate use of address terms per se (i.e. declarative knowledge) but rather lacking sufficient control over attention to this knowledge necessary for its implementation in TL communication (cf. Barron 2006 highlighting the connection between declarative knowledge and Bialystok's analysis of knowledge component on the one hand and procedural knowledge and Bialystok's control over attention to knowledge component on the other).

Further support for Bialystok's proposal from the same study (Hassall 2008) lies in instances where learners supply the pragmatically appropriate form but hesitate before doing so. For example, one of the low-level learners displayed hesitation before producing the appropriate address term. The learner's hesitation, which she herself reports in the verbal report data (see chapter three on eliciting data via verbal reports), suggests that although she has succeeded in developing the relevant knowledge of appropriate use of address terms, she still needs to master the control over attention to knowledge component (Hassall 2008:86-87). From another perspective, Hassall's findings also emphasize the necessity to develop new L2 knowledge to a larger extent than what Bialystok acknowledges.

Koike's (1989) findings on request realization and production by beginner American English adult learners of Spanish also provide support for Bialystok (ibid). In the listening task where learners had to identify a request from a set of SAs including an apology, for instance, nearly all learners were able to

identify requests from non-requests. Learners' ability to identify a request from a non-request at such a beginner-level, even if they relied on other non-verbal cues such as intonation, corroborates Bialystok's argument, that acquiring new knowledge is not a demanding task for adult L2 learners as it is for children acquiring the language for the very first time.

On the other hand, Hassall (2011) provides evidence against Bialystok's postulation, as acquiring new L2-related knowledge is illustrated as a more focal task for adult learners than acquiring control over attention to knowledge. By investigating how Australian learners of Indonesian modify requests in the L2, Hassall observes that learners' requests were often devoid of internal modifications[11] compared to the Indonesian NSs control group who used significantly more internal modifiers. The learners modified their requests internally at a percentage of 6.6% as opposed to 67.7% by the Indonesian NSs. For example, one of the devices available for internal modification in Indonesian is *tolong*, which is the nearest equivalent to *please* in English. However, the Australian learners have been taught that *tolong* has the single effect of marking an imperative (Johns 1977 as cited in Hassall 2001:272). Not having acquired the knowledge that *tolong* in Indonesian functions as internal modification just as *please* in English explains why the learners' requests markedly lacked this internal modifier. As Hassall (2001) concludes "Acquiring new pragmatic knowledge is a major task for adult

[11] *Internal modification* is the use of elements within the request utterance either to tone down its impositive nature (downgraders) or to strengthen its requestive force (upgraders). It is distinguished from *external modification* which denotes the use of supporting statements added to the core request in order to persuade the hearer to carry out the desired action. External and internal modifiers will be covered in full detail in chapter (5), where the coding manual used for analyzing the data of the present study.

learners of a second language – perhaps a larger task than suggested by the acquisitional model of Bialystok" (2001:272).

Another study which arrives at a similar conclusion on the importance of acquiring new pragmatic knowledge in adult L2/FL learning is Barron (2006). Barron looks at the acquisition of address terms in German by Irish learners who spent a year abroad in the TL community. Her findings cast doubt on Bialystok's model, arguing that "while it is not refuted that control over processing is an important component of acquisition, the present study suggests that declarative knowledge may not be as simple to acquire as assumed by Bialystok". (Barron 2006:85; see also Kasper 1993 cited in Barron 2003:44 for a similar standpoint).

Evidently, Bialystok's model should be handled with caution. Assuming that adult learners' acquisition of L2/FL pragmatic competence is largely a matter of control over attention to knowledge rather than forming new representations of TL knowledge consequently suggests that adult learners depend heavily on the already established L1 knowledge. If that was the case, then adult learners' L2/FL acquisition could be thought of mainly as a process of L1 transfer. Clearly, this cannot be valid as transfer does not occur freely but is rather conditioned by a number of constraints, as has been discussed above. For example, one of the constraints on transfer is the increased perceived similarity between the L1 and the L2. In other words, language features that are shared between the L1 and the TL are more transferrable than language-specific features. Accordingly, and if transfer was indeed

assumed to be the main explanatory factor for acquisition of L2/FL pragmatic competence, then learners would not be able to attain the features which are language-specific to the TL. Although the role of transfer cannot be denied here, it should not be overestimated either.

In addition, the cognitive processes which Bialystok's model taps on are not easily detectable (Hassall 2008:79). For example, one way to elicit such retrospective data, where participants comment on what has been going on in their minds while performing the language-related task, is the use of verbal reports. The administration and analysis of verbal report data can be quite challenging for the researcher, not to mention the possibility that participants would not reveal the type of information the researcher is seeking (see chapter three for further discussion of verbal reports as data collection instrument in pragmatic research).

4.4. Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis

According to the noticing hypothesis, *noticing*[12], which stands for subjective experiencing of some stimuli as part of the stream of consciousness, is a prerequisite for learning. It is only when the L2 data (recognized as *input*) is attended to and noticed, what Schmidt refers to as *intake*[13], that L2 data can be learned (Schmidt 1993:24; see also Kasper and Rose 2002:21; also Barron 2003:44).

[12] Schmidt cites other alternatives for the concept of noticing such as *focal awareness* (Atkinson & Shiffrin 1968), *episodic awareness* (Allport 1979), *conscious perception* (Dixon 1971), *apperceived input* (Gass 1988).

[13] *Intake* is the subset of *input* (input being the L2 data available in the learner's environment) that the learner appropriates to build the interlanguage (Kasper and Rose 2002:21).

Schmidt identifies two aspects of consciousness: being aware of what is noticed and being intentional about noticing it. As far as learning is concerned, consciousness as awareness is what matters most (cf. Malaz *et al.* 2011 for a similar argument). A learner may intend to notice some L2-related phenomenon but fail to do so either because the information presented is too complex to process or is presented too quickly or too subtly to be seen or heard (Schmidt 1993:24), or because the learner's attention is distracted by some other factor such as fatigue, for instance (cf. De Paiva 2010:265 on constraints on noticing and consequently on learning). In such cases noticing was not attained although it was intended. Furthermore, the noticing of a given input is overall driven by its relevance (cf. de Paiva and Foster-Cohen 2004:284-5). Applying the relevance theoretic (as pointed earlier in this chapter) Cognitive Principle of Relevance whereby "human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance" (Sperber and Wilson 2004:5), input which perceptually sounds more relevant is more likely to be attended to and noticed (cf. De Paiva 2010:266). This of course does not mean that learners are capable of noticing all the input available in classroom (i.e. intake) but at least the amount that their mental capacity or attention span allows.

Schmidt further distinguishes between two levels of conscious awareness: surface level (i.e. noticing) and deeper level (i.e. understanding). *Noticing* here means merely registering the occurrence of some event (Atkinson & Shiffrin 1968; Kihlstrom 1984 as cited in Schmidt 1993:26) whereas *understanding* means the recognition of a general principle, rule or pattern.

For example, the learner could simply notice a pragmatic function as in the use of a certain address form by a NS of the L2. If the learner could dig deeper into what is being noticed and makes the connection between the address form being used and the status of the hearer, especially after noticing a couple of occurrences of this particular form in varied interactional situations, then the learner comes to understand the pattern for using this address term. Schmidt argues that in general both noticing and understanding are essential to the development of pragmatic competence; however, noticing seems to be of greater influence. Schmidt illustrates this proposal in relation to the case of acquiring address terms in the L2, for example, as follows:

> "if the task is to acquire an address system in which the ingroup/outgroup distinction is relevant or in which address forms systematically vary by sex of addressee, learners must attend to and notice in input both the linguistic forms and the relevant contextual features. This may mean attending to features of context that either are not relevant or are defined differently in the native language, so that learning a new pragmatic system often entails learning how to make new interpretative assessments of the world. However, it does not seem to be necessary for learners to make any conscious connection between the address forms encountered and the contextual factors that are correlated with such forms."
>
> (Schmidt 1993:34)

Here, "conscious connections" which apparently entails understanding, is not emphasized as condition for successful learning of address form system.

Instead, it is the noticing of the linguistic forms and their functions as well as the concurrent contextual features which are altogether more necessary for the learning process. Evidence to the import of noticing over understanding in learning a pragmatic rule in the L2 can be found in DuFon's experiment (1999 as cited in Barron 2003:45), which investigates six participants over 4-months period abroad learning Indonesian as L2. From the participants' retrospective data, DuFon observes that features of address terms and greetings in the L2 were noticed despite the fact that not all learners reached a level of understanding of differences noticed.

The concept of noticing vs. understanding evokes another distinction between explicit and implicit learning. According to Dekeyser (2003:314), the criterion that distinguishes explicit from implicit is that of *awareness*, implicit representing learning without being aware of what is being learned. Implicit learning is often illustrated by inductive learning techniques, whereby learners are going from the particular to the general, from examples to rules. Thus, when children acquire their linguistic competence in the L1, they are learning the structures without thinking consciously about them much, hence illustrating inductive and implicit learning. Conversely, language learners who are encouraged to find rules for themselves and by studying examples in a text exemplify explicit inductive learning. Explicit teaching thus is demonstrated by metapragmatic, awareness-raising explanation about form-function relationships of the target structures (Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh 2008:180).

Likewise, Bialystok (1978 as cited in De Paiva 2010:263) distinguishes between *explicit* and *implicit linguistic knowledge*. The former refers to the conscious facts the learner has about the language and his/her ability to articulate those facts, the latter denotes intuitive information via which the learner produces responses and comprehends responses of others in the TL. This is in line with the distinction between analyzed mental representations, where the relationship between form and meaning is apparent to the learner (hence explicit), and unanalyzed representations of linguistic knowledge, where the learner has no conscious access to structured form-meaning relationships (implicit). Thus, explicit knowledge reflects the type of knowledge offered via instruction, and it can transform to implicit as it becomes automated in the learner's processing system through time and practice.

As far as the teaching of pragmatic functions is concerned, research findings strongly suggest that pragmatic knowledge needs to be explicitly taught, which conforms with Schmidt's proposal (see discussion in conclusion, cf. Franch 1998; Bardovi-Harlig 2001; Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh 2008; Kasper 1992:219; Takahashi 1996; also Rose 2000 reporting some studies on the effect of explicit vs. implicit learning on the development of pragmatic competence).

5. The Theoretical Framework for the Present Study:

Evident from the discussion of Bialystok (1993) and Schmidt (1993) above, the two theories operate on cognitive processes (control of processing in adult L2/FL learners and noticing, respectively) and perceive them as requisites for

successful acquisition. The effect of such cognitive mechanisms cannot be properly detected without retrospective data where participants reflect on their own production (see chapter three for data types). Relying on production data alone, the researcher cannot resolve whether for instance the absence of a certain L2 convention in the IL data is a result of the lack of L2-related knowledge to begin with or the ability to implement this knowledge in the elicitation task. That is to say, whether the learner has not actually acquired this particular L2 convention (i.e. *declarative* knowledge or analysis of new L2 knowledge component) or was not able to exploit that knowledge in actual production (i.e. *procedural* knowledge or control of attention to knowledge component).

Nevertheless, and at the risk of falling under the kind of research which is not properly guided by a theoretical framework (Kasper and Rose 2002; de Paiva 2007), the present study draws on some aspects of the two theories. For example, and although Bialystok's model is criticized for underestimating the task of acquiring new TL knowledge in adult L2/FL learners, the emphasis Bialystok's model places on the control of processing component draws attention to a focal process in the development of the IL, transfer. As such, increased similarity between the learners' data and the L1 data serves to corroborate the role of L1 competence in developing IL pragmatic competence. In a similar perspective, and in relation to Schmidt (1993), instances of target-like performance in the learner's data can indicate that s/he has noticed the TL input until it was acquired as *intake* (cf. Malaz *et al.*

2011). On the other hand, non-target-like performance can suggest that the relevant L2 convention was not noticed to begin with.

Another theoretical framework that is highly relevant to the present study is Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1978), as will be discussed in chapter (2). According to Brown and Levinson, requesters vary the level of directness of the request and use of mitigation devices which overall affect the degree of politeness communicated depending on the social variables in the request situation. These variables include the power differential between S and H (P), the social distance (D), and the ranking of the imposition of the request (R) (see chapter four). Thus, in hearer-dominant situations, in situations where S and H are distant from one another, and/or in situations where the imposition of the request is high, requesters are expected to decrease the level of directness and/or increase the use of mitigation devices. The present study investigates the validity of this hypothesized relation between the three social variables and the use of request strategies and modification devices.

It should be further considered that the findings of the present study fruitfully add to the existing body of ILP research in more than one way. To begin with, the present study focuses on a language variety (Kuwaiti Arabic KA) that is novel to ILP research, and thus establishes a primary database for request realization. This unprecedented database includes some of the most conventional semantic formulae and syntactic structures for request formation in KA as well as mitigation devices. This allows the cross-comparison

between request conventions in KA and other Arabic language varieties and can be further extended to other non-Arabic languages. This is illustrated in chapter (6) where the findings of the present study are discussed in relation to other ILP studies of different L1 backgrounds.

The present study also explores the pragmatic component of the IL of a new learner group (KA speakers of English at different proficiency levels, see chapter four). Compared with results of existing request studies on English learners from different L1 backgrounds (other varieties of Arabic and other languages), the results of the present study contributes a better understanding of learners' pragmatic competence in TL English.

To sum up, the pragmatic competence of the participants in the present study is investigated by looking at a particular function (request formation) at two levels of analysis: the core request (request strategy) and supportive moves. Supportive moves are optional elements commonly used by requesters to soften the imposition of the request upon the requestee. Supportive moves can be added outside the core request, hence *external modification*, or within it, hence *internal modification* (see chapter five for a full-fledged discussion of request strategies, external and internal modifications). The present study further investigates the validity of the relation between the three social variables (P), (D) and (R) and the use of request strategies and modification devices as hypothesized by Brown and Levinson (ibid).

Accordingly, the aims of the present study can be pinned down as follows:

1- Identifying the similarities and/or differences between the two NSs control groups: the KA and the British English (BE), in the use of request strategies and supportive moves (external modification and internal modification).

2- Identifying the similarities and/or differences between the two learner groups: the intermediate-level (INL) and the advanced-level (ADL) in the use of request strategies and the use of supportive moves.

3- Identifying the similarities and/or differences between participants in each learner group and participants in the L1 group in the use of request strategies and the use of supportive moves. In the cases where the learners' IL requests are more similar to the requests produced by participants in the L1 group could provide evidence for transfer. If so, that is if L1 transfer is visibly detected in the IL data, then Bialystok's argument is reconfirmed (that adult learners' acquisition of L2/FL pragmatics is largely a matter of analysis of control of attention to knowledge rather than acquisition of new TL-related knowledge).

4- Identifying the similarities and/or differences between each learner group and the TL group in the use of request strategies

and the use of supportive moves. The cross-group analysis between each learner group and the L1 group on the one hand, and between the two learner groups and the TL group on the other can further contribute to existing research on the role of proficiency as a constraint on transfer. If, for instance, the advanced-level learners' data showed greater tendency towards transfer from L1 KA, then proficiency can be perceived as an aiding factor for transfer. Statistical analysis is carried out on the similarities and/or differences between the various participant group pairs (L1-IL, L2-IL, and L1-L2) to support the findings more accurately (Kasper 1992:223; also see chapter six on quantitative analysis of the present data).

5- Identifying the effect of the three social variables, (P), (D) and (R), on participants' choice of request strategy and use of supportive moves in each individual situation.

As such, the Research Questions (RQ) for the present study can be summed up as follows:

RQ.1. How do participants in the two NSs control groups differ in their use of request strategies and supportive moves?

RQ.2. How does proficiency level affect request formation in the TL in terms of request strategy choice and use of supportive moves (i.e. differences between the two learner groups)?

RQ.3. Which learner group behaved more like the L1 control group on the one hand and the TL control group on the other in terms of request strategy and supportive moves?

RQ.4. Which request strategy and modifier type is most used in relation to each participant group on the one hand and the situation on the other?

Each research question will be addressed separately in chapter (6).

Chapter (2):

The speech act of requesting

1. The Speech Act of Requesting: Why Requests are Selected as Topic for Investigation in the Present Research

As established in the previous chapter, pragmatic competence involves a range of phenomena related to language in use. The phenomenon of most relevance to the present research is the appropriate production of Speech Acts (SA), particularly the speech act of requesting.

Requests are selected as a topic for study in the present research from a wide range of SAs that speakers can perform (see below) due to their highly frequent usage in speech. Numerous instances of language use involve situations where the speaker is trying to get his/her hearer to perform some action (such as the case of requests involving a physical action response, as in the classic example "*pass the salt*") or provide some information that would mostly benefit the speaker (Koike 1989; Soler *et al.* 2005; Curl and Drew 2008; also Fukushima 1996:672 on the two types of requests; requests for action or goods vs. requests for information). In fact, the ability to produce and understand the communicative functions of speech acts in general and requests in particular is believed to be universal (Kasper 1992:211-2; cf. Koike 1998), especially considering that such SAs are often performed using formulaic (conventionalized) expressions available in each language (Koike 1996) such as "*Can/could you do X?*" in English, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Furthermore, requests are believed to be among the most difficult SAs to master by L2/FL learners. As Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984; also Lin 2009) point out, requests require a relatively high level of knowledge of both the linguistic forms available to express the illocutionary force of a request which range from most direct to least direct (as will be illustrated later in this chapter), as well as knowledge of the appropriate use of each form in the TL culture, that is at the sociopragmatic level (Harlow 1990, Alaoui 2011; Ellis 1995). This two-fold knowledge of both linguistic means and social constraints on the use of requests (i.e. pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic, respectively, see chapter one) is necessary to attain due to the imposition inherent in requests (cf. Sifianou 1999; Yates 2010, Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily 2012). A request is believed to impinge upon the hearer's autonomy, that is, his/her need to be free from imposition, or what Brown and Levinson (1978) identify as *negative face*. Therefore, speakers need a richer repertoire of linguistic resources so that they can modify (mitigate) their requests and diminish their imposition upon the speaker's face (Usó-Juan 2008; Holtgraves and Yang 1992; Huang 2007; cf. Al-Ali and Alawneh 2010; Schauer 2008, Trosborg 1995, Beltrán and Martínez-Flor 2004). By the same token, a request can be met with an incompliant response, which ultimately compromises the speaker's *positive face,* what Brown and Levinson (ibid) identify as the individual's need to feel embraced by others. For such considerations, studies on requests bring forth another level of knowledge that could be productively invested in the formation of requests. This knowledge involves the ability to incorporate various types of modification into the core request (cf. Al-Ali

and Alawneh 2010; Malaz *et al.* 2011), including *external* vs. *internal* modification and *lexical/phrasal* vs. *syntactic* modification which illustrate internal modification[1] (request modification will be discussed in full detail in chapter five). Each type of modification contributes to reducing the overall imposition of the request upon the hearer's face, which in turn makes it more difficult for the hearer to decline the request.

2. The Speech Act of Requesting from a Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical paradigm for treating SAs in general and requests in particular cannot be established without referring to the renowned Speech Act Theory (SAT). The foundations of SAT were laid down by Austin and later developed by his student Searle. Austin proposed that speakers are constantly "doing things with words" (Austin 1976 as cited in Barron 2003). Accordingly, there is an open-ended list of SAs that speakers can perform through language just as many as the expressible intentions. Austin identifies five major categories of the most common SAs, a categorization which has been revised by a number of other scholars (Robinson 2006). The most relevant category to the topic of the present research is *directives,* getting H do what S wants. SAs that fall under this category can thus be extended to include in addition to requests and orders SAs such as pleas, giving directions or instructions, offers and the like (Meier 2010;

[1] Lexical/phrasal modification and syntactic modification are both sub-types of internal modification, where the request is modified by inserting the element within the core request. External modification, on the other hand, involves the addition of an element outside the core request (before or after). All types of modification will be elaborately treated in the coding manual (chapter five) used to analyze the data in the present study.

see also Craven and Potter 2010 for an alternative view where directives (i.e. imperatives) are distinguished from requests as they do not allow room for non-compliance).

According to SAT, speakers produce three acts in performing a given SA: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary[2]. *Illocutionary act* generated most attention. It carries what S intends in producing the SA, what is identified as *force* of an utterance. As such, SAT identifies Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFID)s such as performative verbs, mood, word order and intonation (Huang 2007), which help the hearer figure out the force of a given utterance.

Considering the speech act of requesting, there are certain verbs that unmistakably signal a request, hence *performative verbs.* The most common performative verb indicative of requests in English is '*ask*' as in '*I'm asking* you to do X' (see request strategy 'Performatives' in coding manual in chapter five). In Kuwaiti Arabic (KA), the verb '*request*' is used in the past tense to mark 'Performatives' (that is [ṭalabt-ik] for male addressee and [ṭalabt-ič] for female addressee, which translate as: I-*request*-Past tense-you). Grammatical mood can

[2] Locutionary act: the act of uttering (phonemes, morphemes, sentences) and also referring to and saying something about the world. Perlocutionary act: the intended effect of an utterance on the hearer, for example to make the hearer do something (request), to make the hearer happy (compliment), and so on (Huang 2007).

also be indicative of the illocutionary force of a SA (cf. Khalil and McCarus 1999 on the conditions available for indicating the illocutionary force of an utterance). For example, the sentence mood *imperative* is classically associated with attempting to get the addressee to do something, although in actuality imperatives are rarely used in speech for this function, particularly in languages such as English (a topic which will be treated with more detail later in this chapter). Furthermore, Searle (ibid) proposes that the force of an utterance is marked by a set of prerequisites, termed *felicity conditions*[3], which in his view pertain to the speaker's linguistic competence (see Umar 2004 reporting on Searle 1969).

As far as the production of requests is concerned, *imperative* is ideally the grammatical mood that bears the illocutionary force of a request. In actual language use, however, speakers do not necessarily employ *imperatives* or use performative verb '*I request*' (or its more common equivalences such as '*I ask*') to realize their requests, at least not without modification with the most customary politeness token '*please*'. Instead, speakers use *declaratives* by stating information as in examples 1.*a-b* below (from Levinson 1983:254-5). Speakers also show high preference for using the sentence type *interrogative* to make

[3] The four felicity conditions that Searle identify are: propositional content condition, preparatory condition, sincerity condition and essential condition (see Umar 2004:45-6 on Searle 1969). In the formation of a request, felicity conditions are operative as follows (Trosborg 1995):

a. Speaker (S) wants Hearer (H) to do A (A being the future act desired by S on the part of H).

b. S assumes H can do A.

c. S assumes H is willing to do A (of course this condition does not matter much in cases of more compelling requests such as orders and commands).

d. S assumes H will not do A in the absence of the request.

requests, oftentimes by questioning the preparatory felicity condition (see felicity conditions *b* and *c* above). This is usually achieved by enquiring about the hearer's ability to carry out the requested act (as in 2.*a*), his/her willingness (2.*b*), or permission (2.*c*).

(1) *a.* I want you to VP..

b. You ought to VP..

(2) *a.* Can/Could you VP?

b. Will/Would you VP?

d. May I VP?

Discussion of the results of the present study (chapter six) manifestly reveals the dominance of *interrogatives* in making requests in both languages' data, KA and English, a topic that will be scrutinized in the next section.

3. Indirect Speech Acts (ISA)s: Theoretical Accounts on Indirect Requests

The observation that *imperatives* whose function is to perform the speech act of commands/orders are rarely used in performing requests suggests that in practice the relation between the form used and its intended illocution is not always straightforward. Therefore, some theoretical accounts have been proposed as to how the illocutionary force of an utterance can be analyzed,

especially when there is a discrepancy between the form used and the function intended. The next section (from C.i. to C.v.) delineates these accounts as they help explain the logic of Indirect Speech Acts (ISA). As will be manifest when discussing findings of the present study and other similar ILP studies (see chapter six), ISAs (particularly conventionally indirect requests) are more commonly used in requesting than direct requests.

3.1. The Literal Force Hypothesis (LFH)

Among such theoretical resolutions is the Literal Force Hypothesis (LFH) which contends that the illocutionary force of an utterance is invested into its form in one of two ways or rules (Levinson 1983: 263-4):

(i) Explicit performatives have the force named by the performative verb in the main clause.

(ii) Otherwise, the three major sentence-types in English, namely the imperative, interrogative and declarative, have the forces traditionally associated with them namely ordering (or requesting), questioning, and stating, respectively (with of course the exception of explicit performatives mentioned above which happen to be in the declarative format already).

While many utterances can be dealt with in terms of either rule of the LFH, some other utterances carry an additional inferred 'indirect' meaning and are

recognized as Indirect Speech Acts (ISA)s. For example, utterances such as "*Can you pass the salt?*", widely referred to in the literature as illustration of an indirect request. This utterance does not contain the performative verb of the sort '*ask*', so according to rule (i) it is not a request. Judging by rule (ii), "*Can you pass the salt?*" carries the force of a question (rather than a request) following its *interrogative* sentence-type. However, utterances such as "*Can you X?*" are highly recurrent in speech as requests. Though the LFH acknowledges the availability of such an additional indirect meaning it fails to explain how this particular meaning can be arrived at (cf. Flowerdew 1990). Other theoretical accounts were therefore brought forward to supplement the LFH in this regard; *idiom theory* and *inference theory* (Levinson 1983).

3.2. Idiom Theory

Idiom theory rejects the assumption of a literal force to begin with and calls for an idiomatic meaning instead. ISAs of the sort "*Can you X?*" are thus perceived as idioms for "*I (hereby) request you to do X*" just as "*kick the bucket*" is, for instance, an idiom for "*die*"[4].

[4] Disregarding the literal meaning altogether and perceiving ISAs as idioms is misleading in a number of ways (cf. Levinson 1983; also Al duaij 2007 for details).

3.3. Inference Theory

Inference theory agrees with the LFH, and adopts its two rules (i) and (ii) as basis for assigning the literal force of an utterance. Inference theory further sheds light on how the additional indirect meaning can be inferred. In light of inference theory, an utterance such as "*Can you X?*" has the literal force of a question given its *interrogative* format. Such an utterance equally has an indirect force of a request calculable from the surrounding contextual clues via some inferential processes such as Gricean implicature[5], the relevance-theoretic comprehension process and expectations of optimal relevance, and the like (see chapter one). This is why inference theory has more than one version, depending on the inferential perspective being adopted by the theorists (for example Gordon and Lakoff 1971, 1975; Searle 1975 as cited in Levinson 1983). All versions however share these basic properties:

(i) The literal meaning and the literal force of an utterance is computed by, and available to, participants.

(ii) For an utterance to be an *indirect* speech act, there must be an inference-trigger, i.e. some indication that the literal meaning and/or literal force is conversationally inadequate in the context and must be "repaired" by some inference.

[5] According to Grice (1989 as cited in Spencer-Oatey and Žegarac 2002) co-participants in a conversation initially adhere to the cooperative principle (CP) and its subsequent maxims of quality, quantity, manner and relation. Whenever one or more of the maxims are flouted, *implicature* occurs. Implicature denotes inferences containing a set of conveyed messages which are meant without being part of what is said (Huang 2007:27).

(iii) There must be specific principles or rules of inference that will derive, from the literal meaning and force and the context, the relevant indirect force.

(iv) There must be pragmatically sensitive linguistic rules or constraints, which will govern the occurrence of, for example, pre-verbal *please* in both direct and indirect requests.

3.4. Morgan's Natural vs. Conventional Perspective on Indirect Speech Acts

Another approach to understanding ISAs is proposed by Morgan (1991) in his natural vs. conventional perspective. The *natural* perspective adopts the position of two meanings; literal and intended, which is consistent with inference theory. From a natural perspective, an ISA such as "*Can you pass the salt?*" bears both a 'yes/no' question and a request to pass the salt. Hearers can arrive at the intended request by relying on information naturally available to them by means of rationalization, through some knowledge of the world shared by and accessible to all participants during conversation. In terms of common sense, the hearer is justified to assume the following, for instance, why would the speaker enquire about my ability to pass the salt unless s/he intends to make use of this ability one way or another? However, the request embedded in forms such as "*Can you VP?*" is so frequently used in speech to the extent that hearers need not make rationally driven assumptions to arrive at the speaker's intended request. The inferred meaning becomes a second literal meaning that arises

alongside the 'yes/no' question, what represents Morgan's *conventional* perspective on ISAs. Conventionally speaking thus, ISAs of this sort resemble idioms whose meaning is arbitrary associated with their form in the same manner as words are assigned to their corresponding meanings. This perception is reminiscent of idiom theory's position on ISAs. Morgan identifies such form-function associations derivable automatically without resorting to classical conversational implicature as *short-circuited implicature*. A short-circuited implicature originates as a conversational implicature. After the form is being regularly employed to carry out the same function across compatible situations among members of the same group or society, the form acquires a new conventionally allocated meaning and the conversational implicature is deactivated (Morgan 1991; cf. Bender 2007; Asher and Lascarides 2006). This is clearly the case with forms such as "*Can/Could you VP?*" in English as well as its equivalent translations in other languages which have been reintroduced as indirect requests instead of genuine questions of ability[6]. Incompetent speakers of the language (namely language learners at beginner levels) who lack the knowledge of such conventionally established form-function relations would continue to calculate the meaning via the classic conversational implicature.

[6] Although the literal translation of the English *"Can you VP?"* is also conventionally used in KA to make indirect requests, the form which was used to a larger extent by the KA participants group was a question of possibility rather than ability which translates into *"Is it possible for you to VP?"* (See chapter 6 for more details).

Relevant to the concept of short-circuited implicature, Morgan makes a distinction between two types of conventions; conventions of language and conventions of usage[7] (Morgan 1991). *Conventions of language* reflect the literal meaning of utterances, whereas *conventions of usage* determine the settings where the utterance can be used to realize a certain communicative function and why a particular linguistic form is customarily used for a certain function over the other paraphrases of the same form. For example "*Can/could you do X?*" is the most common form for questioning H's ability although there are other paraphrases that can semantically express the same proposition such as "*Are you able to do X?*" or "*Do you have the ability to do X?*". While conventions of language are part of the language, conventions of usage in Morgan's view are not, they are part of the culture not the language per se. Placing conventions of usage separately from the language body in this manner corresponds to Culy's (1996) notion of user's manual (pointed earlier in chapter one) which promotes the addition of a socially-bound meaning as a secondary module to linguistic competence. Furthermore, Morgan's distinction between conventions of language and conventions of usage is somewhat reminiscent of Leech's (1983) dichotomy of *pragmalinguistics* vs. *sociopragmatics* (also discussed in chapter one). While the former deals with the linguistic resources available for expressing a certain illocution the latter sets the contexts where the use of certain linguistic

[7] See also conventions of means vs. conventions of form (see Umar 2004; Le Pair 1996; also Weizman 1993:127). Conventions of means denote the semantic device by which an indirect speech act can be performed whereas conventions of form concern the conventions about the wording of indirect speech acts. This distinction between these two conventions though is not as clear as Morgan's taxonomy of conventions of language vs. usage.

form or set of forms is most appropriate for the expression of a certain illocution. Nevertheless, Leech's sociopragmatic is more socially oriented than Morgan's as it concerns issues of appropriate (polite) language use, and is thus more suitable for the present study.

3.5. Non-Conventionally Indirect Speech Acts: Hints

Building on the discussion raised in the above section, conventionalized ISAs mainly operate on a certain kind of knowledge such as that involved in *conventions of usage* (Morgan 1991), whereby a certain form becomes connected, mainly through recurrent use by speakers, with fulfilling a certain function.

Other ISAs, however, have not undergone such conventionalization and therefore have not established the automated form-function connection as did the question of ability '*Can/could you do X?*', for instance, with the function of indirect request. Such ISAs continue to rely on other 'non-conventional' information for their intended illocution to be inferred as a request by the addressee. This information include along with context (Pinker *et al* 2008) what relevance theory proposes on interlocutors' tendency towards the maximization of relevance in speech (the cognitive principle of relevance) as well as the classical inferential route that builds from Gricean conversational implicature and the four maxims (see chapter one). Such ISAs are hence recognized as *non-conventionally*

indirect requests, mainly represented by hints. Consider the following example from Asher and Lascarides (2006):

(5) I am out of gas.

The *declarative* sentence type here indicates an assertion that merely conveys a state of affairs. It is only through rationality and mutual knowledge[8] of the world whereby both S and H know that this particular state of affairs (being out of gas) is not desirable, that H would be able to arrive at the intended request (i.e. that H is required to do something to alter this undesired state of affairs by providing S with gas as needed).

As the previous section discusses the rationale for speech acts in general, focusing on ISAs, the next section presents the most used request strategies ranging from most direct to least direct. The nine request strategies proposed below result from researching an extensive corpus of different languages (cf. Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989).

[8] Pinker *et al* (2008:837) argue that indirect requests, particularly non-conventionally indirect ones, rely on mutual knowledge (i.e. shared between co-participants to a conversation) whereas direct requests rely on common knowledge (i.e. known to language users). Such mutual knowledge is demonstrated in Relevance Theory (see chapter one) in the notion of *manifestness.* What is manifest is the kind of accessible information which both S and H can process.

4.1. From Direct to Indirect: The Nine-Levels Classification of Requests Based on How Direct the Requestive Intent is Expressed

As is evident from the discussion above, requests can be performed either by using a form that straightforwardly carries the requestive illocutionary force (as in the case of *imperatives*) or by using a form that can only be realized as a request via an inference of some sort, whether conventional (as in the case of *interrogatives* such as *"Can/Will you do X?"* hence conventionally indirect requests) or conversational (as in the case of hints hence non-conventionally indirect requests).

Accordingly, requests have been classified into three main categories based on how transparent the requestive intent is from the locution (linguistic form) being used, descending in order from most to least direct. This classification of request strategies is adopted as a basis for analysis in a number of interlanguage/cross-cultural pragmatics studies on a variety of languages (for example, the Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Pattern (CSARP) Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989 investigating Australian English, American English, British English, Canadian French, German, Danish and Hebrew; Fukushima 1996 investigating L1 Japanese and TL English; Le Pair 1996:658 investigating L1 Spanish and TL English; Otcu and Zeyrek 2008 investigating L1 Turkish and TL English; Al duaij 2007 investigating Kuwaiti Arabic NSs and learners of English and English NSs, Marti 2007 investigating politeness rating of request strategies by Turkish NSs,

among many others). The coding scheme for analyzing the data of the present study also builds from a similar classification of request strategies (see chapter five).

(1) Direct requests:

The force of the request is directly derived from the linguistic form, due to the use of *imperative* that classically carries the illocution of request (or getting the hearer to do something for the speaker) as in (*a*) or the use of performative verb that indicates a request such as '*ask*' in English as in (*b*), (see discussion of IFIDS pointed earlier). Direct strategies also encompass statements which contain a verb (usually modal verb) whose propositional meaning inevitably marks obligation as in (*c*) or statements that express the requested act as speaker's wants/needs or desires as in (*d*). Although the grammatical mood and hence the function of such statements is distinct from *imperatives* (to state facts as opposed to command or request, respectively), these statements still bind the hearer to the requested act.

a. Imperatives:

Imperatives are usually identified in ILP literature as 'Mood Derivable' (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989, also the coding manual chapter five), as the request is clearly derivable from the grammatical mood. For example:

"*Do X*"

b. *Performatives*:

Performatives contain a performative verb indicating a request. In some classifications (for example Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989), there is a distinction between *explicit* performatives (example *i*) and *hedged* performatives (example *ii*). In the latter type, the performative verb denoting the requestive force is preceded by some sort of hedge, which makes the resulting request less direct and more polite than an explicit performative with bare, unhedged performative verb.

i. "I'm *asking* you to do X"

ii. "I *wanted to ask* you to do X"

c. *Obligation Statements*:

Obligation Statements are also identified as 'Locution Derivable' (see the coding manual in chapter five). Here the requestive force is derivable from the locution (linguistic form) which bears a modal verb that characterizes obligation, for example:

"You *should/must/have to* do X"

d. Want Statements:

In Want Statements the requested act is presented to H as some wants/needs or desires by the speaker. For example:

"I *want/need/would like* you to do X"

(2) Conventionally Indirect Requests:

The literal meaning of the linguistic form being used does not carry the force of a request but a question (due to the *interrogative* mood). However, certain pragmalinguistic forms of the type interrogative have been frequently used in making requests. As a consequence the force of an indirect request becomes *conventionally* attached to these interrogatives.

a. Suggestory Formula:

An interrogative that presents the requested act as some kind of suggestion for the hearer to carry out, for example:

"Why don't you do X?"[9]

While the request strategy 'Suggestory Formula' is proposed in this classification of request strategies based on data from previous research investigating different

[9] Forms such as *"Why don't you do X?"* can also be used in situations where S is offering some advice or recommendation for H's benefit to serve the function of suggesting.

languages (see above), this strategy was never used to make requests in the present study's data.

b. Preparatory:

Also termed *Query Preparatory* in ILP/CCP research (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989) as it performs the request by enquiring about a certain preparatory condition that is necessary for the successful execution of the request (see section of felicity conditions above). As will be manifest when discussing the results of the present study (chapter six), the universality of preparatory request strategy is unarguably established. Different languages have different pragmalinguistic means for questioning one of the conditions that are relevant for executing the request. In English, for example, enquiring about the hearer's ability (example *i*) to perform the requested act is the most common illustration of a preparatory request. On the other hand, in Kuwaiti Arabic, preparatory requests are often represented by questioning the possibility for carrying out the requested act by the hearer (example *ii*).

i. "Can/could you do X?"

ii. "Is it possible for you to do X?"

(3) Non-conventionally Indirect Requests:

Just as in the case of conventionally indirect requests, the intended illocution of non-conventionally indirect requests is not derived from their linguistic form (i.e. literal, context-independent sentence meaning). Likewise, the intended request in non-conventionally indirect requests is not derived from some grammatical construction (as in '*Can/Will you X?*') or semantic device (as in pre-verbal *please*) used conventionally to indicate a request, which is how conventionally indirect requests are realized (cf. Weizman 1993:124). Instead, the target illocution in non-conventionally indirect requests, represented essentially by *hints,* can only be realized by taking into account the surrounding contextual clues (see chapter (1) on what constitutes context). Hints have been classified into two sub-categories, mild and strong (see Blum-Kulka *et al.*'s 1989 coding manual), according to the likelihood of inferring a request, as opposed to any other illocution, from the locution being used. It is not always easy though to draw the distinction between the two types, especially when hints are presented as examples, abstract from the full-fledged context where they have occurred (Weizman 1993:124).

a. Strong Hints:

Strong hints are made by making reference to a relevant element or precondition that is logically necessary for the fulfillment of the request. For example, when asking for a lift, the requester can enquire about (*i*) or (*ii*) which both imply that s/he is trying to secure a lift, at least from a rational perspective of the world that is mutual to both interlocutors given such a context.

i. *"Do you have a car?"*

ii. *"Are you going home?"*

Another common way for strongly hinting a request is stating the reason for the request (Weizman 1993) without explicitly stating what is requested exactly, as in the following example requesting to borrow H's lecture notes (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:280):

iii. *I wasn't at the lecture yesterday.*

b. Mild Hints:

The relevance between the locution used and intended illocution is not immediately established and the hearer needs to dig in deeper into the overall context to arrive at the speaker's meaning. Considering the above example whereby S is trying to request for a lift home, the following is an example of a mild hint (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:281):

I didn't expect the meeting to end this late. (Requesting a lift home)

As it is, the locution here is more likely to be realized as a complaint for the meeting taking too long. The hearer has to be familiar with some extra knowledge of the speaker's circumstances (that s/he does not have a car and is bound by the bus timing, for instance) to be able to understand a request from such a statement.

4.2. Brown and Levinson's (1978) Politeness Theory: The Classification of Request Strategies from Most to Least Direct

One of the most influential theoretical paradigms for researching politeness in pragmatic research lies in Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory. One of key concepts in politeness theory is *face* (which is an extension of Goffman's 1967 notion of *face* as reported in in Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily 2012). Face is divided into two wants: the want to be unimpeded and the want to be approved of in certain aspects. Ideally, every speaker attends to the face wants of the other speaker (although in some cases the speaker is not quite keen on satisfying the hearer's face needs, for example in situations of conflict with the hearer). Based on these dual face wants, Brown and Levinson identify two types of face: *negative face,* which concerns the individual's right not to be intruded upon, and *positive face*, which relates to his/her need to feel affiliation with the other

individuals in the group. Accordingly, speech strategies which attend to negative face wants as termed *negative politeness* strategies whereas those aiming to serve positive face wants are termed *positive politeness* strategies[10].

Requests pertain to a larger group of SA's which Brown and Levinson recognize as Face Threatening Act (FTA)s. FTA's are acts whose propositional content threatens or runs contrary to the face wants of participants in an interaction, threatening S's negative or positive face, or H's negative or positive face (see Bou-Franch and Gracés-Conejos 2003). Receiving the request threatens the requestee's negative face, while non-compliance with request threatens the requester's positive face. Spencer-Otay (2005) promotes another perspective for understanding face threat that goes beyond negative vs. positive face, namely *rapport management theory*. Her theory stipulates that rapport (reflective of harmony or politeness) between people can be threatened in two ways: through face-threatening behaviour and through rights-threatening behaviour. An illustration of threats to rights is represented by acts such as orders or commands where S tries to force H to do something, especially in situations where S is believed to have minimal right to perform such an act. Threats to face, on the other hand, occur when the act performed has a deeper level of offense towards H, for example when S opposes or criticizes H. On this approach,

[10] Kasper (1992:208) points another parallel distinction: discernment politeness (or social indexing) and strategic politeness. The former concerns marking interlocutors' relationship in terms of in-group vs. out-group, social power and social distance, irrespective of the speaker's current communicative goal whereas the latter type is used to counterbalance face-threat involved in the realization of particular linguistic actions. The former type thus is more reflective of positive politeness whereas the latter echoes negative politeness.

requests are not necessarily perceived as face-threatening acts. Their threat to face is not inherent in the linguistic form being used per se but rather depends on the assessment of the context where the request occurs. For example, an order involving a task which the recipient perceives as demeaning given his/her status at that given situation is considered to be more threatening to face. Conversely, a request for help from a friend or relative for instance is more likely to be perceived as face-enhancing rather than face-threatening. By relying on the requestee as such, the requester here is demonstrating closeness with the requestee and trust in his/her ability to resolve the situation at hand.

Brown and Levinson identify a scheme of five strategies for performing FTA's in general and requests in particular as follows:

1. Do the FTA without redressive action.
2. Do the FTA with redressive action: positive politeness.
3. Do the FTA with redressive action: negative politeness.
4. Do the FTA off-record.
5. Do not do the FTA.

Applying this scheme to the abovementioned nine-level classification of request strategies, strategy (1) in Brown and Levinson's model is represented by the use of bare imperative as in "*Close the door*". Strategy (2) similarly uses a direct request (strategies 1.*a-d* above), however, the request is expressed with a

positive politeness strategy, as in "*Close the door, Nicky.*" Here the imposition of the request is toned down by employing a nickname, a lexical device through which S expresses solidarity with H. Choosing to perform the request via strategy (3), S uses a conventionally indirect request as in "*Would you mind closing the door?*". As will be delineated in the next section, conventionally indirect requests communicate S's attentiveness to H's negative face, where s/he needs to be free from imposition such as the one evoked by receiving the request. Strategy (4) entails the use of hints, whose interpretation relies on the classical Gricean conversational implicature. By making a statement such as "*There's a terrible draught in here*", H is inclined to assume that s/he is required to do something about this undesirable event and 'close the door'. Strategy (5) is when S does not express the request verbally at all. Instead, s/he could try to reach out for the door (in which case H might actually end up closing the door if s/he was physically closer to the door that S, for instance), or instead S can go all the way and close the door him/her-self. The basic assumption in Brown and Levinson's model is that the more threatening the FTA is, the higher the ranking of the strategy used to perform it should be.

Brown and Levinson further identify three social variables that determine the *weight* of the FTA and consequently affect the strategy, and by extension the modification devices, employed to perform the request. The first variable is (P) for Power which entails three possibilities: the speaker could possess greater power relative to the hearer (by means of status, occupation, age, and the like),

the speaker could be subordinate to the hearer, or both S and H could be equals to one another. The second variable is (D) for Distance which entails two possibilities: there could either be no social distance between S and H (as in close friends or relatives) or there exists a social distance between the two. The third variable is (R) for Ranking of Imposition of the request which could either be high (serious requests as in asking to borrow money for instance) or low (for mild requests). The directness of the request strategy is expected to decrease in contexts where the speaker's power is greater than the hearer's, in contexts of social distance between S and H, and/or in contexts of high imposition requests. Such contexts affect the degree of request modification as well, yielding the use of more mitigation devices. The present study investigates the cross-cultural effect of these variables on request formation (see chapters four and six).

Scollon and Scollon (1995 as cited in Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily 2012:87; see also Beltrán and Martínez-Flor 2004) propose a parallel three-type politeness system that takes into account the effect of the variables power and social distance. Two distance-oriented systems: *deference politeness* where S and H establish a deferential distance from one another, and *solidarity politeness* where S and H maintain closeness to each other. In the third system, *hierarchy politeness,* the power deferential between S and H is emphasized. Scollon and Scollon's system is not considered in the present study because it does not add anything different to what Brown and Levinson's politeness theory already offers, not to mention

that politeness theory acknowledges the effect of another crucial variable: imposition of the request.

5. Explaining the Use of Indirect Requests

Evidently, Brown and Levinson (ibid) advocate a relation between indirectness and politeness. As such, the most polite strategy for performing a request is the least direct strategy, namely hints or off-record strategy. Pinker (2007) argues that the association between the highest degree of politeness and hints in Brown and Levinson's viewpoint comes from the ability of hints to allow H to decline the request while at the same time sparing S's feelings (namely his/her *positive* face), what Pinker *et al* (2008) refers to as *plausible deniability* (or *deniability potential* in Weizman's terms 1993:125; see also Sifianou 1993 for a similar view). As Pinker (2007) specifies:

> "With off-record indirect speech the hearer is implicitly given the opportunity to ignore the request without a public refusal, which also means that if s/he complies with the request, it's not because s/he is taking orders" (Pinker 2007:441-2)

However, the proposal that off-record indirect strategies are the most polite linguistic form for performing a request is challenged in a number of publications (for example, Wierzbicka 1991; Stadler 2011; Al duaij 2007, Sifianou 1993;1999;

Holtgraves and Yang 1992; Marti 2007 among many others) which represents a major critique to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. The findings of the present study also contribute to this camp as will be illustrated in chapter (6). As Pinker (2007) explains, the use of non-conventional indirect requests forces H to take the longer inferential route so that s/he can realize the intended illocution. This in turn places greater mental processing effort on H. As such, the balance between maximal benefit (effect) and minimal cost (effort) which increases the relevance of an input from a relevance theoretic perspective is compromised (as discussed in chapter one). From another perspective, Alba-Juez (2007) argues that using indirectness can also communicate impoliteness in certain situations more than if a direct strategy was used. Her argument is based on data from recordings of everyday exchanges and scenes from movies and TV series in four language varieties: British English, American English, Peninsular Spanish and Argentinian Spanish. For example, in an interaction between two friends in Spanish, it is actually more polite to criticize H's weight directly, coming from a concerned friend who genuinely cares for H's wellbeing. On the other hand, an indirect comment in such a situation would be understood as impolite mocking of H's weight (cf. Sifianou 1999:113 for a similar argument). In the same respect, using a hint to ask a close friend or relative does not sound sincere. Thus, the (im)politeness of a certain strategy is not entirely a matter of linguistic directness vs. indirectness. The situation, interlocutors' roles (as in interaction between close friends or between superior and subordinate, and etc.) and their intended communicative goals must also be considered in determining the overall value of

(im)politeness of a given strategy. Pinker *et al.* (2008:833) also draws attention to other occasions where indirectness in speech is not meant to serve other means which do not relate to politeness at all, such as incidents of extortion, sexual advances, bribery, threats, incriminating questions and the like.

On the other hand, conventionally indirect strategies can conceal the face threat of the request in a manner that does not require too much processing effort (see Morgan's *short-circuited implicature* discussed above). Blum-Kulka (1987 as cited in Sifianou 1999:114) argues that for an utterance to be polite there must be an interactional balance between clarity and non-coerciveness. In direct request strategies, non-coerciveness is sacrificed to maintain clarity whereas in non-conventionally indirect strategies clarity is compromised at the expense of non-coerciveness. Conventionally indirect requests preserve the balance between clarity and non-coerciveness and are therefore considered more polite. In fact, the relation between politeness and conventionally indirect requests is supported by findings from existing studies in ILP research as well as the present study's data (see chapter six).

Furthermore, it should be noted that the politeness of a given construction is not determined solely and abstractly by its linguistic form (Sifianou 1993). In fact, the sociocultural background shared by speakers of the language can also determine why certain forms, direct or indirect, are perceived as more polite (Fukushima

2000). For example, Sifianou (1999) argues that in English speaking societies (and other *negative politeness* oriented societies) conventionally indirect strategies are deemed more polite because they emphasize H's right to have his/her autonomy intact. Speakers of other languages may not necessarily share the same association between politeness and conventionally indirect strategies. In *positive politeness* oriented societies, emphasizing involvement with and dependency on H is more essential that showing consideration to H's personal space, hence more direct strategies are preferred when making requests. This seems to be applicable to NSs in the Arab world. As Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily (2012:86) explain, the root for the word '*polite*' in Arabic [mu'addab] is ['adab] which in the Ancient times was used as verb [fulan 'adaba al-qawm] meaning '*to invite people to a feast*'. It thus denotes generosity and hospitability which emphasizes connectedness with others (hence *positive* face).

The appropriateness of a certain linguistic form over the other available alternatives should also be assessed in terms of entitlement and contingencies in the interaction (Curl and Drew 2008). *Entitlement* is requester-oriented, referring to the extent to which s/he is entitled to make the request. This is determined by factors such as how costly the request is to H. For example, requests that are less demanding and hence easier to fulfill increase the requester's right in making the request. *Contingencies*, on the other hand, are requestee-oriented, referring to the conditions surrounding the granting of the request. These include factors such as the requestee's ability, willingness, and/or desire to comply with

the request. To illustrate how considerations of entitlement and contingencies affect S's choice of linguistic form, Curl and Drew look at phone-calls data from everyday interactions (among family members and intimates) and after-hour medical calls. The authors found that in general requests performed via modal verbs such as *"Can/could"* or *"Will/would"* occur more frequently in the everyday interactions' data. Increased solidarity between S and H in such contexts allows smaller space for non-compliance. In other words, H seeks to maintain closeness with S which can be compromised if H did not grant S's request. This is turn increases S's entitlement to make the request. On the other hand, requests prefaced by *"I wonder if"* are more frequent in after-hour medical calls. Embedding the request in a linguistic form that marks tentativeness (see chapters five and six) portrays S's awareness of the contingencies present in such situations. Here, S is seeking medical advice from a professional and is unsure of the proper procedure that should be followed.

This is not to say that displays of entitlement in requests are more expected in everyday interactions or that contingencies are characteristic of requests produced in formal, institutionalized settings. In fact, Curl and Drew observe that in after-hour medical calls involving more urgent matters the requests were performed using the more compelling modal verb construct. Similarly, in everyday interactions where H explicates that the request is rather problematic to handle, S might shift into a more contingent form such as the tentative *"Is it possible to X?"*. Furthermore, displays of entitlement and contingencies in the

pragmalinguistic form can be negotiated throughout the course of the interaction. For example, Craven and Potter (2010) observe that in child-parent interaction, the parent may initiate the sequence with a contingent request such as the conventionally indirect "Can/could you X?". If his/her request was not fulfilled, the parent shifts to a form that demonstrates maximal entitlement: directives.

From a similar perspective, Spencer-Oatey (2005) argues that the degree of face threat evoked by a request varies depending on the context of the request. For example, a request to carry out a task which the requestee evaluates as demeaning to his/her status is more threatening than a request for help from a close friend. Even if both requests were performed using the same linguistic strategy, the request in the latter situation is still less threatening to H's face. The requesting friend is communicating solidarity with the requestee and trust in his/her ability to resolve the predicament at hand which in turn obliterates the face threat to the requestee. Spencer-Oatey seeks to broaden Brown and Levinson's conceptualization of face threat by considering not only the linguistic strategy but also the social judgments of both S and H.

6. Requests in Arabic

The bulk of research on requests from a pragmatic perspective is conducted with English language as basis for analysis, both as L1 and TL (Sifianou

1999;1993)[11]. On the other hand, Arabic language has not been sufficiently treated in this respect, to the best of my knowledge, apart from a limited number of ILP/CCP studies reviewed with more detail in chapter (3). These studies investigate a number of SAs, for example, refusals (Al-Issa 1998; 2003; and Nelson et al 2002), apologies (Nureddeen 2008; Bataineh and Bataineh 2008) and compliment responses (Nelson *et al* 1996). The only few studies on requests in Arabic that were accessible to the researcher here are: Al-Ali and Alawneh (2010) on American English NSs and Jordanian Arabic learners' request mitigation, Alaoui (2011) on requests, offers and thanks by Moroccan NSs and English NSs, and Umar (2004) on the use of request strategies by advanced EFL Arab learners (of different varieties of Arabic as their L1, including: Sudanese Arabic, Saudi Arabic, Bahraini Arabic and Egyptian Arabic). Other studies include Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily (2012) on requests of Saudi Arabic and American English and Al-Gahtani (2012) requests produced by low-level and high-level Saudi Arabic learners of Australian English. The last two studies are more relevant to the discussion in the present study because they investigate NSs of Saudi Arabic. This variety of Arabic shares a lot of features with Kuwaiti Arabic due to geographical neighboring (cf. Holes 1984; 2004). The findings of these studies are reported in chapters (3) and (6).

[11] Apart from the emphasis on British English in ILP/CCP research, it is reported that almost 75% of published intercultural studies were conducted in the United States, Israel and Japan (Landis and Wasilewski 1999 as cited in Nelson et al. 2002:53).

The following section discusses how requests are performed in Arabic. First the diglossic status of Arabic language is explained, followed by a concise description of request formation in KA.

6.1. The Linguistic Status of Arabic language: Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)

Arabic language has two main varieties, written and spoken (Nydell 2002)[12]. The written variety is usually recognized in the literature as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). MSA is a modernized version of Classical Arabic, the language used in the Hejaz area of Arabia in the seventh century A.D. Classical Arabic is also the language of the Holy Qur'an through which it was preserved as the written language of all members of the Arabic-speaking world since then. MSA evolved from Classical Arabic to account for modern age usages and the new vocabulary that has entered the lexicon accordingly (cf. Holes 2004). MSA is the same across all Arabic-speaking countries, except for a few variations in regional or specialized vocabulary. MSA is used for formal purposes, such as formal correspondences and speeches, news broadcasting. MSA is grammatically more complex than the spoken language. Spoken Arabic, on the other hand, is represented by the dialects or Colloquial Arabic distinguishable from one country or region to another. Colloquial Arabic is used for everyday spoken

[12] The ranking of Arabic among the top ten most used languages in the world is as follows, Mandarin Chinese, English, Hindustani, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Bengali, Portuguese, Malay-Indonesian, French (Nydell 2002:93).

communication. It is not ideally used for written functions except in some informal correspondences (Nydell 2002; also Younes 2006). Nowadays, modern technology contributed to extending the use of Colloquial Arabic for written functions, including mobile texting, television commercial slogans and comments posted on social networking websites and the like.

The spoken variety (Colloquial Arabic) is the language acquired as L1 of Arab speakers (Holes 2004). This is why the data for the present study is elicited in Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) rather than MSA. On the other hand, MSA is only acquired through formal instruction, as is the case in any other foreign language learning context. Arab speakers who did not receive formal instruction on MSA end up being illiterate, able to speak Arabic (Colloquial Arabic of their region/country) but not write in MSA.

Though the two varieties (MSA and Colloquial Arabic) serve different communicative functions, the two occasionally overlap. In fact, Colloquial Arabic shares the foundational properties of MSA except for some occasional deviations from standard rules of grammar, and lexical and phonological realizations of words (Feghali 2004:71). Younes demonstrates the overlap between the two varieties of Arabic as follows:

> "In most language interactions, the typical educated native speaker of Arabic uses that range of the linguistic continuum that lies between the

two extremes of "pure" *Fuṣḥā* and "pure" dialect to fulfill his or her daily linguistic needs. For ordinary conversation he or she uses the colloquial side of the range, and for reading, writing and formal speaking, he or she uses the *Fuṣḥā* side". Younes (2006:159)

6.2. Requests in Kuwaiti Arabic (KA)

Given the scarcity of data on KA syntax in general (Brustad 2000:3) and request formation in particular, the following discussion is established based on the structures that frequently occurred in the present study data.

Similar to English, Arabic (MSA and by extension KA) has three basic sentence types, declaratives, interrogatives and imperatives basically marked by word order. Imperatives inherently carry the function of ordering, commanding or requesting, using the verb in the imperative mood, for example:

(6) *Do X.*

In KA, as is the case in English, declaratives are also used as requests. The use of declaratives to request often follows the structure of Want Statement (direct strategy 1.*d* identified above). The modal verb used in KA to express want is ['abi] (Aljenaie 2001), originating from the MSA verb ['abġī]. This verb is used either in the past tense [baġeit] or present tense ['abi], for example:

(7) baġeit-ik/ič tsawi X

I want-PAST-Sng.-you-(male)/(female) do-2nd X

I wanted you to do X.

(8) 'abi-k/č tsawi X

I want-PRSNT-Sng.-you(male)/(female) do-2nd X

I want you to do X.

Want Statements can also be expressed with the use of a lexical item [ya leit] or [ya reit] denoting wishful thinking that is equivalent to the English structure "*It would be great*", expressed as follows:

(9) *It would be great if you could do X.*

Another manifestation for the use of declaratives in making requests is the use of a modal that marks obligation, hence the direct request strategy obligation statement (1.*c*) identified above. As Aljenaie (2001) illustrates, the modal that marks obligation/necessity in KA is [lāzim] which translates literally as '*must*' (Aljenaie 2001).

(10) *You must do X.*

Interrogatives are also widely used in making requests in KA, often by questioning the possibility for the requested act to be fulfilled as in (11) or by questioning permission as in (12) (see also chapter (6) for more examples from the present study's data):

(11) *Is it possible to do X?*

(12) *Is it okay for you/for me to do X?*

Having discussed the SA of requesting from a theoretical point of view, the following chapter looks at how this particular aspect of pragmatic competence can be assessed in the interlanguage by reviewing research methods available to achieve this goal. A review of the studies on SA production in Arabic is also included in the next chapter as they can contribute some useful implications for the present study.

Chapter (3):

Investigating interlanguage pragmatic competence

1. Investigating Interlanguage Pragmatic Competence: The Broad Methodological Discipline

From the 1970's onwards, and following the emerging interest in the pragmatic component of language competence (see chapter one on the communicative competence model), a wealth of studies has been conducted to explore how pragmatic competence is developed in the Second Language (L2) or Foreign Language (FL), researching learners of different L1 backgrounds, age groups and proficiency levels (cf. Rintell 1984; Franch 1998). The dominance of such studies is fueled by their practical benefits to the teaching process. The assessment of learners' pragmatic competence as such can reveal some of the similarities and differences in pragmatic behavior between the learners and the NSs of the Target Language (TL). This in return can contribute some useful implications as to how pragmatics should be taught so that the gap between learners' performance and target-like production is minimized (cf. Thomas 1983 on pragmalinguistic vs. sociopragmatic failure in chapter one). Furthermore, research of this kind helps reveal some features of the IL, such as how the IL develops and how the pragmatic dimension of the IL differs from other dimensions such as syntactic (see chapter one on the relation between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence development-wise).

Most studies on learners' pragmatic competence carry out their investigation by looking at the case of Speech Act production and/or comprehension, which constitute an integral aspect of language use (cf. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka 1984;

De Paiva 2010), as established earlier in chapters (1) and (2). The path that most studies follow is to investigate how a group of learners perform a single SA (or a set of two or more SAs) then compare learner's performance to the performance of NSs of the TL one the one hand and NSs of the learners' L1 on the other[1].

Such a trend in linguistic research has led to the emergence of the relatively recent paradigm known as *Interlanguage Pragmatics* (ILP). As Schauer (2004:253) puts it, ILP refers to "the acquisition, comprehension and production of contextually appropriate language by foreign or second language learners" (cf. Liu 2010). In practice, however, the majority of the studies under the umbrella of ILP end up focusing on issues of usage (production/comprehension) rather than acquisition, and on production rather than comprehension (Woodfield 2008). By comparing the performance of NSs to NNSs, such studies acquire a *comparative*, hence Cross-Cultural Pragmatics (CCP), rather than a *developmental* overtone (Bardovi-Harlig 1999; Ellis 1995). Comparative studies though are not completely detached from acquisitional topics. As will be manifest in the upcoming review of studies, comparative studies which compare learners at different proficiency levels help establish some developmental patterns relating to the pragmatic phenomenon under investigation (cf. Geluykens 2007). This is the case indeed in the present study.

[1] Kasper (1992) points the challenges in comparing NSs' performance to learners' performance in SLA research. For example, there is an effect of instruction. What is presented to the learners in textbooks and the classroom as TL norms may not be reflective of what represents L1 norms according to the NSs of the TL themselves (see chapter one).

Studies in ILP and CCP research can take one of two directions, *cross-sectional* or *longitudinal*, depending on their methodological design[2] (Woodfield 2008; cf. Rose 2000 for a review of studies pertaining to each type). A cross-sectional study "looks at different learners at different moments in time and establishes development by comparing these successive states in different people" (Cook 1993:34 as cited in Woodfield 2008:230). A longitudinal study, on the other hand, "involves the observation of the same participant(s) over an extended period" (Kasper and Rose 2002:76 as cited in Woodfield 2008:230; cf. Barron 2003:30-34)

Examples of commonly cited longitudinal studies include Ellis (1992; 1997), Achiba (2002) and Schmidt (1983). Ellis (1992) traces the development of requests of two primary school children in a classroom setting studying ESL in the United Kingdom over a period of two years. Achiba (2002) looks at the development of requests produced by her own seven-year-old Japanese daughter as a beginner ESL learner over a 17-month period of sojourn in Australia. Schmidt (1983) investigates the development of request realization by a Japanese learner of English over a three-year period.

[2] Rose (2000) points out a third type: single moment studies (see also Woodfield 2008). Single-moment studies investigate properties of learners' pragmatic competence by classifying learner groups based on criteria that do not relate to their chronological development, such as learners' L1. One of the largest in scale and most influential single-moment studies in contrastive pragmatics is the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), see Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989) where learners are grouped into several groups according to L1 and L2 proficiency. The coding manual for analyzing the data in the CCSARP is a major source for creating the coding scheme for the present study (see chapter five).

In the more recent longitudinal studies, there is a tendency to investigate the pragmatic development of learners in a study-abroad context, and compare the performance of learners to a control group of NSs of the TL on the one hand and another group of learners learning the TL at their home country as FL on the other (i.e. at home learners). Here, participants whose pragmatic competence is being investigated are specifically brought to the TL community for the purpose of studying the TL, as in Barron (2003) and Schauer (cf. Schauer 2010)[3].

In Barron (2003), thirty-three Irish students spending one year abroad to study German as L2 were investigated on the performance of three SAs; requests, offers and refusals to offers, in relation to variables of social dominance and social distance between S and H and the degree of imposition of the SA. Data was elicited mainly using production questionnaires (see discussion on questionnaires as research instrument below). Barron further employed a questionnaire to gather background information about the participants, which might be useful in explaining the participants' behavior later on at the analysis stage. Another type of instrument used in Barron's study is retrospective interviews, which can yield further self-assessment (metapragmatic) information by allowing participants to contemplate their own performance shortly enough after they have performed the main elicitation task. Concentrating mainly on the use of internal modification in requests, including lexical/phrasal modifiers (particularly the politeness marker *bitte,* the German equivalent for *please* in

[3] Schauer has a number of publications cited in the present study (see list of references). Schauer (2010) provides a summary of her findings in previous research.

English) and syntactic modifiers, Barron found that the study abroad benefited learners' performance. Towards the end of their sojourn, the learners' use of lexical/phrasal modifiers was more consistent with that of NSs of the TL. The use of syntactic modification, however, did not reflect the same pattern, suggesting that lexical/phrasal are easier to acquire.

In Schauer's study (cf. Schauer 2010:101-2), nine German adult learners of English were investigated for their request production in the TL over three periods of time. The first data collection session took place shortly after the learners' arrival in the United Kingdom. The second session was in the middle of their stay. The final session was shortly before their return to Germany. Schauer looks at the effect of variables such as social dominance between S and H (equal status vs. superior requesting from subordinate) and the degree of imposition of the request (high vs. low) throughout 16 request scenarios. The data collection instrument she used is a Multimedia Elicitation Task (MET), which simulates a closed role play while providing participants with audiovisual input (see the review of data collection instruments below). Schauer found that towards the end of their sojourn, the learners' request formation was more similar to that of NSs of the TL, and used fewer direct request strategies than before (as in imperatives and unhedged performatives). The learners, however, continued to use direct strategies (as in hedged performatives) in situations of high imposition, although such direct strategies were avoided by the English NSs in such situations. These findings suggest that despite the positive effect of the study abroad experience

on learners' development, it does not entirely eliminate the effect of the L1 (negative L1 transfer, see chapter one). As for request modification, and analogous to Barron's findings above, Schauer found that lexical/phrasal modifiers were employed by the learners variably since the earliest data collection session. This suggests that the ability to modify requests with lexical/phrasal modifiers is acquired at an early stage before syntactic modifiers, which is reminiscent of Barron's findings above.

Examples of cross-sectional studies include Scarcella (1979), which is one of the earliest studies in the field. Scarcella investigates politeness strategies employed by Arab learners of English and English NSs in the realization of invitations and requests in three context types; when addressing a hearer of equal, higher or lower socio-cultural status. The learners in Scarcella's study pertain to two levels of proficiency (beginner and advanced) and the data is elicited using Role Plays (RP)s (eliciting data via RP will be discussed later in this chapter). Another common study illustrating cross-sectional research paradigm is Trosborg (1995), which investigates the production of the SAs requests, complaints and apologies by Danish learners of EFL at three levels of proficiency levels via the use of RPs. This study is of particular importance to the present study because the coding manual used to analyze the data of Trosborg's study contributes largely to the design of the coding scheme for the present study, as will be discussed fully in chapter (5). Similar to Trosborg's study, Rose (2000) also investigates the production of three SAs; requests, apologies and compliment responses, across

three groups of Chinese primary school children in Hong Kong representing three proficiency levels in EFL. Rose elicits data orally using a Cartoon Oral Production Task (COPT) which presents the scenarios as cartoon drawings with a brief description under each scenario in the participants' L1; Cantonese Chinese (see section 2 below for further details on this data collection instrument in Rose's 2000 study). The present study also illustrates a cross-sectional research paradigm, comparing learners at different proficiency levels to NSs of the TL and NSs of the learners' L1.

2. Data Collection: Review of Instruments

Studies in ILP/CCP research employ different types of data elicitation methods which are abundantly documented and reviewed in the relevant literature (see for example Rose 2000, Fukushima 2000, Kasper and Dahl 1991, among many others). If the method used allows the researcher to manipulate the contextual variables such as roles of S and H in the described situation and the communicative goal of the SA, the resulting data is recognized as *experimental*, as is the case in the present study's data. When collecting *conversational* (authentic)[4] data, on the other hand, the researcher has no control over the ongoing situation (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 2008). The choice of data elicitation instrument is determined by the research questions being investigated (Gass and Mackey 2007; Kasper 1992:222).

[4] Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1984:20-21) refer to the most authentic collection of speech as *ethnographic* data, as opposed to *semi-ethnographic* data elicited via RPs.

The following section presents a concise review of data collection instruments, descending in order from most to least controlled. Each type is illustrated by some of the most commonly cited studies in ILP/CCP literature.

2.1.1. Questionnaires:

Perception Questionnaires: Multiple Choice Questionnaires (MCQ) and Rating Questionnaires

When responding to MCQ or rating questionnaires, participants have to select from (the former type) or judge (the latter type) ready-made responses based on a scale that measures a certain variable. Some of the variables that can be addressed via MCQs and rating questionnaires are the degree of appropriateness of a given response in a given situation (i.e. which response is the most appropriate among a provided set of responses) and the degree of familiarity with a given strategy type (i.e. to what extent is the provided response representative of what the participant him/her-self would say when encountering a similar situation) and the like[5]. In addition to the valuable perceptual information they can reveal, perception questionnaires do not place a great cognitive load on participants compared to the other production tasks where the participants have to produce speech data on their own. As such, perception questionnaires can be administered over short periods of time across large populations of participants. Furthermore, the pre-allocation of responses in production questionnaires makes

[5] Rating questionnaires are sometimes referred to as *acceptability ratings* (Cohen 1996:26; cf. Kasper and Rose on scaled-response questionnaires).

the coding and analysis of the elicited data easier than the other types of data (Geluykens 2007).

In the present study, a rating questionnaire is employed to assess the likelihood of occurrence of the situations that will be used in the consequent main elicitation task, the Discourse Completion Task (DCT). The situations which were rated as more frequent were thus selected as prompts for the DCT, as will be discussed in chapter (4).

An example where perception questionnaire was used is Olshtain and Cohen's study (1990 as cited in Cohen 1996:261-2). A rating task was used to assess the appropriateness of certain forms over others in certain situations by Hebrew EFL learners on the speech acts: apologies, requests and complaints (the other data collection method in their study was DCT). The results were used in developing the teaching materials so that learners' performance in the TL is more native-like. (cf. Fukushima 2000 for more studies employing MCQ to reveal judgments on particular aspects of language use).

2.1.2. Production Questionnaires: Discourse Completion Test (DCT)

Participants here produce data rather than rate or judge data readily provided by the researcher (cf. Fukushima 2000). The most common illustration of production questionnaires in ILP literature is the DCT. Participants are required to produce

responses, by filling in the blank to fulfill a conversational turn based on a specific stimulus (context) which the researcher provides in the situational description. DCTs can be open-ended or close-ended (Cohen 1996:25; cf. Kasper 2000a as cited in Barron 2003 for another typology of the DCT). In *close*-ended DCTs, the researcher provides a hearer's response, what is known as *rejoinder*, after the speaker's turn played by the participant while *open*-ended DCTs do not contain a rejoinder. There is some claim that providing rejoinders affects the way participants formulate their responses. According to Fukushima (2000), if the participant who is playing the role of the speaker in a DCT eliciting requests, for instance, realizes that the hypothetical hearer does not comply with the request, the participant might overtly modify his/her requests compared to what s/he would have done if no such rejoinder was provided (cf. Rose 1992 as cited in Felix-Brasdefer 2010:45-6 comparing responses with rejoinder to responses without rejoinder). From another perspective, Rose (1992 as cited in Felix-Brasdefer 2010:45-6; also Rose 1992a as cited in Rose and Ono 1995:197) did not find significant differences in request formation as he compared responses to situational prompts where a rejoinder was provided to responses to prompts without a rejoinder. Johnston *et al.* (1993 as cited in Rose and Ono 1995:198) further argue that it is not merely the absence vs. presence of the rejoinder that could affect participants' responses to DCT prompts. Other factors including the type of rejoinder (preferred rejoinder as in compliance with the request as opposed to dispreferred rejoinder as in declination of the request), the type of the

SA involved, and participants' L1 (NS as opposed to NNS). The DCT used for the present study is open-ended, not inclusive of rejoinder.

The DCT has been widely employed by researchers who modified its layout according to their target populations and research questions (cf. Felix-Brasdefer 2010 for illustrations; also Rose and Ono 1995). For example, Brown's (2001) study employs a number of production questionnaires such as Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT), where participants read a written situational description and write down what they would say in such a situation, and Oral Discourse Completion Task (ODCT), where participants listen to the situational descriptions provided audibly then respond orally and their responses are tape-recorded to elicit requests, refusals and apologies by EFL learners and Japanese as SL learners (cf. Woodfield 2008 who employs WDCT to elicit requests by Japanese and German ESL learners and English NSs; also Barron (2003) reported above who employs DCT which provides the first turn such as greetings or opener to the interaction and rejoinder to elicit requests, and Free DCT (FDCT) which only provides the situational description and the communicative intent to elicit offers and refusals to offers).

Another example of employing DCT creatively is Schauer (2004) who designed a special format of a production questionnaire termed Multimedia Elicitation Task (MET)[6]. The MET presents the situational stimuli to participants via audiovisual

[6] MET seems to stand somewhere between production questionnaires (namely DCT) and Role Plays (RP)s. Unlike DCTs, the MET elicits oral data, as is the case with RPs. However, the MET has the advantage of

technology and elicits data orally (similar to Brown's 2001 ODCT above). Oral data makes the resulting corpus closer to authentic speech than written data resulting from traditional production questionnaires.

In spite of its widespread, the use of DCT has evoked great controversy regarding its effectiveness as data collection instrument. Some studies propose that the overall differences between DCT data and oral data are not significant to the extent that could seriously disqualify DCT data (for example Bodman and Eisentein's 1988 as cited in Beebe & Cummings 1996:66). From another perspective, it is argued that DCTs yield data that is not properly reflective of the essential features of natural (oral) speech (Rose 1994; Golato 2003; Takahashi 1995; Yuan 2001; Olshtain and Blum-Kulka 1984; Cohen and Olshtain 1994). Regardless of these two opposing standpoints on DCT data, DCT is selected as data collection instrument for the present study because it fulfills the requirements of the research questions being investigated (see chapters one and six). The rationale for choosing DCT for the present study is discussed in the last section of this chapter.

2.2. Role Plays (RP)s

Role Plays stand somewhere between DCT in its most controlled format and authentic data and can take one of two forms: closed or open (cf. Kasper and Dahl 1991; also Golato 2003). In *closed* RPs, the conversational prompt is

standardization. In MET, the situational description is projected to all participants in the exact same automated manner, thus eliminating any potential influence of mood or tone of the other interlocutor who is role-playing with the participant in RPs (Schauer 2004:257; cf. Rose 2000).

provided (i.e. first turn of the conversation such as greetings) along with the situational description. The participant is required to play the role of the speaker with another participant that the researcher assigns and their data is audio- and/or video-recorded. In *open* RPs, only the situational description is specified and the planning and execution of the communicative intent is up to the participant (cf. Fukushima 2000; also Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 2008:10).

One of the recent studies that employed RP is Flores Salgado (2011) who modified Rose's COPT to investigate adult learners' production of requests and apologies. The learners in Flores Salgado's study were Mexican Spanish learning English as FL in three proficiency levels: basic, intermediate, and advanced. Similar to the DCT in the present study, the COPT in Flores Salgado's study allows 'opting out'. Participants are allowed not to produce the target SA, and whenever they opt out they are required to specify the reason(s) for doing so by selecting from a list of seven reasons.

2.3. Naturally Occurring Data

The method with the least level of control is the use of authentic data where the researcher only observes the speech as produced by the speakers. In this case, the researcher must obtain his/her participants' consent prior to recording their interactions to avoid issues of unethicality. According to Have (2007), the participants must consent to three aspects: the recording of their speech, the use of the recordings and their transcription for research purposes, and to making the

recordings publically accessible. In fact, most universities provide a standardized consent form that must be filled by both the researcher and each participant before the initiation of any data collection session (see appendix (A) for the ethical consent form supplied by the University of Essex).

Once the participants become aware of their speech being recorded, the resulting data would rather lose the quality of complete authenticity[7]. Have (2007) reports that participants oftentimes display unease towards having their data recorded by dropping casual comments on being exposed, for example. It is hence suggested that the researcher selects the participants from outside his/her circle, so that if some personal details were revealed throughout the recordings it is more likely that their references would remain anonymous to the audience (Have 2007)[8].

An alternative method for collecting authentic data without concerns for academic ethicality is the use of field-notes on natural speech (cf. Kasper and Dahl 1991:241). However, field-notes do not accurately capture features of natural speech being observed mainly due to constraints such as the writing ability and short term memory of the researcher observing the data (Beebe and Cummings 1996; see also Gelato 2003). Therefore, if the research is of the type that must

[7] See Menasan (2004) who obtained the participants' consent after having recorded them without their awareness.

[8] From another perspective, participants who are completely unfamiliar with the researcher will be less inclined to volunteer for his/her data collection sessions in general (unless in exchange for a worthy reward for instance). This was the case in the present study. Although the present data does not involve any recordings, it was often the case where participants did not show interest in taking part (see conclusion on challenges during the data collection process).

build from a corpus of natural data as in Conversation Analysis (CA), audio- or video- taping is preferred to note-taking, on condition that researcher obtains the participants' consent. Another source of data is the use media discourse (Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010; also Martínez-Flor 2008 in the conclusion chapter) or institutional talk which takes place between institutional representatives and their clients, as in academic advisory sessions between advisors and students or doctor-patient interactions in a medical institution (Gunnarsson 2009 on professional discourse, see also Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 2008).

2.4. Verbal Reports

Verbal reports[9] help explain why participants produced or perceived a particular SA the way they did, thus eliciting assessment (*metapragmatic*) data (Kasper and Dahl 1991). Verbal reports are also useful in yielding sociocultural information such as participants' perceptions of the effect of social variables such as power differential and social distance between S and H, and how these social factors affect the selection of strategies (pragmalinguistic means) for performing the targeted SA. An example of a study employing the verbal report instrument is the abovementioned Woodfield (2008). Her verbal report was administered after the administration of a written discourse completion task (WDCT) eliciting requests from German and Japanese ESL learners and British English NSs.

[9] Although verbal reports exert more control on what participants produce compared to natural data and thus should have been reviewed before natural data, verbal reports do not yield primary data but rather retrospective explanatory data.

Furthermore, verbal reports can be useful in validating the main data elicitation method. For example, Felix-Brasdefer (2010) administered a RP to elicit refusals and then requested that the participants reflect on the contextual information provided in the RP situational prompts. Based on the participants' feedback, Felix-Brasdefer's 2010 enhanced the situational description in the RP prompts with more details.[10]

The administration of verbal reports can take one of two directions: retrospective or concurrent (Kasper and Rose 2002). Retrospective verbal reports are administered after the completion of the main elicitation task. Participants are asked to reflect on certain aspects of their performance in the preceding task, as in Al-Issa (1998), Hassall (2008) and Woodfield (2008) (see also Edmondson *et al.* 1984 who used open RP then interviews). Concurrent or online verbal reports, known as *think-aloud* tasks (Felix-Brasdefer 2010) are simultaneous with the main elicitation task. Participants should report on the internal cognitive activity, or at least the aspects that the researcher has asked the participants to attend to, which is going on in their minds as they are producing the data, as in Robinson's study (1991 as cited in Cohen and Olshtain 1994:150).

[10] See Al-Issa 2003; Schmidt 1993; Felix-Brasdefer 2010; Cohen and Olshtain 1994; Hassall 2008 for discussion of some of the challenges to applying Verbal Reports in ILP research.

2.5. Combination of Methods

Recently in ILP/CCP research trends, combining more than one instrument in the data collection process is recommended, a practice known as *triangulation* (Geluykens 2007; Kasper and Dhal 1991; Cohen and Olshtain 1994; Barron 2003). There are plenty of examples illustrating the use of more than one data collection method in single study. Some examples from the aforementioned studies include and Brown (2001) who uses various types of DCT and RP as well as self-assessment tasks to elicit requests, refusals and apologies by EFL learners and Japanese as SL learners, and Hassall (2008) who employs RP then retrospective interviews eliciting requests and complaints from low-intermediate and upper-intermediate Australian learners of Indonesian as FL.

Another recent trend in ILP/CCP research, following the larger Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research paradigm, is the use of data computer software in data analysis (Baralt 2012). Such programmes allow the researchers to manage all types of data, written, audio or video, with more ease. For example, these programmes support automated searches which, similar to online search engines, display the results instantly. Furthermore, these programmes group data in a single online location. This allows the researcher to access other projects in the same field (which can be made available by their authors with a 'read only' format so that the content cannot be altered) and also allow more than one researcher to work on the same project from different locations or even countries.

3. Review of Some Studies on the Pragmatic Competence of Arab learners of English

While the preceding section reports on data collection instruments in ILP/CCP research by referring to some of the most commonly cited studies illustrating each method, this section focuses on the methodological design of studies investigating the pragmatic competence of Arab NSs (of different varieties of Arabic as their L1) and Arab learners of English. As illustrated previously in chapter (2), there is a disappointing lack of studies on Arabic language in ILP/CCP research. The existing body of research on requests in Arabic is even more limited. Although none of the studies reviewed in this section investigate KA, and most of them investigate SAs other than requests, the examination of their methodology and results can still be beneficial for the present study.

Among the very few studies on requests by Arab NSs and Arab learners of English that the researcher was able to access are Al-Ali and Alawneh (2010), Umar (2004), Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily (2012), and Al-Gahtani (2012). Al-Ali and Alawneh (2010) compared the use of request mitigative devices (external, lexical/phrasal, and syntactic) produced by forty-five undergraduate American English NSs and forty-five undergraduate Jordanian Arabic EFL learners. The proficiency level of the Jordanian learners majoring in English at four public universities in Jordan was determined based on their academic level, thus only second and third year undergraduate were selected. The data collection instrument was a six-item DCT that investigates two social variables: three levels

of power (speaker-dominant, hearer-dominant and equal status interlocutors) and two levels of distance (S and H either know each other or do not). Similar to the findings of the present study, one of the most notable observations in Al-Ali and Alawneh's study is that the Jordanian learners' requests did not exhibit syntactic modification to the same frequency and variety of pragmalinguistic means as in the requests of their American NS counterparts. The authors attribute this finding mainly to the limited pragmalinguistic ability in the interlanguage to express the more complex forms of request mitigation as well as transfer from the L1.

Umar (2004) researched request strategy choice of twenty advanced Arab EFL learners and twenty British English NSs. The colloquial Arabic variety of the Arab learners in this study was not homogenous, five Sudanese, five Saudis, five Egyptians and five Bahrainis selected from universities in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Bahrain. The DCT administered in this study contained nine situations investigating two social variables: two values of power (either hearer-dominant or S=H) and two values of distance (close vs. distant). The author observed a relation between the social variables in the situation and the strategy selected by the participant to perform the request. For example, in situations where S is requesting from a higher status H, participants in both groups (the NSs control and the learners) opted for indirect strategies to a larger extent, conventionally indirect strategies for the most part. However, the two participant groups differed in their realization of these indirect requests. The Arab learners' requests were shorter and less tactful whereas the English control requests were more

elaborate with explanations for making the request. Similarly, the English control requests employed a wider range of modification which appears to be a logical consequence of the superior linguistic command of the language by its NSs.

Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily (2012) carry out a cross-cultural comparison of Saudi Arabic and American English requests, using a twelve-item DCT to investigate the effect of the three social variables: Power, Distance, and Imposition. The authors observed an increase in the use of direct strategies by Saudi NSs in situations of low social distance between the S and the H (-D) and speaker-dominant situations regardless of the weight of the request. This suggests that the effect of the variables 'Power' and 'Distance' was more influential on request strategy choice than that of 'Imposition'. The American NSs, on the other hand, preferred conventionally indirect requests, particularly in situations addressed to a familiar hearer (as in close friends) that involve a rather impositive request. In fact, the American NSs' preference for conventionally indirect requests was observed even in speaker-dominant situation, although in such situations the speaker's authority presumably allows him/her relatively more freedom to perform the request directly.

Al-Gahtani (2012) investigates the request strategies and modifiers occurring before the core request (*pre-head act*) and after it (*post-head act*) by Saudi learners of Australian English in Melbourne in two proficiency levels: high and low, as well as a control group of Australian NSs. Using an open Role-Play to

elicit data, the three situations in his study investigate the effect of a single variable, 'Power' (thus speaker-dominant situation, hearer-dominant situation, and S=H situation). As far as the request strategy choice is concerned, Al-Gahtani found a relation between the learners' proficiency level and their sensitivity to the hearer's power. For example, the low-level learners in Al-Gahtani's study did not vary the level of directness in their requests according to the power of the hearer. This could be attributed to the lack of linguistic means to express a more versatile range of request strategies in the L2. Regarding the use of request modification (*pre-* and *post-* head act), the author observed that the influence of H's power varied not only across participant group but also across modifier type. This is analogous to the findings of the present study in relation to the use of external modifiers, as will be discussed in chapter (6).

Hussein's (1995) article addresses the topic of request realization in Arabic from a general sociopragmatic perspective, among other SAs such as apologies, expression of gratitude, greetings, refusals, partings and disagreement. The data in his corpus ranges from the researcher's observation of a few instances of natural conversations (in Jordanian Arabic) to examples from written discourse which he extracted from newspapers and letters (in the written variety of the language that is Modern Standard Arabic MSA, see chapter two in the present study). The data Hussein draws on provides illustrations of some of the main strategies for making requests in Arabic, which are also used in English (strategies pointed in chapter (2) and (5) in the present study). Such strategies

include imperatives, need statements and permission questions. Obviously, Hussein's discussion here is less comparable to the present study because it draws from unsystematic data (data that it not elicited from a sufficient number of participants on a number of situations with specified social variables such as roles and relation between S and H).

Another study that addressed the topic of requests in MSA is Al-Aqra's (2001). The author's analysis perspective is different from the present study though, she investigates the use of modals in requests translated from English to Arabic (MSA) by Palestinian EFL learners and compares their translations to the requests produced by American English control group. She used three types of questionnaires: a multiple choice questionnaire, a translation questionnaire and assessment questionnaire. Al-Aqra' found differences in the employment of modal verbs between the two groups, which is most likely attributable to the properties of Arabic language. While the concept of modality and its impact on the increase of politeness in speech is universal, Arabic language does not have the same extended set of modal verbs as the ones available for making requests in English (such as *'can/could'*, *'will/would'* and so on). This does not mean that languages such as Arabic are less polite than languages such as English but simply indicates that different languages make use of different pragmalinguistic resources to achieve politeness (cf. Taha 2006; Sifianou 1999 for a similar discussion; also see discussion of the present study's results in chapter six).

Other studies on Arab learners investigated other SAs such as apologies, compliment responses, and refusals (their results are not discussed here because they are less relevant to the present study). For example, Nelson *et al* (1996) investigated the similarities and/or differences in compliment responses between Syrian Arabic NSs and American English NSs, using audiotaped interviews as data collection method. Nureddeen (2008) deployed a 10-item DCT to elicit the most common forms for performing apologies in Sudanese Arabic investigating three variables: the severity of offense (mild vs. severe), strength of the relation between S and H, and power differential between S and H. Bataineh and Bataineh (2008) also investigated apologies in American English and Jordanian Arabic. To ensure that the situations in the data collection instrument are familiar to the prospective population, the authors administered a questionnaire asking the participants to suggest the situations which they think would be more likely to evoke apologies, thus establishing a *pool* of situations contributed by the participants themselves. The authors then rated the frequencies of occurrence of each situation and selected the ones with higher ranking of familiarity to serve as situational prompts in the main elicitation task, which is a 10-item production questionnaire. This is similar to the practice followed in the present study as will be discussed in chapter (4). Al-Issa (2003) examined the sociocultural transfer of refusals by Jordanian Arabic EFL learners, by comparing their performance to a control group of NSs of American English and another control of NSs of Jordanian Arabic (see also Al-Issa 1998). He employed a 15-itme DCT eliciting refusals to requests, offers/invitations and

suggestions. The variables in his situations are power differential between S and H (speaker-dominant, hearer-dominant, or S=H) and social distance between S and H (close, familiar or distant). To design his DCT, Al-Issa spent some time observing the situations where refusals are likely to occur (cf. Fukushima 2000 who followed a similar course) and then selected the situations which occurred more commonly. Nelson *et al* (2002) investigate the (in)directness dimension of the communication style of Egyptian Arabic NSs (25 participants) and American English NSs (30 participants). The authors employed a 12-item DCT to elicit four types of refusals: refusals to requests, refusals to invitations, refusals to offers and refusals to suggestions. For each refusal type there were three types of situations representing three social status values (speaker-dominant, hearer-dominant, and S=H). Nelson *et al.* presented the situational description in the written variety of Arabic (MSA) then elicited the colloquial data orally and audio-taped it.

4. Selecting the Instrument for Eliciting Data in the Present Study

DCT is selected as data collection instrument for the present study because it serves the intended research goals (the research questions for the present study are delineated in chapters one and six). To begin with, one of the fundamental goals of the present study is to establish a descriptive account of how Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) NS's perform and modify requests in the L1. Another goal is to identify the main developmental patterns of request production and modification in the IL of KA NNS's of English as Foreign Language (EFL). As pointed earlier in

chapter (2) both populations (KA NS's and KA NNS's of English) represent new target populations to ILP/CCP research. To this end, relatively large amounts of data must be collected to establish a more generalizable platform for the most common semantic formula and strategies (pragmalinguistic conventions) for request formation in both KA and the IL of KA EFL learners. One of the most acknowledged advantages of production questionnaires is their ability to gather data from large populations over relatively short periods of time. Large amounts of data further allow the researcher to running statistical (*quantitative*) analysis (see chapter six), which makes the resulting data more systematic and relatable to other participant populations.

Another aim of the present study was to investigate the effect of contextual variables on speakers' request formation. The DCT allows the researcher to control contextual variables such as the status of S relative to H, the familiarity relation between S and H and the degree of imposition of the target request by pre-allocating their values in the situational description (cf. Gotor and Dalmau 2007; also Barron 2006:89-93; Fukushima 2000; Al-Issa 2003; Golato 2003). In this respect, it is argued that enriching the situational descriptions with the relevant contextual information can positively affect the elicited data (cf. Woodfield 2008:255). For example, Billmyer and Varghese (2000 as cited in Felix-Brasdefer 2010:46) found that the addition of more contextual features to their situational description such as the time and place resulted in an increased use of request external modification and more elaborate response.

From another perspective, the choice of DCT as data collection instrument for the present study seems appropriate due to the nature of this particular SA. Schauer (2008; also Ellis 1995) argues that requests are among the type of SAs that can be realized in a single conversational turn. As she comments:

> "Requests are deliberate acts and not reactive utterances towards an interlocutor's preceding turn that have to be produced without previous planning." (Schauer 2008:413)

DCT is thus effective in capturing the semantic formulae and syntactic structure that bears the core request as well as other linguistic devices that do not perform the request per se but usually occur with requests, as in external and/or internal mitigation (see chapter five). Other SAs which are essentially *interactive* cannot be realized in a single turn as because they initiate as a response to a speaker's previous turn, such as refusal to an offer, invitation or request (Felix-Brasdefer 2010). Such SAs are better investigated through the use of a data collection method such as Role-Plays (RP), which can reflect the full-fledged, multi-turned conversation (see description of RPs earlier in this chapter).

It is important to bear in mind though that data resulting from controlled methods (such as DCT and RP) are essentially *declarative* (see chapter one on the distinction between *declarative* vs. *procedural* pragmatic knowledge). In DCTs and RPs, participants are instructed to respond according to what they think would say in a similar situation in the real-world (Golato 2003; Barron 2003).

Such data however does not reflect how the participants would actually implement their declarative knowledge in live interactions (i.e. *procedural* knowledge) where speakers are under the pressure to produce responses promptly.

The following chapter discusses the data collection instruments for the present study (including rating questionnaire and DCT), the administration of each instrument, and the data collection process.

Chapter (4):

The present study: The data collection instrument and the participants

The Administration of the Present Study: The Data Collection Instrument and the Participants

There are two types of questionnaires administered for collecting data for the present study, a rating questionnaire followed by a production questionnaire, namely a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) (see chapter three). The components of each questionnaire and its functions in the present study are discussed next.

1. Step One: The Rating Questionnaire

The rating questionnaire consists of twenty request situations, where a hypothetical Speaker (S) asks something of a hypothetical Hearer (H) (see appendix (B). Participants were asked to rate the twenty request situations based on the likelihood of encountering a similar situation in the real-world on a four-point scale ranging from often to never. Thus, under each situation there were four options: *often*, *sometimes*, *rarely* and *never,* and participants had to tick in the box corresponding to the option they judge as most valid.

The twenty situations represent examples for the ten values of variables being investigated in the present study. These values include three manifestations for the social status variable (speaker-dominant, hearer-dominant, and S and H are equal in status), two manifestations for the social distance variable (strangers vs. acquainted) and two manifestations for the imposition of the request variable (high vs. low), as will be discussed later in this chapter (section *1.b.* below; also see chapter two on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory 1978). Thus, for each of the ten values there were two versions which

differ only in the situational scenario they depict. In each of the ten situational sets, the version with the highest score of likelihood was selected to be used in the subsequent data elicitation instrument, the DCT.

The administration of a rating questionnaire to pilot the situations and the selection of those situations with the highest scores to be used in the main elicitation task is in line with the concept of *pool* in Bataineh and Bataineh (2008) as reported in chapter (3) of the present study (see also Rose and Ono 1995 for a similar approach). Although participants in the present study were not asked to describe situations from personal experience, as did Bataineh and Bataineh in their research, but rather rate existing situations already provided by the researcher, the use of the rating questionnaire here seeks to involve a sample of the target population in the situational design in an attempt to yield more realistic data.

The rating questionnaire which is administered to the Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) group was written in MSA, to attribute a sense of formality to the rating questionnaire as a research instrument (see discussion on formal vs. informal variety of Arabic previously discussed in chapter two). This version was then translated to English, consulting two NSs of KA who are also competent in English. The resulting translation was then proof-read by a NS of English to ensure that the resulting translation sounds as if it was originally produced in English. To further ease the translation between the Arabic version and the English version of the questionnaire, certain Arabic names were selected to be employed in the situational scenarios, specifically those names which have

equivalences in both Arabic and English, for example *Nadia*, *Nora*, *Sara* and the like (cf. Barron 2004:88 on the selection of names for the data collection instrument).

The next section discusses the twenty situations in the rating questionnaire, the three social variables in each situation, the participants' sample that rated the frequency of the twenty situations and the results of their rating task which is the basis for selecting situations for the ensuing production task, the DCT.

1.1. The Situations

When selecting the situations for the data elicitation task, the researcher must ensure that the situations s/he employs are not unfamiliar to the target population. If the participants can relate to the situational prompts, the data they produce would be more representative of their actual behavior in the real-world and not fabricated just to fill in for a response slot.

To achieve this, the researcher can adopt situations from existing studies that address populations with similar sociocultural and linguistic background. One of the studies whose instrument for data collection makes a rich source for situational scenarios is the DCT used for the Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project CCSARP (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989). The situations presented in the DCT for the CCSARP were piloted and administered to a large population of participants from different sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds, including eight languages and language varieties (Australian

English, American English, British English, Canadian French, Danish, German, Hebrew and Russian).

Alternatively, the researcher can design his/her own situations, normally inspired by instances where the target SA occurred while the researcher was observing occasions of its most common occurrences (cf. Al-Issa 1998, 2003; also Fukushima 2000). The researcher could then pilot these situations to a sample of the prospective population and make modifications wherever necessary until the outcome becomes as representative as possible of the target population's reality.

The situations employed in the questionnaires for the present study are a combination of both practices. Some of the situations were adapted from previous studies (cf. Koike 1989; Hassall 2001; Schauer 2008, who followed a similar course). For example, situations (5) and (10) in DCT for the present study are adapted from situations (1-marking problem) and (4-paper due), respectively, in Eslami and Noora's study (2008; see also situation C1 EXTENSION in Woodfield 2008; also situation (3) in Konakahara 2011 which is the same as situation (5) in the present study DCT; also situation (4) in Flores Salgado 2011). Situation (7) in the present study DCT where S is a job applicant asking the employee in charge to keep him/her updated with the results is adapted from Barron's study (2003; see also situation A3 JOB from Woodfield 2008). Situation (3) in the present study's DCT where S is a student asking a classmate for a pen and some paper is similar to situation (5) in Al-Ali and Alawneh's study (2010). Situation (8) in the present study's DCT

where S is a student who missed the previous two lectures and asks another student to borrow his/her notes is an adaptation of the 'Notes situation' from the CCSARP (1989; see also Nelson et al. 2002 on refusal to a similar request; also a similar situation is used again in Al-Issa 1998 to elicit the SA refusal, see also situation (4) in Al-Ali and Alawneh 2010). Situation (2) in the present study's DCT is similar to Rose and Ono (1995) situation number (9) 'CALL'.

Likewise, in the rating questionnaire for the present study, situation (13) where S asks the hearer to keep the noise down in the library is inspired by situation (B2 LIBRARY) in Woodfield's study[1] (2008). Situation (4) in the present study DCT is inspired by Schauer (2004) scenarios (15) and (8) 'arrange meeting', although in Schauer's study the request is addressed to equal status H in the former and to higher status H in the latter. In the present study DCT, H in situation (4) is of lower status relative to S (S is the boss requesting from assistant) as these roles sound more realistic (i.e. arranging meetings usually falls under the assistant's responsibilities). Situation (4) in the rating questionnaire for the present study where the boss asks an employee to spend an extra hour or two at work is adapted from Nelson *et al*'s study (2002) situation (12) refusal to request. Situation (12) in the rating questionnaire in the present study where S is asking his/her professor for a recommendation letter is similar to situation (1) in Al-Ali and Alawneh's study (2010) and situation (8) in Umar's study (2004).

[1] The difference between Woodfield's situation and the situation in the present study is in the value of the *P* variable (social status); in the former S is more powerful than H whereas in the latter S and H are equals (both students).

The remaining situations for the present study rating questionnaire were created specifically to illustrate the other values of the variables targeted (see section *1.1.b* below). When creating these situations, orientations of KA participants which constitute the bulk of the target population were considered, while sustaining the applicability of such situations to British English (BE) participants to achieve cultural and linguistic comparability.

1.2. The Variables

Following from Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1978), the Weight (*W*) of a Face Threatening Act (FTA), or request in this case, is determined by three factors: *P, D* and *R* (as pointed earlier in chapter two). *P* stands for the social status or power differential between S and H. *D* stands for the social distance between S and H. *R* stands for the ranking or degree of imposition of the request being performed. According to Brown and Levinson, that these three variables affect how speakers formulate and modify their requests, though speakers may not be particularly conscious of such an effect. The role of these three variables in determining the weight of the request and accordingly the request strategy and modification employed is believed to be universal (Brown and Levinson 1978; Holtgraves and Yang 1992), although some difference occur cross-culturally and across individuals within the same cultures (Fukushima 2000). Therefore, many ILP/CCP studies have incorporated these three variables in their situational design (see chapter three for citation of some studies) and the present study is no exception[2].

[2] Fukushima (2000) and Holtgraves and Yang (1992) argue that most studies focus on only one or two variables.

Each variable has more than one value, which can be illustrated as follows (Brown and Levinson 1978):

Variable (1): Power (P) has three values:

1- S>H: S is of greater social power than H, in terms of occupation, social standing, and/or age, for instance.

2- S<H: S is inferior to H with regards to social power.

3- S=H: S and H are equal with regards to social power.

Variable (2): Distance (D) has two values:

1- +D: There is social distance between S and H. They are unfamiliar with one another.

2- –D: There is no social distance between S and H. They are acquainted with one another.

Variable (3): Imposition (R) has two values:

1- +R: The content of the request is of high imposition upon H (demanding request).

2- –R: The content of the request is of low imposition.

A total of twelve situations resulted from combining the different values of all three variables. Two situations were excluded because when their values for the variables (P), (D) and (R) were combined together, the resulting two situations were not feasible. That is, the potential threat upon S's face was too great to the extent that S would most likely refrain from performing the act in the first place, what corresponds to Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy of 'not doing the FTA' (see chapter two on politeness theory; also Nureddeen

2008 who also uses 10 situations for the same combination of variables as the present study).

The value of the three variables (P), (D) and (R) may be assessed differently in different cultures (cf. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka 1984; Fukushima 2000; Sifianou 1999, among others). A variable which is perceived as having a high value by speakers of a certain culture may not have the same perception in another culture. For example, and as pointed earlier in chapter (2), members of positive-politeness oriented cultures are assumed to value the emphasis of the connections between members of the same group to a larger extent than members of negative-politeness oriented cultures. Thus, speakers in such cultures tend to opt for using more direct request strategies which serves to show that the social distance (D) between S and H is rather diminished (–D). Similarly, assessing the seriousness or heaviness of a given request can vary not only cross-culturally but also across individuals of the same culture (cf. Holtgraves and Yang 1992 who further argue for gender differences). There are though some social roles which seem to have similar perceptions across different cultures. For example, participants in both L1 groups in the present study seem to have the same esteemed perception of the role of university professor. This was reflected in participants' choice of request strategy and degree of mitigation used in responses to situations (5) and (10), where S is student requesting from his/her professor.

1.3. The Participants

The rating questionnaire was administered to a group of participants different from the group which participated in the main elicitation task. The rating questionnaire was first administered in Kuwait in Arabic (in MSA, the variety for written functions) to twenty-eight participants who were employees at the administration office of Kuwait University or senior students at Kuwait University[3]. Twenty-six of the participants were females and two were males. Their ages range from 20-40 years old which is consistent with the age range of the participants in the other groups in Kuwait, the KA control group and the two learner groups.

In the United Kingdom, the rating questionnaire was administered in English to fifteen participants who were students at the University of Essex. Ten participants were females and five were males, and their age was in the same range as the participants in the Kuwaiti Arabic group.

1.4. The Results

Overall, there was no significant difference between the Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) group and the British English (BE) group in rating the frequency of the two versions in each of the ten situational sets (the interaction between group L1 and choice of version in each set was non-significant at p= .662, see appendix (C). Upon individual analysis of the ten situational sets, differences across the two language groups started to emerge. For example, in situational sets (1), (5), (8) and (9), participants in both groups opted for the same version (the

[3] Many thanks to Ms. Shaikha Al-Dosery for her help in collecting the data for the rating questionnaire.

second example in the set) as most frequent. The interaction between group L1 and choice of version was statistically non-significant (see appendix (C). In the other situational sets (2), (3), (4), (6), (7) and (9), the rating of participants differed according to group L1 and the interaction between group L1 and choice of version was significant.

Despite such differences in six out of ten situational sets, it was decided to adopt the rating of the Arabic group for a number of reasons. To begin with, the Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) participants represent the ruling majority of the sample being investigated in the present study. There are three KA groups in the main elicitation DCT task (one control group and two learner groups, composed of thirty participants each), as opposed to one group of British English (BE) NSs consisting of fifteen participants. Secondly, and although the two versions in each situational set are designed to be equivalent to one another in the values of the variables they represent, different situational descriptions have some kind of effect upon the participants' responses (see chapter three). For example, situations with lengthier scenarios which involve more details yield lengthier responses as well as increased use of modification. This was observed when analyzing the data from the three L1 Arabic groups which was elicited prior to the English control data. Thus, to ensure that data from both L1 groups is fairly comparable, the same situational description should be used for both L1 groups.

Furthermore, and as discussed above (section *1.a.*), most of the situations in the rating questionnaire at hand are adopted from existing research

investigating learners of English of different L1 backgrounds and comparing them to NSs of the Target Language (TL). Thus, the suitability of such situations to English NSs is already established. From another perspective, even in the six situational sets where the BE rating differed from KA rating (where the BE participants selected a version in the situational set as more frequent different from the version selected by the KA participants), the rating of the BE participants were still above the mid-level point of the scale which is 2.5. In fact, most situations were rated with a likelihood of occurrence between *'sometimes'* and *'often'* or close to *'sometimes'*.

2. Step two: The DCT

The DCT in the present study consisted of ten items, representing the ten situations that scored higher on likelihood scale based on the abovementioned rating task. Instructions of how to fill in the DCT were provided in the coversheet. Participants were asked to respond in writing (in a designated blank space) in the same manner as they would do if similar situations were encountered in the real-world.

In the Arabic DCT, participants were asked to respond in KA, the language for everyday communication (see chapter (2) on the formal vs. informal varieties of Arabic). The present study DCT also allows participants to 'opt out', that is the choice of not producing a request (cf. Gotor and Dalmau 2007; Flores Salgado 2011; also Eisenstein and Bodman 1986 as cited in Rose and Ono 1995:193) by writing 'NO REQUSET'. Opting out is intended for the situations which the participant perceive as unlikely to happen in his/her reality, or those

situations where the participant would not produce a request mainly because the imposition is too high. Presenting the opt-out option is believed to increase the reliability of the DCT as data collection instrument. The DCT becomes more reflective of real-world circumstances where speakers can choose not to make a request which is too serious and is more likely to be declined accordingly, for instance (cf. Brown and Levinson 1978 on 'do not do the FTA' strategy; also Olshtain and Blum-Kulka, 1984; also Rose 2000:39 on possible reasons for participants' opting out).

2.1. The Participants:

2.1.1. The Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) Native Speakers (NS)s Control Group

The KA control group includes thirty KA NSs, different from those participants who performed on the English version of the DCT. The purpose of dedicating a separate group of KA NSs as control, instead of having the same group perform on the same task once in Arabic and once in English, is to avoid any potential influence of either language during performance. If the participants were asked, for example, to take part in the Arabic version then respond to the English version of the same DCT, there is a chance that they would copy the type of responses they produced in L1 KA into English (see chapter (1) on transfer from L1 to L2).

The thirty participants in the KA control group are all females who ranged in age from 20-40 years old. They are either graduates of one of the colleges of Kuwait University where English is not the language of instruction, or employees at various administrations of Kuwait University or other

governmental institutions. It was not necessary to include male participants in the data collection task because gender is not intended as a variable in the present study.

2.1.2. The Two Non-Native Speaker Groups

Since the present study is a cross-cultural examination of English and Kuwaiti Arabic native-speaker requests and the requests of Kuwaiti non-native speakers of English, it is necessary to identify the learning context of English in Kuwait. Discussing the acclaimed distinction between English as Foreign Language (EFL) and English as Second Language (ESL) is hence due.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is the term traditionally used to describe the sort of English taught in a context in which the dominant language is other than English, and there is little English used in the environment, other than for international communication. Examples of such contexts include countries such as Japan, Germany and Saudi Arabia (Mercer *et al.* 2007:190). This is indeed the status of English usage in Kuwait where there is relatively little English interactions outside the classroom context (also in Turkey, see Otcu and Zeyrek 2008). Conversely, English as a Second Language (ESL) is the term traditionally used to refer to situations in which speakers of other home language are learning English in a context in which English is used alongside the L1 for communication purposes outside the classroom (as in correspondences in public institutions and the like), which is the case in countries such as India (Mercer *et al.* 2007:193).

At the initial stages of outlining the present study, the intention was to include three proficiency levels in English: beginner, intermediate, and advanced (cf. Trosborg 1995 who investigates three proficiency levels; also Rose 2000; Flores Salgado 2011). The inclusion of a beginner level was thought to help reveal more developmental patterns in the performance of requests by this population of learners (KA learners of English), which is new to ILP/CCP research as pointed in previous chapters. The beginner level would ideally be represented by school children, as in primary school or middle school children. However, the decision to include a beginner level was later discarded. Children at such an early age lack the sociocultural insight necessary for evaluating the contextual factors which govern speech act production, such as the influence of the three social variables: (P), (D) and (R) discussed above (Doughty and Long 2000). As has been pointed in chapter (1), the pragmatic dimension of language acquisition does not rely solely on linguistic skills but also on sociocultural conventions, which may not be accessible yet to children. In fact, even older children represented by high school students (under 18 years old) would still be too young relative to the adults in the other two groups (the intermediate and the advanced). The interpersonal and sociocultural maturity of such adolescents does not compare to that of adults. For such considerations, the present study draws on two proficiency levels: intermediate and advanced (cf. Lin 2009 who divides her Chinese EFL learners into two levels: low and high; also Scarcella 1979 who investigates two levels of proficiency: beginner and advanced; also Otcu and Zeyrek 2008 who include low and high proficiency levels).

2.1.2.1. The Intermediate-level (INL) Non-Native Speakers

Participants representing the intermediate level are alumni of Kuwait University who attended one of the colleges where English is the language of instruction and graduated within the last 10 years[4]. This group consisted of thirty participants whose age range was 22-32 years old. Sixteen participants were graduates of College of Engineering and Petroleum. The remaining fourteen participants were distributed as follows: one graduate of College of Medicine, four graduates of College of Dentistry, two graduates of College of Women, two graduates of College of Pharmacy, three graduates of College of department of Language and Linguistics in College of Arts and two graduates of College of Business Administration. All the participants were females except for two males.

A proficiency test was not administered prior to the data collection for the present study. Participants' proficiency level in English is predetermined by their academic level, which is a prerequisite to admission of the colleges they enroll to (cf. Al-Ali and Alawneh 2010 who did not administer a proficiency level test either, also see Rose 2000:33 on similar studies such as Trosborg 1995).

The background education of the participants in the intermediate-level group prior to college was also controlled (cf. Gotor and Dalmau 2007 on the importance of ensuring that members of the groups have had overall equal

[4] With the exception of a restricted number of general education courses which are taught in Arabic. Those courses are mostly taught in the colloquial language variety (KA or the regional dialect of the lecturer in case s/he is from another Arab nationality). However, the formal variety of Arabic (MSA), is used in administration of exams and students are supposed to answer in MSA (cf. Younes 2006 on the dialect in the Arab classroom).

educational background). In Kuwait, English is taught either in private schools or public (state) schools. All participants selected for the intermediate level in the present study attended public schools. Each class takes approximately forty minutes, five times a week (one class per day; see the Formal Guide to the Educational System in State Elementary/Middle/High Schools in Kuwait 2008-2009). This means that participants in this group have had at least eight years of EFL instruction.

2.1.2.2. The Advanced-level (ADL) Non-Native Speakers

The advanced proficiency level is suitably represented by faculty staff members teaching at Kuwait University or the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), representing the most acknowledged non-private academic institutions in Kuwaiti. The standard route to become a faculty staff member in either academic institution is to apply to their scholarships programmes, to study both the MA and the PhD degrees, or only the PhD degree if the applicant already holds an MA degree. The postgraduate degrees should be fulfilled in English, studying either in the United Kingdom or the United States[5]. The United States is the preferred destination for Kuwait University's scholarships. Almost 65% of Kuwait University's scholarships students are studying in American universities as opposed to 15% studying in the United Kingdom. In fact, the annual reports on Kuwait University's scholarships for the last ten academic years show that the number of faculty staff members who graduated from the United Kingdom

[5] Or other countries such as Germany or Egypt, depending on the academic major.

and thus have had contact with British English communicative norms does not exceed sixty members distributed over different colleges of Kuwait University.

Given such a lack of graduates of British universities to represent prospective participants for the advanced-level group, not to mention that a good number of them were not willing to take part in the elicitation task to begin with (see the challenges to the present study in the conclusion), it was decided to select graduates of British universities within the last 15 academic years. This helped the researcher attain sufficient numbers of participants similar to the other two groups of KA NSs (the KA control group and the INL group) each comprising thirty participants. The age range of the advanced-level group was therefore markedly different from that of the other groups 30-50 years old. Examples of other studies with a similar age range (almost 20 years gap between the lowest and highest age number) include De Paiva (2006 in De Paiva 2010) where age range in the learner group (acquiring Brazilian Portugese as L2) is between 20-45, and Bardovi-Harlig (2009) where age range is between 17-36 in the learners group, 18-40 in the American Enlgish NSs undergraduate group, and 23-62 in the American English NSs teacher group.

Choosing faculty staff members who graduated from British Universities for the advanced-level (ADL) group allows the investigation of the effect of an additional feature, the effect of contact with the TL in its native environment. Having attended a postgraduate course in the United Kingdom, participants in the ADL group would have had a minimum of three years of exposure to

English as a Second Language (ESL). As pointed earlier in chapter (3), other studies such as Barron (2003) and Schauer (2004) also investigated the effect of exposure to the TL in its community on the acquisition of SA performance, thus comparing Second Language (SL) learning context to Foreign Language (FL) learning context. However, and unlike Barron's (2003) and Schauer's (2004) research, the data for the present study was not collected during the participants' study abroad phase. Furthermore, and though participants in the ADL have had the opportunity of learning English in the SL environment during their sojourn in the United Kingdom, they have started learning English in the traditional classroom (EFL) environment in Kuwait. Therefore, the ADL participants in the present study cannot represent ESL learners in the true sense of the term.

It should be noted though that such a temporal gap between the time these ADL NNS's have had significant contact with the TL in its environment and the time of the data collection might have some influence on their responses, as will be later demonstrated in chapter (6). For example, there were no significant differences between the ADL group and the INL group in choice of request strategy and use of external modification. This lack of differences in request formation between these two different proficiency levels in the TL could be attributed to the fact that the ADL participants have been already settled back into their L1 environment. It seems that these participants are now rather detached from target-like requestive behaviour that was abundantly available to them in the TL environment.

Due to such considerations, participants in the ADL group are identified as non-native-speakers as opposed to learners. They have already passed the stage where they can represent learning in its true sense. As discussed earlier in this chapter, *learning* is demonstrated by EFL or ESL students who are still systematically acquiring and developing their L2 competence. Most of the participants in the ADL group hold a PhD degree from the UK and are teaching their respective fields of expertise at a collegiate level. Similarly, participants in the INL group are university alumni already working in various administrative jobs. In both groups, the participants are no longer acquiring English, at least not purposefully as would be the case in an English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom. In this respect, Cook (1999) makes the distinction between *L2 learner*, which refers to the NNS who is still in the learning process, and *L2 user,* which applies to the NNS using an L2. Analogous to the concept of the interlanguage (IL) pointed in previous chapters, the L2 users' linguistic system is not perceived as some deficient representation of the TL but as multicompetent. It is comprised of both L1 competence and L2 competence.

To sum up, the ADL group consisted of thirty faculty staff members teaching in Kuwait University or the PAAET who hold a PhD degree from the United Kingdom. Eighteen were females and twelve were males. None of the participants in this group was majoring in English language programmes, literature or linguistics. However, English is the language of instruction in the postgraduate programmes these ADL participants were attending while studying in the United Kingdom and English was also the language for writing

the doctorate thesis. In addition, these ADL participants were exposed to English norms of requesting through contact with BE NSs (see chapter one on *input* in Schmidt's 1993 terms, also implicit vs. explicit learning). Therefore, the defining criteria for the ADL group in the present study is identified in relation to increased amount of exposure to the TL in its environment rather than proficiency level on its own.

2.1.3. The British English (BE) Native Speaker (NS)s Control Group

The BE control group consisted of fifteen students at the University of Essex, ten females and five males. Obviously, the total number of participants in the BE NSs group is less than the total number of participants in the other three groups of KA NSs (fifteen as opposed to thirty). This is because BE NSs is a population that has been sufficiently investigated in existing ILP/CCP research. Based on the studies reviewed in chapter (3), there is a relatively well-established understanding of SA production by BE NSs. In this respect, Rose (2005 as cited in Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh 2008:180) reports that most instructional pragmatic studies include learners coming from English, Japanese, Cantonese, German, Hebrew and Spanish as L1. On the other hand, the population of KA NSs has never been surveyed in regards to the production of requests[6] (or any other SA phenomenon for that matter, see chapter two). It was hence necessary to collect data from a larger number of

[6] It should be noted that KA is selected as L1 and not L2 in the present study because foreign residents in Kuwait need not acquire KA for the most part. While living in Kuwait, foreign residents can either continue to use English (the use of which is increasing in daily life exchanges). Besides, the Arabic variety taught in schools and academic institutions is the formal variety for writing and reading purposes (MSA), which can be taught via formal instruction to Kuwaiti Arabs and non-Arabs alike. Kuwaiti Arabic is not treated in the same manner and is acquired by speakers as L1 without formal instruction (see chapter two on the varieties of Arabic).

participants in the three KA NSs groups to increase the reliability of the results.

Most participants in the BE control group were studying humanities majors such as Language and Linguistics, philosophy, history, sociology, literature, modern languages and the like. Their age range was 20-37 year old. A short background questionnaire was administered to ensure that the participants' parents were both English, hence eliminating the effect of any L1 other than English in their household. Furthermore, a cash reward was offered upon participation.

Having discussed the administration of the present study, including the two questionnaires used for data collection (rating questionnaire and DCT) and the four participant groups, the following chapter explains the analysis of the elicited data and the coding manual used to analyze the DCT data.

Chapter (5):

Coding the present study's data

1. The Coding Process for the Present Study

After collecting data from the participants via DCT (see previous chapter), their written responses were entered into word document. Using a computer format facilitates the coding and analysis as it allows the search option (searching for all occurrences of a word or phrase in the file). The total number of tokens (responses) came up to 1050 (i.e. 30 participants in each of the three KA NS's groups and 15 participants in the BE NS's group, each participant responding to 10 situations).

To analyse the data, the researcher can use pre-assigned codes (what Baralt 2012:231 refers to as *researcher-denoted* codes) and/or let the data itself inspire the codes (*in-vivo* codes; Baralt 2012:231) which is the case when coding Conversation Analysis (CA) data. The present study uses both practices to analyse its data. The analysis is mostly based on a pre-established coding manual that will be discussed in the next section. There are also some other instances in the present study's data which did not fit in any of the categories identified in the coding manual and hence a new category was created, such as the category 'Creating Realistic Context' and the subcategory 'Appealing to Hearer's Benevolence', as will be discussed in further detail below.

Data from KA NS's control group was transliterated and translated literally into English by the researcher[1]. The literal English translation was then translated into English equivalences, while preserving as much as possible the structural and semantic elements from the original KA script. The resulting English equivalent translation was further checked by a competent English NS and slight adjustments were made accordingly to ensure that the outcome sounds as if it was originally produced in English by an English NS.

2. Establishing the Coding Manual for the Present Study

The coding manual for the present study is consisted of integrated adaptations from a number of sources, mainly Blum-Kulka *et al*'s coding manual for the CCSARP (1989), as well as Trosborg (1995) and Schauer (2007; 2008; 2009; 2006b). Other publications on requests where the authors include some scheme for data analysis were also consulted (e.g. Le Pair 1996; Fukushima 1996; Lin 2009; Usó-Juan 2008; Soler *et al* 2005, and others).

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[1] As an undergraduate studying in the faculty of Arts, University of Kuwait (2000-2004) the department of English language and literature require students to take four obligatory translation courses for which my grades were 'A'. After graduation, I worked at the office of Vice President for Academic Affairs in Kuwait University as beginner translator (2004-2006). This is why I carried out the translation task myself. Occasionally, however, and every time I came across cases where I had some doubts I would consult some fellow Arabic language and literature major graduates (another department in the faculty of Arts) or some relevant academic reference on KA, whenever available.

There is some critique raised against the CCSARP coding manual on the argument that its categories are based on whether primary features exist in the realization of the SA under analysis (apology or request) or not (cf. De Paiva 2010:268-9). These specific features are determined by data from previous research rather than some proper theoretical grounding. In the same vein, Soler *et al.* (2005) argue that existing typologies, especially as far as the classification of different modifier types is concerned, "are based on grammatical and syntactical considerations when defining and categorising these modifiers without paying attention to the more interactional and contextual factors that play an important role in performing appropriate requests" Soler *et al.* (2005:2-3).

Some other coding schemes have thus been proposed, seeking to bear in mind other considerations besides the presence or absence of certain semantic and syntactic features. This is the case in Trosborg's (1995) coding manual, for instance, whereby an utterance can be coded by considering both its propositional content as well as the illocutionary force. This is how the present study's data was coded, particularly in relation to non-conventionally indirect request strategy 'Hints' where the requestive intent is more ambiguous and open for negotiation (see *chapter two on hints*).

Another example of how the coding process in the present study considers both the syntactic/semantic features set as the defining criteria for each

category as well as the context of occurrence of the item being coded is observed in relation to the request strategy Locution Derivable (LD). The defining criterion for this strategy according to the CCSARP coding manual is typically the existence of a modal verb that communicates obligation (as in *'must'* or *'have to'* or their equivalences, see definition of request strategies below). However, other locutions can equally oblige the requestee with the request without the use of such obligation modal verbs, as in the following example from the present study's data:

(1) Sweetheart, are there any other papers you want me to bring?
Then I'm waiting for you-plural to inform me if there is anything.
(KA-23-sit.7)

This example is extracted from KA control data, participant number (23) responding to situation (7), where S is asking H for future updates on a job application. The abbreviations in the brackets here are used when reporting examples from the present study's data in this chapter (also chapter six). They stand for the following: (KA) examples from Kuwaiti Arabic control data, (BE) examples from British English control data, (INL) examples from intermediate-level non-native speakers' data, (ADL) examples from advanced-level non-native speakers' data. The numbers represent the number of participant in each group.

In the abovementioned example, the requestive intent is presented in such a binding way that does not allow room for H to overlook it. S is indeed

expecting H to inform her of the updates and makes her expectation explicit, hence obliging the requestee with the requested act (cf. Schauer 2009:137-8 where questions for directions such as *"How can I get to the Trent Building?"* are coded as LD because they also oblige H to provide an answer). Evidently, the functional, pragmatically-sensitive approach when coding the data for the present study comes in handy, especially in the cases where the designated syntactic/grammatical features (as identified by coding manuals such as the CCSARP) are not salient or even absent.

Furthermore, some categories in the present coding manual which are adopted from existing coding manuals have undergone some rearrangement, for example, by merging categories together to form a larger main category, or by adjusting and extending the scope of definition of some existing categories. The purpose of this practice was to create a coding manual that can account for all instances of data collected from all four groups in the present study (the KA group, the INL group, the ADL group, and the BE group). Another aim was to ensure that the resulting coding manual can cope with the KA data, a language variety that is not covered by the any of the coding manuals cited above, or by any other coding manual available in existing ILP/CCP research on other varieties of Arabic language (see chapter three on the scarcity of ILP research on Arabic language and KA in particular where research is non-existent).

An example of a category whose domain was extended to cope with the present study's data is 'Appreciator' adapted from Schauer (2007) to account for expressions that are employed at the end of the request to positively reinforce it (as will be discussed later in this chapter; see also the external modifier 'Imposition Minimizer'). In Schauer's coding scheme, the category 'Appreciator' is illustrated by a single example "*That would be very nice*". This example does not refer to the most classic expression of gratitude such as '*Thank you*' or '*Thanks*', which are rather recurrent in request contexts and occur frequently in the present data. Moreover, the domain of the category 'Appreciator' in the present study's coding manual was further extended to include instances of 'Prayers of God Wish', as in *"May God bestow well-being upon you"*. Such religious routinized expressions are not registered in previous research as they are customary to Arab NS's, a language rarely treated in ILP/CCP research. This adds a further advantage to the present study's coding manual, making it culturally-sensitive to such language-specific forms.

From another perspective, there are instances in the present study's data which did not meet the defining criteria of any of the existing categories, despite the fact that the present coding manual interweaves parts from a number of coding schemes which should result in a more comprehensive coding manual. This is the case in the category 'Creating Realistic Context' introduced in the present coding manual to cover instances where the participants provided further details that do not contribute to the making of the

request proper per se or the modification of its impositive nature but rather serve to make the overall response sounds as if it occurred in real-world speech. For example, in situation (7), where S is asking H for future updates on a job application, some participants provided their contact information (see chapter five for more examples). No such category 'Creating Realistic Context' is proposed by any of the cited coding schemes, although it is unlikely that their data did not feature similar instances where the participant preface his/her target request as such. It might be the case that these researchers simply did not acknowledge such instances in their coding manuals because they do not have a mitigating effect on the request.

Of course, the nature of the present study's data (production data as opposed to rating data) does not allow all data to fit neatly into the coding manual, no matter how comprehensive the coding manual is (cf. Stadler 2010 on challenges in coding Speech Act (SA) data). However, coding data into categories and subcategories as such is necessary. It allows the organization of data into various consistent and comparable units which can be treated from a *quantitative* analysis perspective (cf. Baralt 2012; also Larson-Hall same volume; also Lambert 1994:54 on the benefits of applying quantitative analysis in empirical language research). Quantitative analysis allows the researcher to generate important numerical information about the data, such as frequency of occurrence of a certain element (such as request strategy or modifier type) and whether there is a significant effect of a certain variable (such as the three social variables 'Power', 'Distance' and 'Imposition'

identified in previous chapters) on participants' choice of request strategy or modifier type (i.e. factor analysis).

3. Identifying Analysis Perspectives

Each response in the present study's data is coded based on a three-fold analysis:

1. Analysis of the Head Act (HA).
    - A. Single HA.
    - B. Multiple HAs (the use of a second request which includes repetition cases).
    - C. No HA.
2. Analysis of External Mitigation.
3. Analysis of Internal Mitigation.
    - A. Lexical/Phrasal downgraders.
    - B. Syntactic Downgraders.

The data was colour-coded, starting with the identification of the HA, then external modification and internal modification. Each analysis perspective is explained in full detail below.

Moreover, and in order to verify the reliability of the coding carried out entirely by the researcher, a portion of the data (10%) was further coded by a fellow PhD student (cf. Felix-Brasdefer 2010:44 on *inter-rater reliability* in ILP research). The second coder is a Japanese research student who has similarly obtained her MA degree from University of Essex in the field of ILP/CCP in relation to the SA of requesting, and is currently conducting her PhD in the same field (cf. Konakahara 2011). A summarized version of the coding manual chapter was made available to the second coder, with all the categories and sub-categories well defined and sufficiently illustrated. The coding process, which is not unfamiliar to the second coder having depended on Blum-Kulka *et al* (1989) coding manual in her research, was also explained to the second coder. For example, the number of HA should be identified first. After identifying the request strategy being used in each HA, the modification in the overall response is attended to. This includes external modifiers and internal modifiers (lexical/phrasal and/or syntactic). The two coders also discussed the borderline cases where certain categories may occasionally overlap. The *intercoder reliability* between the main coder and the second coder was identical. Although in some studies the intercoder reliability value is calculated statistically, the agreement between the main coder and the second coder in the present study was visible beyond any doubts. Hence there was no real need for statistical treatment.

Following the three-fold analysis perspective delineated above, the present study's data was analysed first for the Head Act (HA), or 'request proper' in

Holtgraves and Yang's terms (1992:249). The HA is the fundamental element in the response as it carries the formulation of the request that actually performs the illocutionary act of requesting. As Blum-Kulka *et al* (1989:275) explain "The Head Act is the minimal unit which can realize a request; it is the core of the request sequence". The HA can stand on its own (Martínez-Flor 2008; Soler *et al.* 2005), although requests are often realized by adding one (or more) modifiers to the HA, as will be manifest when discussing the various types of modifications that participants in the present study utilized in performing their requests. In each response to each situation in the present study's data, the HA was distinguished from the rest of the elements in the response on the basis of the syntactic structure and the semantic content of the utterance, following from the definitions of the six request strategies provided in the next section, as well as clues from the surrounding context. The italicized part in the following example represents the HA:

(2) I missed the first two lectures. *Will it be possible to photocopy them from you?* I will give them back within an hour.

(ADL-9-sit.8)

This example is taken from the response to situation (8) where the speaker (S) is asking to borrow the hearer's (H) lecture notes.

4. Head Act (HA) Analysis

As far as the HA analysis is concerned, there are three options (Fukushima 1996):

4.1. Single HA

Coded as 'single HA' are cases where the participants produce one HA in a single situation, whether the HA is modified by one or more supportive moves (internal and/or external) or not.

4.2. Multiple HAs (two requests in a single response including cases of repetition of request)

Included here are cases where the participants produce two requests within a single response[2] (cf. Fukushima 1996). Participant could produce a second request by using two distinct request strategies as in example (3) where the participant employs Locution Derivable (LD) strategy then Mood Derivable (MD) strategy, by using a paraphrase of the same request strategy as in example (4) where the participant produces two MD requests, or by repeating the request using the same request strategy as in example (5), or a different strategy as in example (6) that does not spell out the content of the request per se but rather stresses it.

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[2] There are only five cases in the present data where the participants produced three HA's, all found in situation (6) and seem to be some kind of emphasis to the initial request (you ask your fried to bring you some medicines from abroad and have them carried in hand-luggage). Three cases are found in the KA data (DCT 10, 21 and 23), and the other two in the ADL data (DCT 16 and 19). Such cases were not considered in the analysis because of their infrequency and only the HA's which present the requestive intent more transparently were coded for the statistical analysis (see chapter three on the effect of enriched situational description on participants responses).

(3) *You must finish the presentation first thing tomorrow morning. Try to work as hard as you can.* (INL-15-sit.9)

(4) *Work on the presentation and try to finish it today*, and please *do your best to have it ready tomorrow morning.* (ADL-14-sit.9)

(5) [supportive moves] (i.e. one (or more) supportive moves were supplied by the participant here)... *Is it possible for you to give me a chance to submit the assignment on another day but tomorrow?* [supportive moves]... *So is it possible to have that chance?*[3] (KA-5-sit.10)

(6) *I wanted you to notify the staff of the meeting tomorrow. Don't forget please.* (KA-18-sit.4)

Furthermore, the two HAs could come consecutively after one another, as in example (3) above, or be separated by one (or more) supportive moves, as in example (4) above. Some of the coding manuals cited above propose certain categories that account for cases where the response includes more than one HA, for example the category '*Repetition of Request*' (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989) and the category '*Expanders*' (Usó-Juan 2008; also Soler *et al.* 2005). Such categories

[3] The exact supportive moves that occurred in the actual response are not mentioned here because the actual response is rather lengthy. The response is provided here to exemplify one of the ways for producing a second request.

are not considered in the present coding manual. To begin with, the category '*Repetition of Request*' is identified in Blum-Kulka *et al.* as literal repetition or paraphrase of the request and is as classified under internal modification. However, repeating the request as such does not meet the defining criteria of internal modification, whereby the linguistic form is added within the request proper, as opposed to before or after it (see discussion of external vs. internal modification below), especially when considering that all repetitions of the request in the present study's data occurred after the HA. By the same token, the category '*Expanders*' is not properly defined and is poorly illustrated by a single example that only represents the case of repeating the request using the same strategy as follows:

(7) Would you mind opening the window?... Once again, could you open the window? (Soler *et al.* 2005)

This example clearly does not account for the different cases of producing more than a single HA found in the present study's data.

4.3. No HA

Coded as 'No HA' are cases where the participants opted out and did not produce a request (by writing 'NO REQUEST')[4]. In the front page of

[4] In the present study, there are two cases where the participants seem to have misunderstood the target request and produced a completely irrelevant HA, as in response (*a*) where the participant is supposed to ask to be updated regarding a job application and response (*b*) where the participant is supposed to ask to have the presentation prepared earlier:

the DCT where the researcher provides a summarized description of the study and instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire, it is explained to participants that they are allowed to opt out by writing 'NO REQUEST' if they think they would not make a particular request in a similar situation in the real-world (see chapter four). The 'opting out' option is also made available to participants to examine their sensitivity to the three social variables of power (*P*), distance (*D*) and imposition of request (*R*) operative in each situation, identified in chapter four (Fukushima 1996; 2000). Some participants may perceive the request involved in certain situations as being too impositive, with a higher likelihood of being declined by H, and therefore not worth making in the first place. The three social variables, however, are not pointed out to

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a. *Excuse me, but what are the required documents?* (KA-4-sit.7)

b. *Don't bother yourself to finish the presentation in such a rush, the meeting has been postpond it to tomorrows afternoon.* (ADL-20-sit.9)

There are other two cases where the participants describes what s/he would do but does not write down what s/he would actually say as in the following response:

c. *By the end of the lecture I'll run to the doctor and point out the mistake in grading to him.*

(KA-6-sit.5)

Further, there is a single case where the participant produced a number of supportive moves without a HA that spells out the request content as follows:

d. *Please, I tell you something, and please, promise that if you can't bring it or it's difficult, tell me and don't be shy.* (INL-20-sit.6)

Due to their overall scarcity in the data, the above cases are coded under 'No HA', although they do not represent the intentional opting out as provided in the DCT instructions sheet.

the participants in the DCT instructions' section so that their reactions to these variables remain subconscious.

The next section of this chapter starts with the identification of the request strategies that can be used to perform the HA (referred to previously in chapter two), followed by a detailed discussion of external modification, organized according to their position relative to the HA (occurring before the HA, occurring before or after the HA, or occurring after the HA). Next, internal modification is presented which is divided into two types: lexical/phrasal downgraders and syntactic downgraders.

4.4. Request Strategies

A request strategy is the obligatory choice or the level of directness by which the request is realized (Blum-Kulka *et al* 1989:278; also see chapter two on discussion of directness levels and request strategies). Blum-Kulka *et al* identify nine strategies for performing a request which can be performed using one strategy at a time (i.e. a single HA contains no more than one request strategy), listed from most direct to least direct. Although decreasing level of directness is theoretically associated with politeness (Brown and Levinson 1978; see also Sifianou 1993), the relationship between indirectness and politeness is not always absolute and is subject to cross-cultural variation (see Fukushima 1996; also see discussion in chapters two and six).

The following section reviews the request strategy types as classified in Blum-Kulka *et al* (see also Trosborg 1995). The present coding manual adopts the same core classification, while making some modifications to the definition or domain of certain strategy types based on the data of the present study. For example, the strategy 'Suggestory Formula' is omitted because there are no illustrations of this particular strategy in the present study's data[5]. Furthermore, the request strategies 'Explicit Performatives' and 'Hedged Performatives' are merged into a single strategy 'Performatives', while the request strategies 'Mild Hints' and 'Strong Hints' are merged into a single strategy 'Hints'. This is because requests 'Mild Hints' and 'Explicit Performatives' did not occur significantly frequent as did the other request strategies in the present study's data. Thus, the total number of request strategies in the present coding manual is reduced to six (as opposed to nine in Blum-Kulka *et al* 1989 and eight in Trosborg 1995). Strategies (1-4) in the present coding manual represent direct strategies, strategy (5) pertains to the conventionally indirect strategies and strategy (6) represents the non-conventionally indirect strategies (see chapter two).

1- Mood Derivable (MD)

The grammatical mood of the locution (sentence type) conventionally determines its illocutionary force as a request. The prototypical form is the

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[5] The illocutionary intent is projected as a suggestion by means of some routinized formula. For example:

How about cleaning up the kitchen./ *Why don't you* get lost. (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:280)

imperative[6], however, functional equivalents such as non-finite forms and elliptical sentence structures can express the same level of directness (For example, "No smoking in the lavatories please."/ "The menu please." Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:278-9). An example from the present study:

(8) Please take one and pass it to the others. (ADL-7-sit.1)

2- Performatives

This request strategy employs a performative verb (as in '*ask*' in English or its equivalences) that expresses the requestive intent. In some other coding manuals (cf. Blum-Kulka *et al* 1989; Trosborg 1995; Schauer 2009) two types of Performatives are identified: Explicit and Hedged. In Hedged Performatives, the performative verb is modified by a modal verb or any other verb expressing intention. No instances of 'Explicit Performatives' were found in the present data and therefore the strategy 'Performatives' in the present coding manual is confined to 'Hedged Performatives'. For example:

(9) I must/I have to/I'd like to/I wanted to ask you to present your paper a week earlier. (from Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989)

An example from the present data:

(10) *May I ask* you to get me these allergy tablets? (ADL-15-sit.6)

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[6] Although orders have the same grammatical mood as MD, orders are distinct from requests. The use of orders seems to be confined to rather restricted settings, whereby the recipient of the order has no choice but to comply (as in instructions), which is hardly the case in the requests involved here.

3- Locution Derivable (LD)

The illocutionary intent is directly derivable from the semantic meaning of the locution, by using a relevant verb that communicates obligation (Blum-Kulka *et al* 1989:279). For example:

(11) Madam you'll *have to/should/must/ought to* move your car.

There were also a few cases in the present study where the passive form is used resulting in impersonal LD, for example:

(12) but *the report must be finished today.* (KA-19-sit.9)

4- Want Statement (WS)

The utterance expresses S's desire that the event denoted in the utterance comes about (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:279). As Trosborg (1995:201-2) puts it, requesting for an item/action can be expressed as some desire or wish of the speaker (example 13), or as need or want (examples 14-15), with the former type being more tentative and hence more polite than the latter.

(13) *I would like to* have some more coffee.

(14) I *need* a pen.

(15) I *want* you to sign this for me.

Other examples from the present data:

(16) *I hope that you revise my grade.* (KA-2-sit.5)

(17) *I would greatly appreciate* buying a box from Europe on your way there. (ADL-8-sit.6)

Clearly, both structures "*I want X*" (examples 13, 14 and 17) and "*I want you to do X*" (examples 15 and 16) where explicit reference is made to H as the agent of the desired action qualify as WS. Furthermore, and like impersonal LD above, there were a few instances of impersonal WS, for example:

(18) I think *my grade needed a revise.* (INL-24-sit.5)

5- Preparatory

The utterance contains reference to a preparatory condition (see chapter two on felicity conditions) for the feasibility of the request, typically that of ability, willingness, or possibility, as conventionalized in the given language. Usually, S questions (using interrogative) rather than states the presence of the chosen preparatory condition, hence the term *query preparatory* (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:280). Preparatory requests are recognized as *conventionally indirect* requests (chapter two). Although preparatory requests retain an *indirect* relation between linguistic form and function (interrogatives serve as questions), their meaning cannot be confused for only a question that does not serve as a request (at least not to NS's of the language or learners who

are competent enough in that language; see chapter two on Morgan's 1991 *short circuited implicature*).

To distinguish the different preparatory conditions that can be questioned using 'Preparatory' request strategy, it is divided here into six sub-strategies (A-F).

A. Preparatory Questioning *Ability*

S questions H's ability to comply with the content of the request, for example:

(19) *Could you* please hand these handouts to your colleagues? (INL-5-sit.1)

(20) *Will you be able to* have your presentation done for first thing tomorrow? (BE-7-sit.9)

The structure (19) "*Can/could you do X?*" was far more frequent in the present data than other questions of ability, such as (20). In fact, this form is indeed the most common (conventionalized) form for ability preparatory in English (see Morgan's *conventions of form* in chapter two).

B. Preparatory Questioning *Willingness*

S questions H's willingness to comply with the content of the request (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989), for example:

(21) *Will* you please notify our colleagues about tomorrow's meeting? (ADL-24 -sit.4)

C. Preparatory Questioning *Possibility*

S questions whether it is possible for H to comply with the content of the request[7], for example:

(22) *Is it possible for you* to help me distribute the papers? (KA-5-sit.1)

The possibility condition can also be questioned by querying the general likelihood or probability of the requested act to come about. (Lin 2009:7 also classifies utterances such as "*Is there any chance..?*" under questioning possibility), for example:

[7] In some other classifications (for example Le Pair 1996) questioning whether it is possible for H to comply with the request (as in *"Is it possible for you to help me?"*) and questioning H's ability to comply with the request (as in *"Can you help me?"*) are allocated under one sub-strategy (*utterances concerning hearer's ability/possibility*) which branches from the request strategy 'Query Preparatory'. In the present coding manual, the two preparatory conditions *ability* and *possibility* are segregated, as the former seems to relate to H's intrinsic ability whereas the latter to some state of affair in the world.

(23) *I thought if there's any chance for me to give you their cost and you to bring me the amount I need?*

(KA-19-sit.6)

D. Preparatory Questioning *Permission*

S questions H's permission towards complying with the request, for example:

(24) *May I* please use your cell phone? (ADL-9-sit.2)

(25) *Is it okay* for me to take your notebook and photocopy it?

(KA-14-sit.8)

Permission Preparatory also covers speaker-oriented requests performed using a structure that is characteristic of another Preparatory type (Schauer 2009; Fukushima 1996). In the following examples, the requests employ the modal verb *'can'* which is essentially characteristic of *ability* preparatory. However, speakers here are not genuinely questioning their own ability to do the requested act but rather checking whether H consents that S is permitted to do the action specified in the requested act.

(26) *Can I* use your mobile? (INL-1-sit.2)

E. Preparatory Questioning *Availability* (of the requested item)

S questions whether the content of the request is accessible (available) to H, usually by questioning H's possession of the targeted item.

(27) *Do you have an extra paper?* (INL-6-sit.3)

F. Preparatory Questioning *Prediction*

This category is introduced in Le Pair (1996: 663) for requests formulated by predicting H's future act as in the following examples (translated from Spanish data):

(28) Do you help me?

(29) Will you help me?

'Prediction' is adapted in the present coding manual to account for similar cases in the KA control data where the participant requests by questioning the happening of the requested act, as in the following examples:

(30) If it's not too much on an imposition, *will you distribute the papers*? (KA-28-sit.1)

(31) May God heal you, *will you give me your mobile?* (KA-16-sit.2)

It should be noted that in the actual KA responses, examples such as (30-31), do not have the future indicator [rāḥ] which is equivalent to '*will*' in English (and translates literally *go*-Past-3rd-Sng-Male)[8]. The future indicator '*will*' was added so that the final product of the translated KA data sounds as proper English. Thus, the literal translation of examples (30-31) is as follows, respectively:

- *distribute-PRSNT-2nd-Sng-Fem.* the papers?
- *give-PRSNT-2nd-Sng-Fem-me* your mobile?

Though examples such as (30-31) are translated for the purpose of coding as '*Will you do X?*' they should not be confused with 'Willingness' preparatory requests. This is because the future indicator [rāḥ] in KA is confined to refer to future events and does not relate to H's willingness in the same manner as '*will*' in English. Examples such as (30-31) are recognized by KA NS's as requests of the interrogative type, despite the absence of some modal verb marking the interrogative, via other clues such as context of use and intonation (cf. Holes 1984 on similar requests). In fact, the high frequency of examples such as (30-31) in the KA control data testifies that they are among the most conventional forms for making requests in KA.

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[8] In addition to the use of the verb [rāḥ], another way of indicating future in KA is the addition of the prefix *b-* to the imperfective form of the main verb (Al-Najjar 1984).

6- Hint

A hint is a statement or question concerning the state of affairs which S uses to imply to H what s/he wants without explicitly stating his/her exact requestive intent. There are two types of hints depending on the transparency of the requestive intent from the statement or question via which it was communicated, mild and strong (Blum-Kulka *et al* 1989; Trosborg 1995). A hint is *mild* if S does not address the desired action per se, and *strong* if there is a reference of some kind to the desired action. Questions such as (32) are rather familiar in a context where S is trying to secure a lift from H, for instance, thus illustrating strong hints. Based on rational reasoning of information in this context from knowledge of the world shared between S and H, a request for a lift is probably the most relevant interpretation here (see chapter two on hints; also see Sifianou 1993).

(32) *"Do you have a car?"*

On the other hand, the requestive intent is less retrievable from a statement such as (33), illustrating a mild hint:

(33) *I didn't expect the meeting to end this late.*

This statement could be interpreted as a complaint of the delay in ending the meeting. It is only if S has sufficient knowledge of H's circumstances whereby H does not have a ride home after a certain time that S could interpret this statement as request for a lift home. As such hints are recognized as *non-conventionally indirect* requests (chapter two). There are no established (conventionalized) linguistic forms for expressing a hint similar to

interrogatives such as "*Can/could you do X?*" in the conventionally indirect request strategy 'Preparatory'.

In the present coding manual both mild and strong hints are included under a single category 'Hints' (Trosborg 1995; Schauer 2008;2009). This is because the distinction between mild hints and strong hints can occasionally overlap, unlike the distinction between the other request strategies which are distinctively marked by both syntactic structure and semantic function. Secondly, there are not enough occurrences of hints (mild hints in particular) in the present data to merit the specification of two categories of hints.

Examples of hints from the present data include statements such as:

(34) Doctor, there's a question which I've answered correctly but you marked it as incorrect. (KA-7-sit.5)

(Asking the professor to revise an incorrectly marked answer).

5. External Modification

External modification is the use of statements or phrases to persuade H to carry out the desired action (Schauer 2007; Trosborg 1995; Le Pair 1996). Such elements are added by S externally, either before or after the HA in the immediate context where the request occurs (Martínez-Flor 2008), and are also recognized as *supportive moves* (Blum-Kulka *et al* 1989; Trosborg 1995).

Supportive moves can either *mitigate* the request or *aggravate* it (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989). *Aggravating supportive moves* were not detected in the present data and therefore, the focus will be on *mitigating supportive moves*. In the present coding manual, external modifiers are arranged according to their location relative to the HA: occurring before the HA, occurring before and/or after HA, or occurring after the HA.

5.1. External modifiers that occur before the HA

External modifiers in this group occur either at the very beginning of the response (example 35) or in the middle of the response, after one (or more) external modifier yet still prior to the HA.

A) Alerters

An alerter is an element whose function is to alert H's attention to the ensuing request (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989: 277), such as '*excuse me*' in the following example:

(35) *Excuse me,..* can you please run on my paper again?

(ADL-20-sit.5)

Among the types identified as Alerters in Blum-Kulka *et al.*, four types occurred in the present data[9].

1- Title/ Role

Doctor (KA-8-sit.5)

Sir (ADL-10-sit.5)

2- First name

Susan (ADL-4-sit.4)

Some participants in the present study do not specify a certain name per se but indicate the use of a name, for example:

(36) *"name of addressee"* is it possible for me to use your phone? (KA-12-sit.2)

3- Endearment term

Sister (KA-6-sit.3)

Sweetheart (KA-15-sit.3)

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[9] In Blum-Kulka *et al.*, *Alerters* stand as a main category that encompasses a number of sub-categories. In the present coding manual, Alerters are classified as a type of external modification that occur before the HA (cf. Schauer 2007). In addition, to the four *Alerter* types illustrated in the present coding manual (Title/Role, First name, Endearment term, and Attention getter), Blum-Kulka *et al.* identify five other Alerter types (Surname, Offensive term, Pronoun, Nickname, and Combinations of the above). The first three types did not occur in the present data. The type 'Nickname' was used only twice by the same participant (KA-10) in two different situations (sit.2 and sit.6), and therefore was coded as 'Endearment Term'. As for the sub-category 'Combinations of the above', it is eliminated from the present coding manual for statistical analysis reasons. If this sub-category which covers cases where participants use more than one 'Alerter' type was sustained, it will not allow the calculation of the frequency of individual Alerter type (i.e. which Alerter type is used most). Besides, the statistical analysis design for the present study is formatted in a way that shows whether the participant used one or more than one type in a single situation.

4- Attention getter

Excuse me (BE-1-sit.8)

Say (KA-21-sit.2)

5- Greeting forms

Greeting forms can also function to get H's attention to the upcoming SA (Schauer 2007). In addition to the customary greeting forms in English (such as *'Hi'*, *'Hello'* and the like), another form of greetings that occurs only in the KA control data is the customary Islamic greeting [is-salām(u) 'alay-kum] which translates *'peace upon you'* (cf. Hussein 1995 on greetings in Arabic).

(37) *Peace upon you*, who can help me distribute the papers?

(KA-1-sit.1)

The inclusion of such language-specific forms makes the present coding manual more comprehensive and culturally-sensitive to this particular population of participants (KA NS's).

6- *'Please'*

When occurring in sentence initial position or prior to the HA, *'please'* serves to alert H's attention to the upcoming request (Le

Pair 1996)[10]. However, when occurring in the middle or end of the request proper, *'please'* is counted as a type of internal modification (see the section below on Internal Modification: Lexical/Phrasal Downgrades: Politeness Marker).

(38) *Please* take one and hand out the others.

(BE-14-sit.1)

What applies to *'please'* here also applies to *'kindly'*, which also serves as 'Alerter' request-initial position and as internal modifier of the type 'Politeness Marker' when occurring in the middle or after the request proper.

B) Preparator

S prepares his/her H for the ensuing request without giving away the very content of the request (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:287). According to Trosborg (1995), there are three ways for preparing a request[11]:

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[10] See Sato (2008) on the positioning of *'please'* and its association with the type of SA to be expected. Sato's analysis of spoken data elicited from American and New Zealand NS's suggests that *'please'* at initial position features SAs such as demands, pleas and directives, conventional polite requests at medial position and task-based requests at final position.

[11] Trosborg identifies a fourth Preparator type 'Checking Availability' whereby S is seeking to ensure that the request does not come at a bad timing. This Preparator type is not considered in the present coding manual because it occurred once only in the present data (in ADL-23-sit.6).

1- Preparing the Content

The requester can structure the conversation so that the request fits naturally into the context. If one needs help one can state that one has a problem, if one wants to borrow a dress for a party one can start talking about this party and the like (Trosborg 1995). In the present study, participants demonstrated various approaches to preparing the content of their requests, for example by asking a question that is relevant to the intended request as in (39), introducing oneself to H as a way of establishing common grounds as in (40), bringing up some state of affairs that would eventually lead to the target request as in (41-42) and the like[12].

(39) Professor, *when can I come and see you?* I want to check my answer with you. (ADL-23-sit.5)

(40) *My name is Hessa and I am a student in your class*, I was wondering if you can take a second look at my exam paper? (INL-21-sit.5)

(41) *There will be a change in the plan.* (INL-21-sit.9)

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[12] Schauer (2007) introduces the category 'Small Talk', for short utterances employed at the beginning of the request to establish a positive atmosphere, for example:

Good to see you (SA, B, 12/2)

This category is not considered in the present coding manual because *Preparing Content* covers such introductory moves which make the request falls harmoniously into the discourse.

(42) *We have a small problem*[13]. (INL-20-sit.9)

2- Preparing the Speech Act

The requester can let the requestee know that s/he is to anticipate a request (Trosborg 1995), as in the following example:

(43) *I really need your help.* (ADL-28-sit.10)

3- Getting a Pre-commitment

In order to avoid a possible refusal the requester can also try to secure a pre-commitment before s/he makes the request (Trosborg 1995). Apparently, the interrogative form of this preparator type serves as an advance check for H's response to the request (comply vs. decline). It follows from an affirmative answer to a question of 'Getting Pre-commitment' that H would comply with the request, as in the following examples:

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[13] Utterances similar to *"We have a small problem"* may also be intuitively perceived as 'Preparing the Speech Act', as they have the potential to lead H to anticipate a request. However, the anticipation of a request is not as transparent here as when using an utterance such as *"I need your help"*. 'Preparing the Content' is generally established by employing elements which can logically lead to the target request (at least according to the participants' conceptions of what constitutes 'logically'). 'Preparing the Speech Act', on the other hand, is achieved by using utterances which give away the requestive intent (without specifying the content of the request per se) in a more explicit manner that allows little room for the anticipation of a SA other than a request. Thus, utterances such as *"We have a small problem"* could signal a request (S points a problem as a way to get H to react and solve it). However, other SAs such as complaint or narration of some problematic incident may also be expected here. On the other hand, the most valid expectation for utterances such as *"I need your help"* seems to be that of a request (H needs to do something for S in order to help him/her).

(44) May I ask you for a favour?

(45) Would you help me out? (from Trosborg 1995)

An example from the present data:

(46) *Is it possible for me to request a favour from you?*

(KA-17-sit.8)

5.2. External Modifiers that Occur Before or After the HA

A) Disarmer

S attempts to disarm the addressee of the possibility of a refusal (Martínez-Flor 2008; Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989). In other words, S points out some aspect of inconvenience which H might bring up as an excuse for not complying with the request. By highlighting the imposition evoked by making the request, S shows that s/he is appreciative of H's negative face (his/her autonomy, see chapter two), a move which is intended to gain H's cooperation in return.

(47) *I know you don't like lending out your notes,* but could you make an exception this time? (from Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989)

(48) *I hate bothering you but...* (from Trosborg 1995)

(49) *I know there's hardly enough time but...* (KA-1-sit.9)

B) Grounder

S gives reasons, explanations, or justifications for his/her request (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989; see also Trosborg 1995 '*Supportive Reasons*'), as in the following examples:

(50) *I wasn't present on the first two lectures* so is it okay for me to take your notebook from you and photocopy it? (KA-14-sit.8)

(51) You couldn't possibly lend me a pen and a sheet of paper, could you, please? *I've forgotten mine*. (BE-3-sit.3)

C) Apology for Inconveniencing the Hearer

S can appeal to H's negative face (see chapter two) by apologizing for the inconvenience that might result from making the request or complying with it for that matter (Le Pair 1996), as in the following examples:

(52) *I'm really sorry but* ...Do you mind if I make a quick call from yours? (ADL-19-sit.2)

(53) Can you get me some X tablets?...*Sorry if it's a problem.* (BE-13-sit.6)

Such apology expressions may share the quality of 'Disarmers' in the sense that that they reflect S's awareness of the potential inconvenience raised by making the request (cf. Trosborg 1995:217 who includes expressions such as *"I'm sorry to trouble you unnecessarily but..."* under 'Disarmers'). However, the use of the apology token '*sorry*' or the performative verb 'I *apologize*' carries more consideration to H's negative face than a 'Disarmer' which merely points out the inconvenience rather than seeks to remedy it. For this reason, a separate category is assigned for expressions of apology in the present coding manual.

D) Imposition Minimizer

S tries to reduce the imposition placed on H by the request[14], as in the following example (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:288):

(54) Would you give me a lift, *but only if you're going my way.*

Another example from the present data:

(55) *If you wouldn't mind,*...is it possible for me to use your mobile?

(KA-29-sit.2)

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[14] Schauer (2007) identifies the category 'Considerator' which is employed at the end to show consideration towards the interlocutor's situation, for example:

Only if you've got the time of course. (SA, A, 15/2)

Judging by the illustration Schauer provides, 'Considerator' seems to overlap with the category 'Imposition Minimizer' in the present study coding manual. However, 'Imposition Minimizer' can occur before or after the HA.

In the present coding manual, utterances which make it easier for H to turn down the request are also included under 'Imposition Minimizer'. By showing that S would not be bothered much if his/her request was not satisfied, the imposition upon H's positive face (his/her need to feel approved by others, see chapter two) is reduced. For example:

(56) *I don't mind if you can't* (BE-10-sit.6)

Another set of utterances included under 'Imposition Minimizer' in the present coding manual are those checking for H's consent. By verifying that H does not object to complying with the request, S is showing consideration to H's negative face and the imposition is minimized accordingly. For example:

(57) *Is that ok?* (BE-4-sit.6)

Another move to minimize the imposition of the request detected in the present data is the employment of *prayers of good wish*, exclusive to the KA control data. Prayers of good wish are widely used in Arabic to show gratitude to the addressee (cf. Hussein 1995; also Bodman and Eisentein 1988:13 who found similar fixed sayings to express gratitude in the data of Lebanese-Arabic, Egyptian-Arabic and Punjabi participants; also Nureddeen 2007:297 who detected the use of religiously oriented formulaic phrases to soften down the threat of an apology in her Sudanese Arabic data; also Salih 2001 on

Jordanian Arabic; also Alaoui 2011 on requests, offers and thanks in Moroccan Arabic). Such prayers are formulaic phrases that can co-occur with a number of SAs such as refusals and requests to soften the impact of the rejection on H's positive face and mitigate the impositive force of the act on his/her negative face (see chapter two on positive vs. negative face). A prayer of good wish can occur at the beginning or end of the HA, or possibly in both positions, as in the following examples:

(58) *May God heal you,*...I want you to bring me the medicine with you,...*May God reward you well.* (KA-25-sit.6)

(59) *May God keep you safe and sound*, can I use your telephone for a few minutes? (KA-18-sit.2)

Given that prayers of good wish can potentially serve to both soften the threat of an impositive act as well as express gratitude, prayers of good wish in the present study are coded as 'Imposition Minimizer' at request-initial position and as 'Appreciator' at request-final position. Although illustrations of 'Imposition Minimizer' can also occur after the HA (as discussed above), a prayer of good wish occurring after the HA seems to have an effect that is more similar to '*thank you*' and its equivalences. At request-initial position, when the request has not yet been made, S is not indebted to H so s/he need not express appreciation. After the HA is produced, it makes sense to be thankful to H, hence 'Appreciator' (see discussion of 'Appreciator' as external modifier below). Even if for some reason H does not comply with the request

performed, S can still be appreciative for H's tolerance of the imposition that automatically arises from making the request in the first place. Such illustrations of 'Imposition Minimizer' here represent yet another example of how some categories in the present coding manual is expanded to create a more comprehensive, culturally-sensitive category.

E) Encouraging the Hearer to Comply with the Request

Participants in the present study demonstrated various moves where S is seeking to encourage H to comply with the request. Such attempts are grouped together in the present coding manual into four sub-categories. The three sub-categories 'Sweetener', 'Promise of Reward' and 'Cost Minimizing' are adopted from existing coding manuals cited earlier (Trosborg 1995; Schauer 2007; Blum-kulka *et al.* 1989), where they are presented as main categories. The fourth sub-category 'Appealing to Hearer's benevolence' is created based on some recurring patterns in the present data, thus representing *in-vivo* codes (codes inspired by the data) referred to earlier in this chapter.

1- Sweetener

A possible strategy to get H to perform the requested act is to flatter him/her accordingly. For example, S can admire H's collection of records, books, etc., if s/he wants to borrow some (Trosborg 1995:217; see also Schauer 2007). It should be noted though that for an utterance to be counted as a 'Sweetener', it must occur alongside a HA

(either before or after). Without an explicit reference to the action which S desires from H, a 'Sweetener' occurring by itself does not serve to mitigate the request but rather perform the request indirectly as a 'Hint' (see discussion of hints above).

In the present data, most instances of 'Sweetener' occurred in situation (9), where the boss asks his/her employee to prepare a presentation ahead of schedule (HA italicized).

(60) *but I also know you are the best employee in my department.* I want the report today even if you have to stay in late. (KA-1-sit.9)

(61) I need you to have the presentation we talked about earlier by tomorrow. *I'm sure it'll be great.* (ADL-2-sit.9)

2- Promise of Reward

To increase the likelihood of H's compliance with S's request, a reward due on fulfilment of the request is announced, as in the following example (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:288):

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

In the present data, instances of 'Promise of Reward' were also limited to situation (9), a boss asking his/her employee to prepare the presentation earlier than scheduled, as in the following example:

(63) *and if the work requires you to stay overtime, don't worry, this will be compensated.* (INL-8-sit.9)

3- Cost Minimizing

In order to persuade the requestee to comply with the request, the requester can point to factors that will minimize any possible costs to the requestee evoked by the request, as in the following example (Trosborg 1995: 218):

(64) Could I borrow your car tonight? *I'll have it back in time for you to drive to work tomorrow.*

Examples from the present data:

(65) Can I copy your notes please? *I will return it back quickly.* (ADL-1-sit.8)

(66) Is there any chance you could extend the date for me? *I just need a day or two more.* (BE-1-sit.10)

4- Appealing to Hearer's Benevolence[15]

By appealing to H's benevolence, S could get H to sympathise with him/her and ultimately comply with the request, for example:

(67) *I hope you will not turn me down,* (KA-28- sit.6)

(68) *I'm counting on you.* (ADL-18-sit.9)

5.3. External modifiers that occur after the HA:

A) Appreciator

An Appreciator is usually employed at the end of the request proper to positively reinforce it, as in the following example (Schauer 2007):

(69) *That would be very nice.* (SA, H, 6/1)

In addition to instances of showing appreciation or gratitude towards H, *prayers of good wish* which occur after the HA are also classified under 'Appreciator' in the present coding manual (cf. Al-Ali and Alawneh 2010 on the use of religious expressions to show gratitude, also see the discussion above on *prayers of good wish* as 'Imposition Minimizer' at request-initial position). For example:

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[15] There is a category in Blum-Kulka *et al.*'s coding manual whose function is to appeal to H's 'benevolent understanding', however, this category is a type of internal modification. Therefore, another category has to be created for the present coding manual to account for cases such as the ones exemplified above where the supportive move utterance occurs external to the HA.

(70) I want it to be ready first thing today. *May God grant you power.* (KA-15-sit.9)

5.4. Creating Realistic Context as External Modifier

This category is created specifically for the present coding manual to cope with a number of instances in the present data where the participants provide relevant details which come at the end or middle of the response, after the HA is produced (so that it is distinguished from the subcategory 'Preparing Content' explained earlier which occurs before the HA). Such utterances do not contribute to the mitigation of the request per se but appear to be more of attempts on the part of the participants to make their responses as reflective as possible of their speech in similar situations in the real-world.

Examples from the present data include the specification of time/venue of the meeting in situation (4) (where the boss requests from his/her assistant to announce a staff meeting) in example (71), making sure the contacts details are provided in situation (7) (where the applicant requests updates on job application) in example (72), and the like.

(71) Can you let them know? *We will meet in (x room).* (BE-5-sit.4)

(72) You would inform me please if anything comes up. *Here's my phone number.* (INL-10-sit.7)

This category is acknowledged here despite the fact that it does not have mitigative function (as in the external and internal modifiers) because it acts in favour for using the DCT as data collection instrument for the research at hand (or other studies with similar objectives). The use of such utterances implies, at least as far as the current analysis is concerned, that participants are capable of providing in writing the kind of details that is expected to occur in their real-world speech.

6. Internal Modification

Unlike external modification, where the mitigating utterance is added outside the request proper (before or after), internal modification denotes the use of elements within the request proper to downgrade its imposition (hence *downgraders*)[16]. A request can be internally modified by using *syntactic* downgraders or *lexical/phrasal* downgraders or both.

6.1. Syntactic Downgraders:

Syntactic downgraders mitigate the imposition of the request by means of syntactic devices, whose structure and mitigative function are language-

[16] Along with 'Downgraders', internal modification include another type of modification recognized as 'Upgraders' illustrated by elements such as *'really'* and *'now'* which serve to strengthen (upgrade) the overall requestive force (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989; Trosborg 1995). Upgraders are not included in the present study's analysis because they occurred rather infrequently in the data (cf. Sifianou 1993; 1999 for a similar argument).

specific (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989). The five syntactic modifiers[17] presented below are adopted from Blum-Kulka *et al.* and are therefore valid for the languages investigated in the CCSARP project, where Arabic is not included. However, the translation process the KA data has undergone described earlier in this chapter should make the forthcoming classification of syntactic downgraders equally applicable to the KA data. According to Blum-Kulka *et al.*, a general rule for identifying syntactic downgraders is to consider only those syntactic devices which are optional in the given context, such as using the past tense modal verb "*could*" in a present tense situation.

A) Negation of a Preparatory Condition

Nearly all illustrations of this syntactic modifier[18] in the present data appeared with tag questions[19] (see the lexical/phrasal downgrader 'Appealer' which also employs tag questions). For example:

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[17] Blum-Kulka *et al.* identify another category Syntactic Downgrading labelled *'Interrogative'*. According to this category, in preparatory request strategies such as *'Can/could X?'* the interrogative is unmarked; the speaker has no choice but to utilize the interrogative format. Preparatory request strategies as such are not coded for *'Interrogative'* as syntactic downgrading. In the other request strategies, the interrogative is optional (hence marked). This category is disregarded from the present study's coding manual because Blum-Kulka *et al.* do not provide sufficient examples to properly illustrate this category. In fact, the only examples Blum-Kulka *et al.* for *'Interrogative'* as syntactic downgrader are in French and German.

[18] Negation in this sense does not cover cases of propositional negation (Blum-kulka *et al.*1989:282) as in:

You can*'t* park here.

[19] Except in this case, where the negation does not co-occur with a tag question:

If you would*n't* mind picking up these allergy tablets for me while you're there?

(BE-9-sit.6)

(73) *I couldn't* pinch a piece of your note paper and a pen, could I?

(BE-8-sit.3)

B) Tense

Tense is coded as syntactic downgrader if the past tense of the form is used in a situation taking place in the present time. That is to say, if using the equivalent present tense does not affect the semantic meaning of the utterance (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:282-3). Opting for the past tense when the present tense form is available to carry the same meaning is thus perceived as a mitigating mechanism, intended to make the imposition of the request less direct. In this respect, the past tense seems to give the impression that S is currently not as interested in the requested item/action as s/he used to be (in the past). This in turn gives H more freedom to decline the request should s/he finds complying with the request rather inconvenient (cf. Lin 2009). For example:

(74) I *wondered* if there was any chance that I could have an extension please? (BE-8-sit.10)

(75) I *wanted* you to notify the rest of the staff of tomorrow's meeting.

(KA-9-sit.4)

Tense as a syntactic downgrader is also applicable to the tense of modal verbs employed in different 'Preparatory' sub-strategies (discussed earlier in

this chapter). In the following examples, the past tense of the modal verb is employed in *ability* preparatory and *possibility* preparatory, respectively:

(76) *Could* you please call me as soon as anything comes up?

(INL-16-sit.7)

(77) *Would it be possible* for you to pick up some of my tablets on your way back for me? (BE-12-sit.6)

C) Embedding

The requester can pre-face his/her request with a clause in which the request is embedded (hence 'embedding clause') conveying his/her attitude to the request, by expressing tentativeness or with expressions of hope, for example. The embedding often, but not always, occurs in connection with conditional clause (Trosborg 1995; Schauer 2006b; 2004). Trosborg identifies three types of embedding: *tentative*, *appreciative* and *subjective*[20]. Only the first two types occurred in the present data.

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[20] Subjective embedding refers to cases where the requester presents the request as his/her personal opinion; using characteristic phrases such as *'I believe/think'*, *'I'm afraid'* and the like (i.e. phrases identified in the coding manual as a type of Lexical/Phrasal downgraders; Subjectivizer, see section 6.2.). For example:

- *I thought* that maybe you wouldn't mind giving me a hand.
- *I'm afraid* you'll have to leave now.

1- Tentative Embedding

The request is included within some phrase that expresses tentativeness, for example:

(78) *I was wondering if* you can take a second look at my exam paper[21]. (INL-21-sit.5)

In this example, *ability* preparatory requests "*Can you take a second look at my exam paper?*" is embedded in an expression that communicate S's uncertainty of whether the request is going to be satisfied by H or not.

Other phrases that could reflect S's uncertainty towards the happening of the requested action are formulaic expressions such as '*Is there any chance/way that..*' (see the discussion at the beginning of this chapter on how the present coding manual broadened the defining criteria and illustrations of some existing categories). For example:

(79) *Is there any chance that* you could extend the due date for the paper? (ADL-25-sit.10)

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[21] Requests such as this one allow a multi-layered analysis. The HA here is coded for two syntactic downgrading ('Tense' in *'was'* and 'Tentative Embedding' in *'I was wondering if'*). Furthermore, and from a Lexical/ Phrasal downgrading perspective, the phrase *'I was wonder'* functions as 'Subjectivizer'.

2- Appreciative Embedding

Appreciative Embedding employs phrases that show S's appreciation for the requested act to come about, for example:

(80) *I would really appreciate it if* you would inform me as soon as a position becomes available.

(ADL-16-sit.7)

Appreciative embedding can also occur without the use of a conditional clause indicator '*if*' (cf. Trosborg 1995; see also chapter six on the use of appreciative embedding by KA NS's), as in the following example:

(81) *I was hoping that* you could take another look at it?

(BE-7-sit.5)

3- Permission Embedding

Participants in the present study sometimes embedded questions of permission (using *permission* preparatory) within a conditional clause as in the following examples:

(82) *Do you mind if* I photocopy your notes?

(ADL-4-sit.8)

(83) *Is it alright if* I use your mobile? (ADL-2-sit.2)

D) Conditional

This category covers the few cases in the present study's data where the conditional clause is not embedded within any of the structures specified above (Trosborg 1995), for example[22]:

(84) *If you could* bring me when you come back 2 boxes of allergy tablets? (ADL-14-sit.6)

Although there seems to be some missing main clause in this above example, understood as '*It would be great if*', for instance, the category 'Conditional' here is distinguished from 'Embedding' where the conditional clause is preceded or followed by another phrase of embedding, as illustrated above.

E) Aspect

The meaning carried in the embedding clause can be further emphasized by using the continuous aspect instead of the simple present/past tense (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989, also Trosborg 1995 '*Ing-form*'), as in the following example:

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[22] Blum-Kulka *et al.* also propose 'Conditional' as a type of syntactic downgrader; however, their perception of the category does not apply to the use of conditional by participants in the present study, as in the following example:

I would suggest you leave now.

Another syntactic downgrader type which is identified in Blum-Kulka *et al.* and does not occur in the present data is 'Subjunctive', for example:

Might be better if you were to leave now.

(85) I *was wondering* if you would give me a hand.

6.2. Lexical and Phrasal Downgraders

Six Lexical/Phrasal Downgraders were demonstrated in the present data as follows[23]:

A) Politeness Marker: '*Please*'

An optional element added to the request to bid for H's cooperative behaviour (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:283), represented by '*please*' and its equivalences (for example '*kindly*'). In Blum-Kulka *et al.*, there is no specification of the position that an element such as '*please*' needs to be in to qualify as 'Politeness Marker', except for a single example where '*please*' occurs at the end of the HA. As discussed earlier under external modification, '*please*' (and its equivalences) function as 'Alerter' if it occurs before the HA, as it serves to alert H to expect a request. Therefore, in the present coding manual elements such as '*please*' are coded as 'Politeness Marker' at request-final position

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[23] In addition to the six categories presented in the present coding manual (B.1-6), Blum-Kulka *et al.*identify two more Lexical/Phrasal Downgraders: 'Hedges' and 'Combinations of the Above'. Hedges are adverbials used by the requester when s/he wishes to avoid the precise specification of the proposition of the request.

- It would fit much better *somehow* if you did your paper next week.
- I'd *kind of* like to get a lift if that's all right.

'Hedges' did not occur in the present data and the category was therefore eliminated from the present coding manual. The category 'Combinations of the above' is also not considered for the present coding manual (see a similar justification for the elimination of the sub-category 'Combinations of the above' under 'Alerters' discussed in an earlier section in this chapter).

(occurring after the HA)[24] or when occurring in the middle of the request proper, as in the following example:.

(86) Could you *please* let everyone know that there will be a staff meeting tomorrow? (BE-3-sit.4)

Similar to '*please*', elements such as '*kindly*' as well as its derivatives such as '*be so kind as to*' and '*be kind enough to*' plea for the H's cooperativeness (cf. Sato 2008 on the perception of '*please*' and '*kindly*' as courtesy markers; also Trosborg 1995:212). For example:

(87) Would you *be kind enough to* re-examine my exam paper again? (ADL-5-Sit.5)

B) Consultative Device

Elements which consult H as a way of asking for his/he consent to comply with the request (Trosborg 1995:212; also Schauer 2006b)[25], for example:

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[24] Some other references classify '*please*' at HA final position as external modification (cf. Sato 2008). The present coding manual does not follow this pattern. Although '*please*' at final position occurs outside the HA, thus qualifying as external modifier, it does not seem to have the same effect as '*please*' which comes prior to the request. After the request has been made, '*please*' at final position seems to be more of a politeness indicator (hence 'Politeness Marker').

[25] Trosborg (1995:212) includes ritualized formula such as '*Would you mind*' and phrases such as '*Do you object*' at the beginning of the request as part of 'Consultative Device' (see also Schauer 2006b). Such phrases will not be considered as part of the 'Consultative Device' category in the present coding manual as they can be confused with the request strategy 'Preparatory' questioning *permission,* especially when they occur at the beginning of the request. Alternatively, Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989:283) acknowledge phrases such as '*Do you think*' as expressions by means of which the speaker seeks to involve the hearer directly to ultimately bid for his/her cooperation, and include such phrases under the category 'Politeness Marker'. Some other references refer to expressions such as '*Do you think X?*' and '*Would you mind X?*' as 'Openers' (for example Soler *et al.* 2005). In other references, the

(88) *Do you think* you can have the manuscript ready by tomorrow?

In a few cases in the present data (mostly in the KA control data), phrases which typically illustrate the external modifier 'Imposition Minimizer' occurred within the HA (as opposed to before or after it which is the typical position for external modifiers). Such phrases are hence coded as 'Consultative Device' as they also function to consult the hearer's consent, as in the following examples:

(89) Is it possible, *if you wouldn't mind*, that you get up and distribute these papers among the students?

(KA-27-sit.1)

(90) Can I ask you, *if it's not too much of an imposition*, to bring me something from Europe? (KA-18-sit.6)

C) Understater

Adverbial modifier by means of which S underrepresents the proposition of the request (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:283-4; also Schauer 2006b)

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category 'Openers' are used to entail elements that serve to attract H's attention such as *'greetings'*, *'address forms'* and *'excuse me'*, which are classified as 'Alerters' in the present coding manual.

(91) Could you tidy up *a bit*? (from Blum-Kulka *et al* 1989)

Trosborg (1995:213) also includes the specification of the time to be spent in the execution of the requested act or the amount of the requested object which are not likely to be of great cost to the requestee under 'Understater (which she labels '*Understatement'*). Examples from the present data include:

(92) Do you mind if I borrowed your phone *quickly*?

(BE-9-sit.2)

(93) Can you *just* check the mark of this question?

(BE-1-sit.5)

(94) Is there chance I could have a *short* extension?

(BE-6-sit.10)

D) Subjectivizer:

Elements in which S explicitly expresses his/her subjective opinions regarding the state of affairs referred to in the proposition, thus lowering the assertive force of his/her request (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:284). In this respect, S could use phrases that show tentativeness (example 95), phrases that reflect his/her uncertainty about the happening of the requested act (example 96), or phrases that project the requested act as some subjective opinion (example 97):

(95) *I'm afraid* you're going to have to move your car.

(96) *I wonder* if you would give me a lift.

(97) *I think/believe/suppose* you're going my way.

Other examples from the present data:

(98) *I was wondering* if you wouldn't mind picking up these allergy for me while you're there? (BE-9-sit.6)

(99) *I don't know*, doctor, if there is a chance for me to submit the assignment within two days after the deadline.

(KA-19-sit.10)

Thus, a single phrase can be coded and analysed from more than one perspective (Baralt 2012). For example, a phrase such as '*I was wondering if*' illustrates three types of syntactic downgrading: 'Embedding', namely *tentative* embedding, 'Aspect' in the use of progressive *–ing* form, and 'Tense' in the use of past tense to make a request in the present time. The same phrase also illustrates the lexical/phrasal downgrader 'Subjectivizer'.

E) Downtoner

Sentence adverbial or propositional modifier used by S in order to tone down the imposition of the request (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989:284; Trosborg 1995; Schauer 2006b).

(100) Could you *possibly/perhaps* lend me your notes?

This lexical/phrasal downgrader occurred only in the BE control data in the present study (see chapter six).

F) Appealer

Elements used to appeal to H's benevolent understanding usually via the use of tag questions (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989; Trosborg 1995; Schauer's 2006b category 'Tag Question')[26], for example:

(101) I don't suppose I could have a copy of your notes and any hand-outs for those days, *could I*? (BE-8-sit.8)

After all data is coded based on the categories and sub-categories specified above, the next chapter discusses the analysis and discussion of the results obtained.

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[26] Trosborg includes 'Appealers' along with 'Cajolers' under a single category named *'Interpersonal Marker'*, which entails expressions whose function is to establish and maintain good interpersonal relationship between the interlocutors (Trosborg 1995:214) On the other hand, Blum-Kulka *et al* (1989:284) introduce 'Cajolers' and 'Appealers' as two separate categories under *Lexical and Phrasal Downgraders*. 'Cajolers' are conventionalized speech items (or fillers of some sort) used to establish harmony between interlocutors, for example:

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

'Cajolers' are not considered in the present coding manual because they were not employed in the present study's data, at least not enough to sustain the category altogether.

Chapter (6):

Results of the present study and discussion

Results of the Present Study

In this chapter, the results of the present study are discussed in accordance with the Research Questions (RQ) below (see also end of chapter one).

RQ.1. How do participants in the two NS's control groups differ in their use of request strategies and supportive moves (external modification and internal modification)?

RQ.2. How does proficiency level affect request formation in the TL in terms of request strategy and supportive moves? (i.e. differences between the two NNS groups)

RQ.3. Which NNS group (intermediate or advanced) behaved more like the L1 control group on the one hand and the TL control group on the other in terms of request strategy and supportive moves?

RQ.4. Which request strategy and modifier type is most used in relation to each participant group on the one hand and the situation?

The discussion in this chapter is divided into three separate sections as follows: section (1) covers the analysis of the Head Act (HA), section (2) handles the analysis of request external modification, and section (3) treats the analysis of request internal modification, including the two types: lexical/phrasal

downgraders and syntactic downgraders (following the same layout as the previous chapter, chapter five). The RQs are then addressed in connection with the results at the end of this chapter (section four).

The coded data, based on the coding manual discussed fully in the previous chapter, are entered into PASW (Predictive Analytic Soft Ware, which goes by the name SPSS.18) to generate the relative quantitative information such as frequency of occurrence of each request strategy of modifier type in each participant group. The resulting graphs and tables are included within the text. This is to make it easier for the reader to refer to the relevant figures throughout the discussion.

Section (1): Head Act Analysis

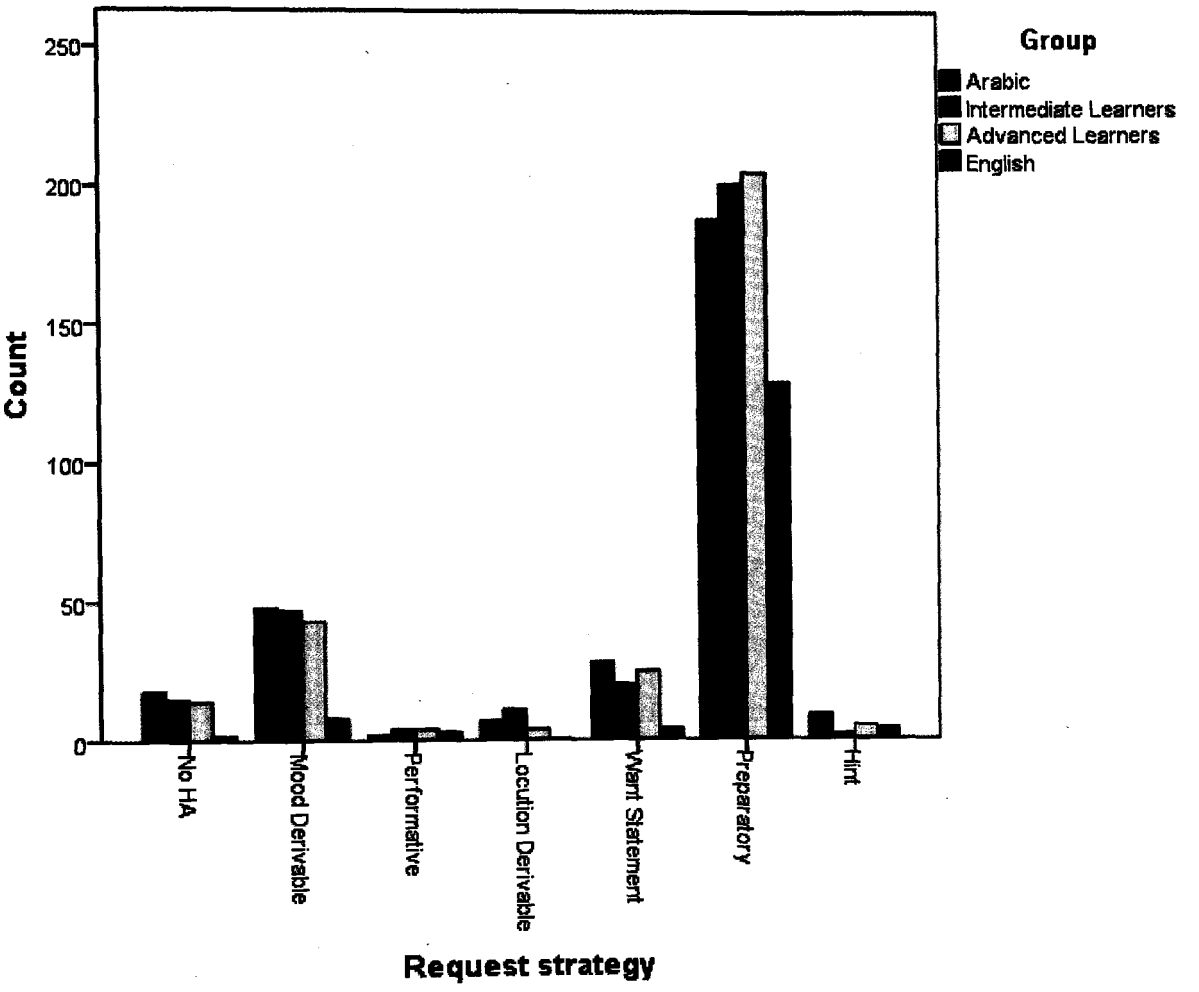
1. The Use of Request Strategies

1.1. Single Head Act

In this section, the request strategies will be discussed in descending level of directness, from most to least direct (see chapter two on hierarchy of directness of request strategies).

1.1.1. Direct Strategies

As explained earlier in chapters (2) and (5), direct strategies include four types: Mood Derivable (MD), Performatives, Locution Derivable (LD) and Want Statement (WS). MD (i.e. *imperatives*) is the most used direct strategy across all participant groups as demonstrated in graph (1) and table (2) below.



Graph (1): The overall use of each request strategy (when occurring as single HA) in each group[1].

[1] Note that the purple bar, which represents the usage of each request strategy in the English group, appears shorter than the other bars for the other three participant groups. This is because there are fewer participants in the English control group (15 participants responding to 10 situations hence 150

First Request Strategy	Group							
	KA		INL		ADL		BE	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
No HA	18	6.0	15	5.0	14	4.7	2	1.3
Direct Strategies								
Mood Derivable (MD)	48	16.0	47	15.7	43	14.3	8	5.3
Performative	2	.7	4	1.3	4	1.3	3	2.0
Locution Derivable (LD)	7	2.3	11	3.7	4	1.3	0	.0
Want Statement (WS)	29	9.7	20	6.7	25	8.3	4	2.7
Conventionally Indirect Strategies								
Preparatory	187	62.3	201	67.0	205	68.3	129	86.0
Non-conventionally Indirect Strategies								
Hint	9	3.0	2	.7	5	1.7	4	2.7

Table (2): The overall use of each request strategy in each group[2].

Comparing the Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) control group and the British English (BE) control group, MD requests are used almost three times more in the KA data than in the BE data (16% of the time vs. 5.3%, respectively). The frequency of MD requests as first HA in the NNS data in both proficiency levels resembled that of participants in the KA control (15.7% in the INL data and 14.3% in the ADL data), which shows some influence of L1 KA. Umar (2004) also found greater

responses) whereas in the other three groups there are 30 participants per group (see chapter (4) for details on selection of participants).

[2] Note that the count of each strategy in the English group comes up to a total of 150 (15 participants X 10 situations), whereas the total count in the other groups is 300 (30 participants X 10 situations). Note also that 'Opting out' (i.e. No HA) is presented here as one of the request strategies.

reliance on direct strategies (namely MD and Performatives) by the advanced Arab learners of English in his study, especially in situations where the S has more social power than the H. Taha (2006) observes a similar pattern and resolves that: "Requests in the imperative form are perfectly acceptable in Arabic as long as there is something in the tone of the expression that reduces the imperative force" Taha (2006:359; see also Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily 2012). Based on their analysis of Saudi requests, Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily (2012) further argue that the use of direct strategies such as imperatives does not necessarily mark impoliteness as hypothesized by Brown and Levinson where politeness and indirectness are positively correlated (see chapter two). For example, in situations where the requester and the requestee are closely acquainted (such as requests among peer friends or relatives) the use of direct requests would be the more appropriate choice (cf. Sifianou 1993 for a similar argument on Greek requests). Direct requests here serve to reassure the relationship between S and H where social distance (D) is rather minimal.

While the above findings suggest that MD strategy is more conventional for request formation in Arabic than in English, the use of MD requests is still dependent on other factors such as the age, gender and status of H relative to S and the type of relation between the two, as well as the content of the request. As will be illustrated later in this chapter when discussing the use of request strategies in individual situations, the use of imperatives increase in situations where the requester is superior to the addressee and when the content of the

request is rather not too demanding. This is the case in situations such as (1) where S is a professor asking a student to pass around handouts, and (4) where S is asking his/her assistant to announce a staff meeting. Such situations obviously require some level of immediacy which further legitimizes the use of the most direct pragmalinguistic choice for request formation (see Otcu and Zeyrek 2008 for a similar argument).

Although KA participants in the present study clearly opted for more direct requests than their BE counterparts, there is a counter argument in the literature proposing that Arab NSs prefer indirectness in communication. For example, Zaharna (1995) argues that Arab speakers need not rely on direct forms to convey their messages effectively because they pertain to a *high-context* culture (see also Hall's 1976 model reported in Nelson *el at* 2002:40). In such cultures, understanding the meaning relies more on the context in which the utterance occurs than on the linguistic form per se. In contrast, American English speakers belong to a *low-context* culture, where the meaning is mostly encoded in the linguistic form, hence the use of more direct forms that explicitly express the intended meaning. A parallel dichotomy of *individualism* vs. *collectivism* oriented cultures is proposed in Meier (2010:82; see also Fukushima 2000:128; also Holtgraves and Yang 1992:253). In the former, participants tend to reinforce individual autonomy (hence low-context-culture) whereas in the latter emphasizing interpersonal bonds between members of the group is prioritized (high-context cultures). However, such a claim whereby Arab NSs pertain to

high-context (or collectivist) cultures which promotes indirectness is not supported by proper empirical evidence. In fact, the high distribution of the MD strategy relative to the other direct request strategies in the KA control data casts doubt on the categorization of Arab NSs as members of a high-context culture.

The INL speakers used slightly more MD requests than the ADL speakers (cf. Flores Salgado 2011:177 where the lower proficiency level learners produced more direct requests). As MD requests are clearly more common in the L1 than in the TL, it could be argued that participants in the lower proficiency level were able to transfer request strategies from the L1 to a greater extent. This provides some evidence to the disputed claim of a negative correlation between proficiency in the TL and L1 transfer (see chapter one). In this respect, the less advanced learners are expected to rely more on L1 forms in developing their IL than the more advanced learners. From another perspective, the higher frequency of MD strategies by the less advanced learners relative to the more advanced learners seem to reflect the early stages of request formation development outlined in Kasper and Rose (2002; see also Ellis 1995). Kasper and Rose's five-stage model for the development of requests in the L2 is based on findings of three longitudinal studies: Ellis (1992) who observed two primary school children (J and R) in the UK over a two-year period, Achiba (2002) who observed her own seven-year-old daughter (Yao) over a seventeen-month sojourn in Australia, and Schmidt (1983) who observed an adult learner (Wes) in a classroom EFL setting (see discussion of longitudinal studies in chapter three).

The second stage of L2 request development in Kasper and Rose, the *formulaic* stage, is mainly characterized by the use of imperatives.

The KA NS's in the present study also employed the direct strategy WS more than the English NSs (28 occurrences of the WS strategy as first request in the KA data as opposed to 4 only in the BE data, see table (2) above). The modal used in KA to express wanting is ['abi] (Aljenaie 2001) that translates literally '*I want*'. KA NS's in the present study expressed their wants either by using the construct '*I want X (item)*' or '*I want you to do X*'. The INL speakers also showed preference for the syntactic structure '*I need/want X*' or '*I need/want you to do X*', which could be preferred due to their formal simplicity (Flores Salgado 2011:183). In the ADL data, on the other hand, participants seem to have expanded the range of pragmalinguistic forms for performing a request via the strategy WS. In addition to expressing S's wants/needs, ADL learners also employed a number of verb clauses that express their desires, as in the following examples:

(1) *I would like to* borrow your notes to copy them. (ADL-14-sit.8)

(2) *I would greatly appreciate buying* a box from Europe on your way there. (ADL-8-sit.6)

According to Trosborg (1995), expressing the target request act as some wish or desire of the speaker makes the requestive intent less forward than expressing it as some needs or wants, which makes examples such as (1-2) relatively more polite (see chapter five). The expansion of linguistic forms for expressing WS strategy in the ADL learners in the present study coincides with the features of *pragmatic expansion* stage proposed in Kasper and Rose (2002). The *pragmatic expansion* stage features the addition of new forms for request realization to the learners' pragmalinguistic repertoire, as well as increased use of mitigation and complex syntax. From another perspective, the use of a wider variety of forms to express a certain request strategy (WS in this case) in the ADL data suggests that the advanced learners were able to both acquire new TL-forms (hence *analysis of knowledge* component in Bialystok's model) as well as gain control over attention to the different forms available for performing a single request strategy in the TL (see chapter one). While Bialystok emphasizes the role of control over attention (i.e. *control of processing*) in adult acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence, it is more of a combined effect of both components, analysis of knowledge and control of processing. Although the ADL speakers made use of a wider range of linguistic forms in expressing the WS strategy than the INL speakers, the overall count of WS requests in the ADL data was still higher than the INL data (25 instances in the ADL data vs. 20 in the INL data). This could support the argument that advanced learners are more prone to transfer from L1 because they have the linguistic means to do so. In other words,

they have access to a more complex linguistic repertoire which enables them to express L1 forms in the TL.

Other speech act (SA) studies on learners of English from other L1 backgrounds revealed similar results to what is observed in the present study, where the learners used more direct request strategies than the English NSs control group[3]. For example, in her Japanese learners' data elicited via Written DCT, Woodfield (2008, reported in chapter three) found that direct requests produced by the learners, especially ESL learners, clearly outnumbered those produced by the British English NSs (also Fukushima 1996; also Lin 2009 on Chinese intermediate learners for similar results; also Scarcella 1979 on Arabic learners of English in low and high proficiency levels; also Yates 2010 on English NSs tendency towards using less direct requests). Direct strategies were also the first to occur in the data of German learners of English at the early stages of their sojourn in the TL environment in Schauer's study (2008:417-8, see chapter three). This could be traceable to influence from L1 German where direct requests are more commonly used than in English. Béal (1994 as cited in Meier 2010:81-2) also found more direct requests in her French ESL learners' data than in the Australian NSs data, collected via recordings and interviews in workplace. According to Béal, the French learners opted for directness to a higher degree when asking for information even in hearer-authority situations

[3] Although in some studies in conducted for the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989) both English NSs and the advanced learners showed preference for indirect request forms (Ellis 1995:355).

because they prioritize the content perspective of communication to the interpersonal perspective. In other words, they are more concerned with delivering the meaning as clearly as possible, than maintaining interpersonal relations with the addressee during the conversation. Another study with similar findings is Otcu and Zeyrek (2008:281, also Eslami and Nora, same volume) who detected possible transfer from L1 Turkish in the EFL learners' use of direct strategies. The frequency of the MD strategy in the learners' data in Octu and Zeyrek's study exceeded the frequency of this strategy in the English NSs' data, especially in the situations where S is superior or equal to H (asking waiter for menu and asking to borrow notes from a classmate, respectively). Octu and Zeyrek attribute learners' preference for direct strategies here to the need to show urgency and efficiency in communicating the intended message. In the DCT situation where there is no interactive interlocutor to provide feedback that the request message is successfully delivered, participants might have found it more efficient to use the most direct (explicit) form available. Furthermore, Flores Salgado (2011) argues that direct strategies are preferred by the learners in her study (Mexican EFL learners), especially at the lower proficiency level, because they represent the simplest syntactic structure and are thus easier to produce. For example, the most direct strategy MD contains the basic form of the verb (imperative) and the requested action or object. Similarly, WS strategy as in '*I want/need X*' and LD strategy as in '*You must/should X*' are syntactically less complex and do not require a high level of pragmatic processing as the indirect strategy hints. Ellis (1995:356) explains the dominance of direct requests in his

longitudinal data although the two learners have already developed the means for expressing indirect requests to the nature of the communicative setting. In the classroom setting, it is often the case that the learners acquire and practice request formation by interacting with each other. Moreover, such classroom-induced requests are often related to routine events. Addressing low imposition requests to fellow students as such does not require the use of indirect requests and extensive modification (*negative politeness* strategies, see chapter two) that are expected when addressing a superior requestee. Ellis therefore concludes that the sociopragmatic aspect of request formation, how requesters are expected to vary their strategy choice and modification according to situation (see chapter one), should be further emphasized in the classroom activities.

Such findings from research on English learners[4] of different L1s indicate that the relatively high frequency of using direct strategies in learners' data in the present study is not entirely a matter of L1 transfer but rather a feature of the interlanguage (IL). Thus, learners need to control their attention to relevant information of the TL to observe that indirectness, namely conventional indirectness, rather than directness is the preferred strategy for requesting in the TL English. This supports the role of *control of processing* in Bialystok's model

[4] Although imperatives and the other direct strategies are relatively easier to form syntactically in English, this is not necessarily the case in other languages. For example, in Arabic the use of imperatives demands knowledge of other elements besides the simple syntactic form such as the right intonation as pointed earlier (cf. Taha 2005 as discussed earlier). Thus, learners of Arabic who lack this extra knowledge may not be able to supply imperatives as frequently as the Arab NSs, though this strategy is rather conventional for request formation in Arabic. The feature of syntactic simplicity of direct requests is highlighted in the literature because the majority of studies focus on English as L2.

and *noticing* of relevant input of the TL in Schmidt's model (see chapter one) in adults' acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence.

The third most used direct strategy after MD and WS in the present study is LD (cf. Schauer 2009:135 for similar findings). To be more specific, this strategy was used as first HA more frequently by participants in the INL group. This might be a result of the teaching environment (see conclusion chapter). The obligation auxiliaries in English such as '*should*', '*must*' and '*have to*' are usually presented to learners in English Language Teaching (ELT) Textbooks and course materials as effective linguistic forms for contexts where S wants to urge H to do something (cf. Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010:425 on the request strategies often illustrated in ELT textbooks). In such traditional EFL learning contexts, expressing the propositional meaning explicitly is encouraged (Hassall 2001:276) which might have led the learners to use more explicit indicators of their requestive intent. Another possible explanation could be attributed to the situational descriptions in the DCT (see chapter three on effect of data collection instrument on responses). Participants in the INL group are graduates of Kuwait University who have not attained in the real-world the high-status positions depicted in some of the situations. This is the case in situation (9) where S is the boss requesting from an employee to prepare a presentation earlier than scheduled. In this particular situation, LD requests were used nine times out of eleven, which is the total number of LD requests used as single HA in the INL data (see table (2) above, also table (11) on use of each strategy in each

situation). Participants in situation (9) having to play the role of a boss, which is not one of their roles in the real-world, might have opted for LD strategy to emphasize their authority. This seems to be the case with participants in the KA control group who also used LD requests as single HA more than participants in the ADL group, especially considering that most of the participants in the ADL group are teaching staff members with postgraduate degrees (see chapter four on participants in each group). KA NSs used the LD strategy in situation (9) six out of seven times, which is the total number of LD requests used as single HA in the KA control data (see table (2) above, also table (11) on use of each strategy in each situation). In contrast, the BE NSs in the present study did not use LD requests as single HA (see graph (1) and table (2) above). LD requests in the BE control data only occurred as second HA (see discussion of use of second HA below, also and graph (5) and table (6). All of the six instances where BE participants produced a second request using LD strategy occurred in situation (6), S asks a friend to bring over some antihistamines from abroad and carries them by hand, specifically when addressing the second condition of the request (having the medicines carried in hand-luggage). It seems that the English NSs here prefer to use the LD strategy for the type of requests that involve some attention to particular aspects in executing the requested act.

The other type of direct strategies in the present study is 'Performatives', which is essentially characterized by the use of a performative verb that explicitly marks the requestive intent as in "I'm *asking* you to X". While performative verbs in

English only occur in the present tense, performative verbs in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) may occur in the imperfect or perfect tense (Khalil and McCarus 1999:10). In KA, the pragmalinguistic convention for producing a performative request is usually via the use of the verb *'request'* in the imperfect tense (that is [ṭalabt-ič] for female addressee or [ṭalabt-ik] for male addressee) which translates literally as follows:

[ṭalabt-ič]

I-*request*-Past-you-(female) (example from: Arb-21-sit.6)

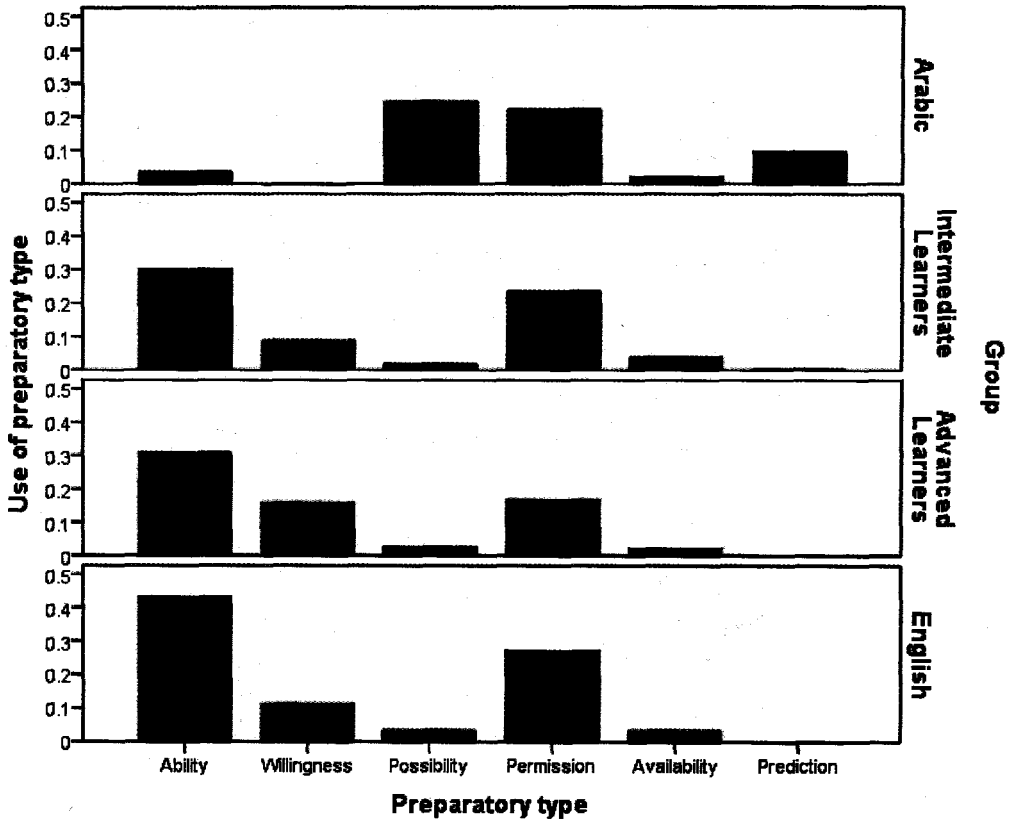
'Performative' was the least used direct strategy throughout the present data. There were no differences across-groups in the use of this strategy (two occurrences in the KA control data, four occurrences in each learners' group data and three occurrences in the BE data, table (2) above). The marginal use of 'Performative' strategy was also observed in some other studies. For example, in Konakahara (2011) only *hedged* performatives (the performative verb is made tentative by using a hedge as in "*I must ask* you to X" or "*May I ask* you to X?", see chapter five) occurred in the data and their overall use in the Japanese learners of English data and English control data was limited. Likewise, in Schauer's (2009) longitudinal study, comparing the pragmatic development of German learners of English to English NSs, 'Performatives' was the least used type of direct strategies. *Unhedged* performatives (containing a performative verb that explicitly spells out the requestive intent as in "I *ask/command/request* you to

do X.", see chapter five) were used only twice by a single learner, while *hedged* performatives (the performative verb is made tentative by using a hedge as in "*I must ask* you to X." or "*May I ask* you to X?", chapter five) were used more frequently. Surprisingly, none of the participants in the English NSs data in Schauer's study used any type of performatives. Schauer argues that performatives are not as frequent in languages such as English or French as they are in German, which seems to be the case in KA as well given the lack of 'Performatives' requests in the KA control data. In Al-Gahtani (2012) on low-level and high-level Saudi learners of Australian English both unhedged and hedged performatives were never used by any of the participants, including the Australian NSs. Ellis (1995) also found that performatives did not occur in his data (beginner child ESL learners in a classroom setting), even after a rather long period of observation (nearly sixteen months). He argues that 'Performatives' seem to be among the least used request strategies in naturalistic setting. In contrast, the strategy 'Performatives' seems more conventional for request formation in other languages such as Turkish. For example, the Turkish NS's in Marti's (2007) study rated explicit performatives as the most polite strategy for making requests. This presents a cross/inter-cultural pragmatic issue, the conventionality of a given strategy in a given language is culturally-sensitive.

1.1.2. Conventionally Indirect Strategy: Preparatory

As graph (1) and table (2) above illustrate, the frequency of 'Preparatory' as first HA overwhelmingly exceeds that of any other request strategy in all groups. This testifies to the universality of this strategy for performing requests (see also Umar 2004; Woodfield 2008:242; Le Pair 1996:661; Lin 2009; Fukushima 1996:677, Konakahara 2011:248; De Paiva 2006; 2010, Flores Salgado 2011, among many others). There are some cross-group differences in the rate of using preparatory as well as the linguistic forms being used as will be discussed below. The participants in the BE control group employed this strategy to the highest percentage (86%). The two NNS groups supplied preparatory requests to approximately the same degree (67% for INL speakers and 68.3% for ADL speakers). Participants in the KA control group employed the preparatory strategy to the least extent relative to the other three groups (62.7%), although the difference between this group and the two NNS groups is not quite salient.

The strategy preparatory was further analyzed for the frequency of using each of its six sub-strategies as identified in the coding manual for the present study (see chapter five). The sub-strategy that is most used by participants in the BE control group is *ability* preparatory (43.3%), represented by questions of H's ability to do the requested act as in *"Can/could you X?"* (see graph (3) and table (4) below).



Graph (3): The use of each preparatory type in each group

Preparatory type	Group							
	KA		INL		ADL		BE	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Ability	3.3%	10	30.0%	90	30.7%	92	43.3%	65
Willingness	.0%	0	8.7%	26	16.0%	48	11.3%	17
Possibility	24.3%	73	1.7%	5	2.7%	8	3.3%	5
Permission	22.0%	66	23.3%	70	17.0%	51	27.3%	41
Availability	2.0%	6	3.7%	11	2.3%	7	3.3%	5
Prediction	9.7%	29	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0

Table (4): The use of each preparatory type in each group.

Querying H's *ability* to perform the requested act can either be achieved by using the conventional form '*Can/could you do X?*'[5], or by embedding *ability* preparatory in one of the three types of embedding which is a type of syntactic downgraders (see chapter (5) on the definition of internal modification, also section (3) later in the this chapter on analysis of internal modification), as in the following examples:

(3) Is there any chance *you could* extend the date for me?

(BE-1-sit.10)

(4) I was wondering *if you could* purchase for me these allergy tablets.

(ADL-28-sit.6)

(5) I would really appreciate it *if you could* extend the due date.

(ADL-28-sit.10)

Like participants in the BE control group, participants in both NNS groups supplied *ability* preparatory requests more than any other preparatory sub-strategy (see also Octu and Zeyrek 2008; Konakahara 2011; Le Pair's 1996;

[5] There are a couple of examples in the present data where participants questioned H's ability using the non-conventional formula "*Are you able to do X?*", as in the following example:

- So *would you* please *be able to* lend me your notes for those handouts? (ADL-19-sit.8)

Schauer 2009; Lin 2009; Woodfield 2008 for similar results; also Marti 2007:69 where ability preparatory "*Can you X?*" and possibility preparatory "*Is it possible X?*" are rated among the more polite request strategies by the Turkish NS's). Ellis (1995) also found that the structure *"Can/ could you + verb?"* was the most used formula for realizing the preparatory request strategy in his data. Request data in his study was elicited using a pen-and-pencil method targeting two child beginner learners of ESL in a classroom setting (see field notes as data collection instrument in chapter three), as well as recordings of the classroom interaction to verify the written data. According to Le Pair (1996:665), the dominance of questions of *ability* in making requests is due to their ability to achieve a compromise between both the literal and the intended meaning (see chapter two for a discussion of the features of conventionally indirect requests). Based on the widespread of ability requests in learners' data from different L1 backgrounds, *ability* preparatory seems to be one of the most conventional forms for performing requests in English (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 2009 on the nature of conventional expressions). As Schauer (2009) puts it: "It seems that employing this strategy when formulating a request in English is likely to be a safe and unmarked option in a wide variety of situations". Thus, if learners of English in the English speaking study abroad context were to exclusively rely on this category in interactions involving requests, the likelihood that their request strategy use would be considered appropriate is probably very high" (Schauer 2009:156).

The frequent usage of *ability* preparatory could also be explained in terms of the instructional effect. Campillo (2008:209) points out that the most illustrated type of requests in English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks and their supplementary recorded materials are usually hearer-oriented questions of *ability* or *willingness*, as in '*Could you..?*' and '*Would you...?*' (cf. Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010:425 on the dominance of conventionally indirect strategies over direct and non-conventionally indirect strategies in the illustration of request formation in ELT textbooks' data). Schmidt's (1993) *noticing* hypothesis, where noticing of relevant input in the Target Language (TL) is seen as prerequisite to acquisition (chapter one), is corroborated by such observations. Apparently, the learners were able to notice the recurrence of *ability* requests in the EFL classroom context (and the ESL context in the case of the ADL learners who spend a significant period of time in England, see chapter four) and applied this noticed input into their interlanguage (IL) requests, hence *output*.

In contrast to the English data in the present study (both the NSs control and the learners) where requests were frequently performed via *ability* preparatory, *ability* sub-strategy is one of the least used preparatory types in the KA data (occurring only 3.3% of the time, see graph (3) and table (4) above). This suggests that questions of requestee's *ability* are not as conventional in making requests in KA as they are in English or other languages (see for example Le Pair's 1996 discussion on Spanish NSs and Dutch learners of Spanish, also Schauer on German NSs and German learners of English 2008:418). Instead, participants in

the KA control group showed a preference for using *possibility* preparatory requests characterized by the formulaic structure "*Is it possible for you to X?*" (cf. Schauer 2009 where '*possibility*' was the most used preparatory type in her German learners of English data). Feghali (1997:362) also points the widespread use of [mumkin X?] which translates literally as '*Possible X?*' in making requests in Arabic. An example of *possibility* preparatory from the present data:

Is it possible for you to give me a paper? (KA-12-sit.3)

mumkin ta'ṭīn-i

possible *give*-Present-2nd-Sng-Fem.-me

Although the *possibility* preparatory sub-strategy is more conventional in making requests in L1 KA than *ability* preparatory, the learners in the present study rarely used *possibility* preparatory in making requests in the TL English. This brings to attention the discussion of constraints to transfer (see chapter one). Forms which are perceived as language-specific are less transferrable from the L1 to the IL. Furthermore, the relative lack of *possibility* preparatory requests in the learners' data here highlights the role of *control of processing* in Bialystok's (1993) model and *noticing* of relevant TL input in Schmidt's (1993) model which are both fundamental in the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence in adult learners (see chapter one). Relevant input in this case is to observe that *ability* preparatory is one the most conventional strategies for request formation in English, and that its

frequency of usage exceeds that of other preparatory types such as *possibility* preparatory which is more frequent in the learners' L1.

While the *ability* preparatory sub-strategy was the most used sub-strategy in the BE control data and the learners' data, and *possibility* preparatory was the most used sub-strategy in the KA control data, *permission* preparatory requests were distributed across data from all groups to relatively comparable extents. As explained in chapter (5), illustrations of the *permission* preparatory sub-strategy include questions about whether H consents to doing the requested act as in *"Is it okay to do X?"* as well as questions of whether S is permitted to do the requested act (i.e. speaker-oriented questions of ability or possibility) as in *"Can/could I do X?"* and *"Is it possible for me to do X?".* Although questions such as "*Can/could I do X?*" concern the 'ability' condition, they are perceived as *permission* preparatory rather than *ability* because S is already aware of his/her own ability to do act X so s/he need not question that ability, at least not genuinely. S's ability thus becomes constrained by whether or not H permits that S goes about executing the act in question.

Looking more closely at the frequency of using *permission* preparatory requests across groups reveals that this sub-strategy was used more by the English NSs than the learners and the KA NSs (see graph (3) and table (4) above). The relative lack of speaker-oriented *permission* preparatory requests in the learners'

data in comparison to the English NS's data was also observed in Schauer (2009:148-9; also Woodfied 2008 in her German and Japanese learners of English data), who considers it a feature of the Interlanguage (IL). Schauer argues that the *permission* preparatory strategy is the only speaker-oriented preparatory type (as in "*Can/May I X?*" or "*Is it possible for me to X?*") which might have presented a challenge for the learners to produce. That is, the learners would be more comfortable shifting the attention from themselves in the request proper, by producing speaker-oriented preparatory requests (as in "Can *you* X?") or even impersonal preparatory requests (as in "Is it possible *to have* X?").

Although the frequency for using *permission* preparatory varied across groups, this strategy was the second most used preparatory type (after *ability*) in the present data. As such, *permission* preparatory appears to be among the most conventional forms for request formation in both languages KA and English (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 2009, who based on perceptions of English NSs and learners of English on the familiarity of certain expressions, includes "*Would you mind X?*" among the most conventional expressions in American English in request contexts). The pragmalinguistic realizations differ across the two languages though.

In performing requests via *permission* preparatory, the KA NSs in the present study preferred forms such as speaker-oriented questions of *possibility* (as in "*Is it possible for me to do X?*") and the use of some other adjectives that verify the hearer's permission. For example, ['ādi] (translated literally as '*normal*') and carry the meaning of "*Is it okay for me/you to X?*". On the other hand, the BE participants and the learners employed a more versatile range in expressing *permission* preparatory. These include, for instance, the permission modal '*may*' (as in *"May I X?"*), the formulaic expression '*Would you mind X?*', and speaker-oriented questions of *ability* and *willingness* (as in "*Can/Could I do X?*" and "*Would you mind X?*", see Morgan's 1991 discussion of *conventions of language* in chapter two). It appears that the learners here were able to *notice* (Schmidt 1993) and *control their processing* (Bialystok 1993) to the pragmalinguistic choices available in the TL for performing permission preparatory requests and manifested this knowledge in their production.

In addition to *possibility* preparatory and *permission* preparatory, another preparatory type that is rather frequent in the KA control data is *prediction* preparatory, questioning whether H would fulfill the request or not (cf. Le Pair 1996 in chapter (5) who proposes a similar category). In fact, *prediction* preparatory is confined to KA requests. As explained in chapter (5), examples of *prediction* preparatory include the following:

(6) If it's not too much on an imposition, *will you distribute the papers*? (KA-28-sit.1)

(7) May God heal you, *will you give me your mobile?*

(KA-16-sit.2)

Such questions in KA do not bear an auxiliary that characterizes willingness such as *'will'* or *'would'* in English (*"Will/Would you do X?"*). They are marked in speech by intonation (rising intonation, see Holes 1984) as well as the use of mitigating devices such as the external modifier 'Imposition Minimizer', for example *"If you would not mind"* or 'Prayers of Good Wish' as in *"May god bestow wellbeing upon you'*, or the politeness marker *'please'* or any other lexical item with a similar function (cf. Taha 2006:359 on similar requests, also see discussion of the external modifier 'Imposition Minimizer' in section two in this chapter). The use of *prediction* preparatory requests in the KA control data in the present study shows that there are some language-specific conventions for the realization of the request strategy preparatory. Furthermore, *prediction* preparatory requests did not occur in the learners' data in the present study albeit their frequency in L1 KA requests. This conforms to the argument that features perceived by the learners as language-specific are less transferrable to the IL than forms which are shared between the L1 and the TL (see chapter one on constraints to transfer).

Another conventional preparatory type in English is *willingness* preparatory, as in "*Will/Would you do X?*". Willingness preparatory was the third most used preparatory type in the BE data and the learners' data. In fact, the ADL learners supplied more *willingness* preparatory requests than the English NSs (cf. Flores Salgado 2011 where the advanced learners used *willingness* preparatory more than the intermediate and basic level learners). This seems to reflect a case of *overuse* (when the learners supply a certain TL-strategy or form more than the NSs of the TL; cf. Barron 2003; also Trosborg 1995; also Lin 2009:10; also see the next section on the use of '*please*' as external modifier), which could be a result of the instructional effect. Along with *ability* preparatory, *willingness* strategy is also presented in textbooks as one of the most common pragmalinguistic forms for performing requests in English (cf. Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010 pointed above). However, given its relatively common presentation in English-Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks as such, *willingness* preparatory strategy was not frequently supplied by participants in the present data as one would expect. Le Pair (1996:666) argues that asking for hearer's ability or possibility are in general a more face-saving strategy than asking for willingness. In this respect, should the hearer chose not comply with the request for whatever reason, it seems that ability or possibility represent more genuine reasons for his/her non-compliance than willingness.

The least used preparatory type in the present data is the *availability* preparatory sub-strategy (enquiring about the H's possession of the requested item). This

preparatory type was limited to the situations where S requests an object rather than an action, which is the case in situation (3) where S asks for extra paper and a pen (see appendix table (1) on the use of each preparatory type in each situation; also see the discussion of the use of each request strategy in each situation below). This is yet another illustration of how the situational description can affect participants' responses.

1.1.3. Non-Conventionally Indirect Strategy: Hints

Overall, non-conventionally indirect strategies are employed minimally in the present data compared to the direct strategies and the conventionally indirect strategies (see graph (1) and table (2) above). Ellis (1995) also argues that in naturalistic settings hints the use of hints is relatively rare. He observes that whenever hints were used in his longitudinal data (of two beginner ESL learners over a sixteen-month observation period) they were strong hints (partial reference is made to an element relevant to the fulfilment of the requested act) rather than weak hints (no reference to the request proper). The lack of hints in the DCT data here could be a result of the data collection process (Le Pair 1996:660). Participants might feel obliged to provide a response that can be unambiguously identified as a request (cf. Rose 1994 for a similar view; also Rose and Ono 1995:194; Schauer 2008). As discussed in chapter (2), hints are inherently more ambiguous than the other request strategies. The interpretation of hints is more open for negotiation, unless sufficient contextual clues are

provided by the speaker to indicate that a request is intended here and not any other SA (Weizman 1993).

Participants in the two NS control groups in the present study used slightly more hints than participants in the two NNS groups (cf. Schauer 2009 on German learners of English for similar findings). Le Pair (1996) observed the reverse pattern in his data of Dutch learners of Spanish, where the learners produced more hints than the Spanish NSs. However, this observation was the result of the coding process. In the instances where the learners could not properly understand that the situation requires the production of a request and instead produced some other vague response that barely reads as a request, these instances were coded as hints in Le Pair's study. Flores Salgado (2011:180) also found that the lower level Mexican EFL learners used more hints than the American English NSs. Flores Salgado attributes this surprisingly high frequency of hints in the basic learners' data to a lack of linguistic resources in the TL rather than a genuine intention for expressing the request indirectly. That is, the hints were coded as such because the learners could not complete the request proper and instead tried to provide reasons for making the request in a highly context-dependent manner (thus '*pseudo hints*').

A possible explanation for the relative lack of hints in the learners' data in the present study is that learners may not be confident that the requestive meaning

would be delivered successfully using such an indirect strategy, especially in the absence of an interactive interlocutor in the DCT who can verify that S's intended request was successfully interpreted as a request. Therefore, the learners here resorted to the more direct strategies (mostly MD), or the conventionally indirect strategy preparatory where the requestive intent is disambiguated by means of conventionality. Another explanation for the infrequency of hints in the present data in general relates to their processing effort. Hints require greater processing effort from the speaker, as s/he needs to formulate his/her hint utterance in a way that could be inferred as an indirect request yet at the same time retains its non-request interpretation (such as statement commenting on some state of affairs). This might be more challenging to learners who are not conversing in their L1, especially the lower-level learners. In fact, the ADL learners in the present study used almost twice as many hints than the INL speakers (cf. Otcu and Zeyrek 2008 for similar results).

Hints also place a greater processing load on the hearer. In direct requests the requestive intent is explicitly stated and in conventionally indirect requests where conventionality blocks further non-request inferences. However, hints require greater mental processing effort that incorporates the surrounding contextual information to arrive at their intended request. This need for extra processing effort goes against *relevance* in Sperber and Wilson's view (see discussion of Relevance Theory in chapter one), assessed by the ability of both interlocutors to arrive at greater cognitive effects with less processing effort.

Furthermore, the data collection instrument could have limited participants' use of hints in the present study. The situations in the DCT do not provide a live interlocutor and thus H's face wants are not actually present at the time but imagined by S (the participant), which minimizes participants' evaluation of the imposition of the request accordingly. Since imposition is not assessed as high as it could be in the real-world, the need to compromise relevance to minimize imposition might be reduced. As discussed earlier in chapter (2), relevance can be compromised by the need to reduce imposition upon H's, which is assumed to be one of the most compelling motives for speakers' indirectness (see Brown and Levinson 1978 who assign a greater politeness value for more indirect requests).

1.2. Multiple HAs: The Use of a Second Request

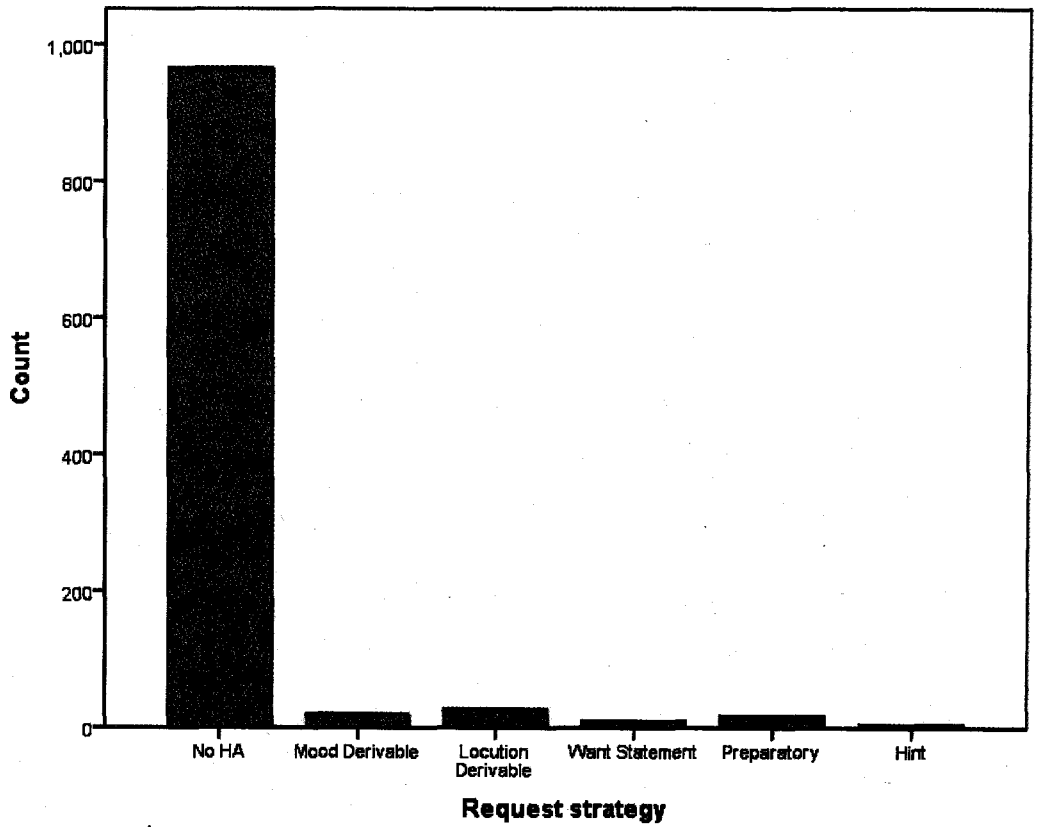
Included in this section are cases where participants used two distinct request strategies to express the same core content (hence repetition of the request) or by confirming the primary request with another request that does not explicitly state the content of the primary request per se. Example (8) below illustrates the first case, the participant performed the request using the preparatory strategy followed by the MD strategy. Example (9) illustrates the second case, the participant stated the request content using WS strategy then used MD strategy to confirm it without restating the content of the request.

(8) *Is it possible for you to type a paper announcing a meeting that will take place tomorrow, God willing?* And if it's not too much of an

imposition, *send a message to all staff and notify them that there is a meeting tomorrow morning at 9 am.* (KA-6-sit.4)

(9) *I wanted you to notify the staff of the meeting tomorrow. Don't forget please.* (KA-18-sit.4)

Overall participants in the present study produced a second request to a limited extent. As is evident from graph (5) and table (6) below, the longest bar is the one that represents non-use of a second HA (i.e. No 2nd HA used).



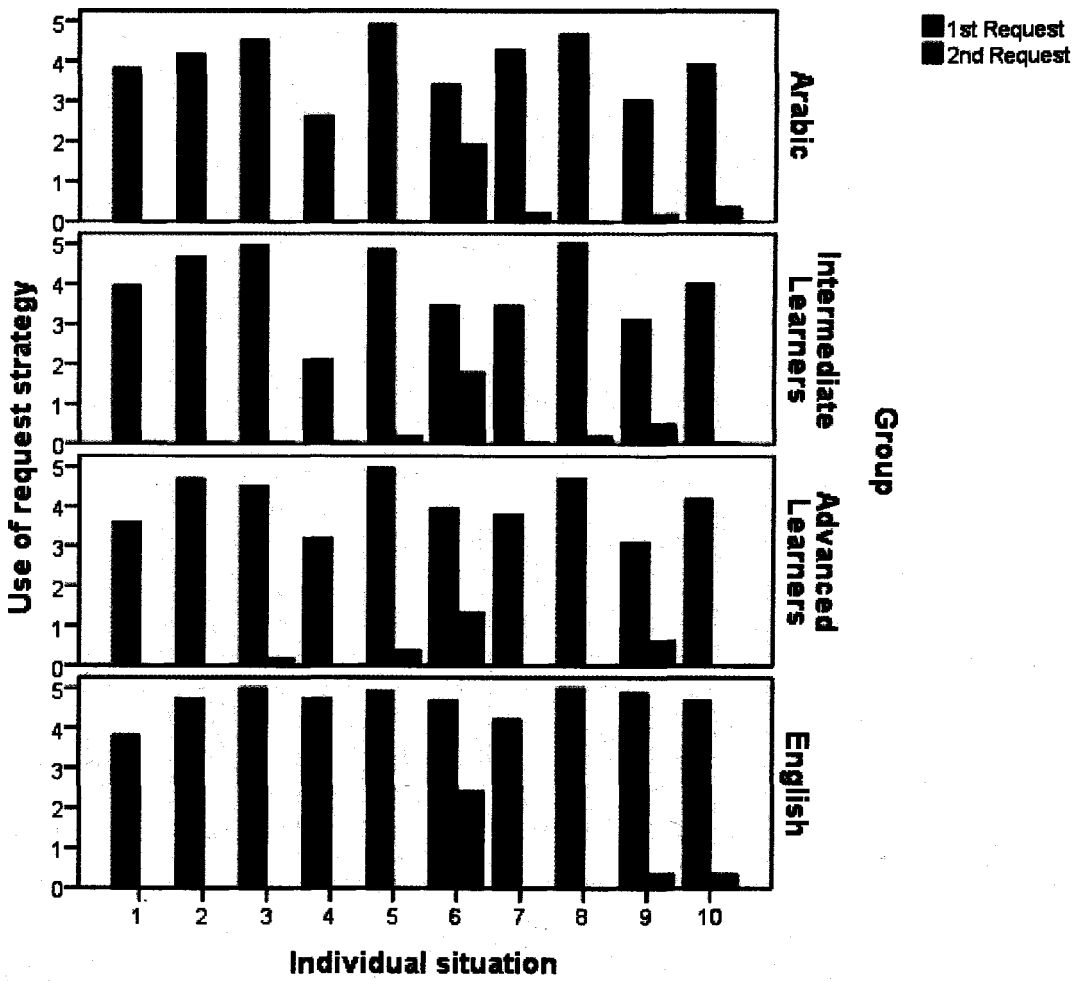
Graph (5): Use of request strategies when occurring as 2nd HA in response in all groups combined.

Request strategy	Group							
	KA		INL		ADL		BE	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
No 2nd HA	92.0%	276	92.7%	278	91.3%	274	92.0%	138
MD	2.7%	8	1.3%	4	2.7%	8	.0%	0
Performative	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
LD	1.3%	4	3.0%	9	3.0%	9	4.0%	6
WS	1.0%	3	.7%	2	1.3%	4	1.3%	2
Preparatory	2.7%	8	1.0%	3	1.3%	4	2.7%	4
Hint	.3%	1	1.3%	4	.3%	1	.0%	0

Table (6): Use of request strategies when occurring as 2nd HA in response

The situational description seems to have an impact on the production of a second request (see graph (7) below). In situation (6), where S asks H to bring over some medicines from abroad and carry them in hand-luggage as they expire otherwise, more details were added to the situational description to ensure that the participants realize the target request as that of high imposition, especially considering that the requestee and the requester are of equal social power and familiar with one another (friends). As a consequence of providing such extra details, nearly half of the participants in the present study produced the target request as two distinct requests (one requesting H to bring over the medicines from abroad, the other requesting H to carry the medicines in hand-

luggage; see Felix-Brasdefer 2010 on the effect of enriched situational description on prolonging participants' responses). In fact, the highest percentage for using the LD strategy as second HA occurred in this particular situation (see table (11) below on the use of request strategies in individual situations). Parallel to the discussion raised earlier on the BE participants' use of the LD strategy in the present study, this strategy seems most effective for performing requests that require some specific conditions that need to be attended to by the requestee.



Graph (7): The use of single HA vs. second HA in each individual situation.

1.3. Opting Out: No HA

Opting out is made available to participants in the present DCT for two functions. First, if the participant believes that s/he may not encounter a certain situation in his/her reality, the participant can choose not to produce the targeted request. This feature is added to increase the reliability of the DCT as data collection instrument. If the participant cannot relate to the situation described, s/he is not obliged to produce a response simply to fill in the blanks (see chapter four on description of the DCT for the present study; also see Flores Salgado 2011:84 where seven reasons for 'opt out' are made available to the participants to examine their motive(s) for opting out)[6]. As pointed earlier in chapter (4), participants in the two language groups (English vs. Kuwaiti Arabic) did not always share the same familiarity rating regarding the situations in the DCT. The rating questionnaire prior to the DCT presented pairs of two different request situational scenarios depicting the same values of the three social variables ('Power', 'Distance' and 'Imposition'). In each pair, the participants had to select the scenario which they perceive as more familiar. In the pairs where the English participants rated a scenario as more familiar different from that selected by the KA participants, the selection of the KA participants was considered (the rationale for this selection is discussed in chapter four). As a consequence, the BE participants are expected to opt-out more frequently due to decreased familiarity with some of the situations in the DCT relative to the KA participants.

[6] However, the studies where opting-out is included do not explicitly discuss the rationale for participants' use of this option (at least nothing that I have come across).

However, the BE participants opted-out in only two instances (table (2) above) which suggests that they were able to highly relate to the DCT situations.

Secondly, opting out is presented in Brown and Levinson's model (1978) as a technique to save face (particularly S's positive face represented by his/her need to be embraced and not rejected by others), represented in the strategy 'do not perform the FTA' (see chapter two). In situations where the request is more likely to evoke non-compliance by the requestee, the requester can avoid losing his/her positive face by refraining from making the request in the first place. In this respect, Flores Salgado (2011) explains the need for including 'opting out' in the data elicitation instrument as follows:

> "The decision to opt out has two potential meanings: (1) intentional non-performance due to relevant contextual factors, and (2) inability to carry out an act because of either limited proficiency in a language or limited familiarity with the situation". (Flores Salgado 2011:54)

At the initial stages of outlining the DCT for the present study there was some concern that participants may not use the opting out choice for the same purposes intended by the researcher. For instance, participants may choose to opt out in high imposition situations where the cognitive load for producing the target request is more demanding, especially in the case of learners who are not responding to the DCT in their L1. In fact, Rose and Ono (1995:205) argue that

most ILP studies on SA production do not offer the 'opting-out' option, most likely due to fear of not obtaining the targeted data. Rose and Ono themselves did not include 'opting-out' in their DCT elicitation task (though it was included in the Multiple Choice Questionnaire (MCQ). However, from the comments provided by some participants in the present data it seems that opting-out served its intended functions. Consider the following examples:

(10) *I think I will take her notes at the end of the lecture and copy everything she wrote (much easier)+ I will not cause interruption to the class.* (ADL-15-sit.3)

Response to situation (3), where S asks H for an extra pen and some paper.

(11) *Will never ask.* (INL-6-sit.6)

Response to situation (6), where S asks a friend to bring some medicine from abroad and carry them in hand-luggage.

(12) *I do not request of her but I will write a preliminary report and give it to the employee and ask her to edit it.* (KA-22-sit.9)

Response to situation (9), where S asks his/her employee to prepare a presentation a week earlier than scheduled.

These examples show that participants opted out because they would not normally produce a request if put in the same situation described in the DCT (cf. Otcu and Zeyrek 2008 who also made opting-out available for similar intentions;

see also Rose and Ono 1995 where participants selected the 'opting-out' option in the multiple choice questionnaire (MCQ) more in hearer-dominant situations than in speaker-dominant or equal power situations). In examples (10) and (12) above, the participants even provided alternative actions that they would actually perform in a similar situation.

Furthermore, there seems to be some kind of relation between choosing not to produce the target request and the social variables embodied in the situations (see the next section on the effect of the social variables 'Power', 'Distance' and 'Imposition' on request strategy choice). For example, participants tended to opt out more in situations involving high imposition requests than in situations of low imposition requests. Participants in the KA group and the two NNS groups opted out almost three times more in situations of high imposition requests than in situations of low imposition requests (see table (10) below, also table (11). Likewise, participants in the BE control group never opted out in situations of low imposition requests.

The 'Power' variable seems to have a similar influence on participants' choosing to opt out. With the exception of the ADL group, opting out is observed more in hearer-dominant situations (S<H) and situations where S and H are equals in status (S=H) than in speaker-dominant situations (S>H) (see table (8) below). It seems that participants found it less challenging to perform a request to a

subordinate addressee, since the addressee might feel obliged, more or less, to comply with the request out of respect for the requester's high status. This is the case in situations such as (1) (a professor asking a student to pass around handouts) and (4) (a boss asking his/her assistant to call in for a staff meeting). In these situations which both involve a low imposition request, none of the participants opted out (only one participant opted out in situation (1) in the ADL group and one participant opted out in situation (4) in the INL group, see table (11) below). Thus, using the opting-out option in some hearer-dominant situations and those with a high imposition request in the present data seems analogous to Brown and Levinson's strategy of 'do not do the FTA' (see chapter two). This further supports Brown and Levinson's proposal on the combined effect of the social variables Power (P), Distance (D) and Ranking of Imposition (R) in assessing the weight of the Face Threatening Act (FTA). The assessment of the FTA weight shapes the formation of the request in question, including the choice of strategy and the extent to which mitigating devices (external and internal modification) are used.

Although the social variables 'Imposition' and 'Power' seem to have motivated the opting-out option in some instances in the present data, participants' responses were not similarly affected by the 'Distance' variable. Supposedly, requesting from an addressee with whom the requester is not familiar is expected to be more challenging. In this case, the requester and the requestee are not bound by a relationship which they both need to maintain, and this might make it

easier for the requestee to decline the request. Following Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory, speakers are expected to increase the politeness level of the request strategy employed and the request mitigation devices when addressing an unfamiliar requestee (see chapters two and four). However, participants in the present study used opting-out, which is the most polite strategy in Brown and Levinson's model (i.e. 'do not do the FTA'), more when addressing a familiar requestee (-D), as illustrated in table (9) below. While this finding contradicts the hypothesized pattern, the participants in the present study might have deemed a greater chance of face damage when addressing a familiar addressee. Since S and H are already connected with one another here, a high imposition request might compromise that connection, especially when H cannot comply with the request for some reason. Looking at individual situations in the present study lends some support to this argument (table (11) below). The two situations where opting-out was most used in the present study are situation (6) (S asks his/her friend to bring over some medicines from abroad and carry them in hand-luggage) and situation (10) (S asks his/her professor who is familiar with him/her from a previous course for an extension on a term paper, see table (11) below). Both situations involve a high imposition request addressed to a familiar addressee. However, the argument here remains indecisive considering the intricately combined effect of the three variables in each situation. In the absence of introspective data where participants comment on their own performance (see chapter three on verbal reports data), we cannot specify for sure which variable had the most compelling effect on participants' choices.

2. The Use of Request Strategies in Relation to the Three Social Variables: 'Power', 'Distance' and 'Imposition'

Having discussed the use of each of the request strategies that occurred in the present data, this section discusses the effect of the three variables *(P)*, *(D)* and *(R)* on participants' choice of request strategy.

2.1. 'Power' and Request Strategy Choice

According to Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory, speakers are expected to select more polite and hence less direct strategies in the requestive situations where the power of the hearer is greater than the speaker (see chapter two). The results of the present study conform to this pattern (see also Fukushima 2000). Considering the most direct strategy MD, this strategy was used 37.8% of the time in the KA data and the INL data, and 32.2% in the ADL data in speaker-dominant situations. By contrast, MD requests were used only 5.6% of the time in the KA control data and the INL data, and 12.2% in the ADL data in hearer-dominant situations (see table (8) below).

Power	Request Strategy	Group							
		KA		INL		ADL		BE	
		%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
S < H	No HA	7.8	7	7.8	6	3.3	3	2.2	1
	MD	5.6	5	5.6	9	12.2	11	6.7	3
	Performative	.0	0	.0	2	1.1	1	2.2	1
	LD	1.1	1	1.1	2	.0	0	.0	0
	WS	12.2	6	6.7	7	6.7	6	4.4	2
	Preparatory	65.6	64	71.1	63	71.1	64	75.6	34
	Hint	7.8	7	7.8	1	5.6	5	8.9	4
S = H	No HA	7.5	9	7.5	7	6.7	8	1.7	1
	MD	7.5	9	7.5	3	2.5	3	1.7	1
	Performative	1.7	2	1.7	2	1.7	2	.0	0
	LD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	WS	11.7	13	10.8	4	6.7	8	0	0
	Preparatory	70.0	85	70.8	104	82.5	99	96.7	58
	Hint	1.7	2	1.7	0	0	0	0	0
S > H	No HA	2.2	2	2.2	2	3.3	3	.0	0
	MD	37.8	34	37.8	35	32.2	29	8.9	4
	Performative	.0	0	.0	0	1.1	1	4.4	2
	LD	6.7	6	6.7	9	4.4	4	.0	0
	WS	13.3	9	10.0	9	12.2	11	4.4	2
	Preparatory	40.0	39	43.3	34	46.7	42	82.2	37
	Hint	.0	0	.0	1	.0	0	.0	0

Table (8): The use of each request strategy in relation to 'Power'.

Similar results on the relation between the directness of the request strategy and the power of S relative to H are obtained in other SA studies. For example, the basic and intermediate Mexican EFL learners in Flores Salgado 's (2011) study also employed significantly more direct strategies in speaker-dominant situations than in hearer dominant and equal-status situations. Direct requests were used more in (S>H) situations than in (S<H). Umar (2004) also found a notable preference for using direct strategies in situations where S is higher in status than H. Likewise, Scarcella (1979) observed that indirectness of the selected request strategy varied according to power differential in the situation. More indirectness (conventionally indirect strategies) was detected in the hearer-dominant situation (H is the boss) especially in the English NS control data and the high-level Arabic learners of ESL. Apparently, in situations where S has more social power/status than H, S can communicate authority relatively more freely by using direct strategies more frequently. Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily (2012:91) also found that the Saudi Arabic NSs preferred direct requests in situations where S is manifesting his/her power as superior to H or in situations where both S and H are close friends.

While the most direct strategy is ranked as least polite in Brown and Levinson's model, the least direct strategy (non-conventionally indirect strategy hints) bears the most politeness. This prediction is not entirely contradicted by the results of the present study. Participants in the present study indeed used more hints in hearer-dominant situations than in speaker-dominant and (S=H) and situations

(cf. Beebe and Takahashi 1989 on the greater use of hinting in situations of lower status speakers addressing higher status hearers by Japanese speakers). For example, and as illustrated in table (8) above, no hints were used in speaker-dominant situations (except for a single hint in the INL data).

However, the use of hints in hearer-dominant situations in the present study did not always follow from the pattern predicted by Brown and Levinson. This was the case in situation (10), for instance, where S asks his/her professor for an extension on a term paper. As reported in table (11) below, none of the participants in the present study used hints in situation (10) which clearly constitutes a hearer-dominant situation. However, in situation (5) which also represents a clear hearer-dominant situation (S asks the professor to revise an incorrectly marked answer) hints were used more generously. In fact, there were more hints in situation (5) than any other situation in the present data. This discrepancy in the use of hints between situations (5) and (10) which both reflect a hearer-dominant scenario could be attributed to the effect of other factors such as the nature of request in each situation and the 'Distance' variable. The interaction between the variables in each situation and how one variable can override the other variables in the situation and affects participants' responses will be elaborated on later in this chapter when the use of request strategies in each situation is discussed (cf. Fukushima 2000; Holtgraves and Yang 1992 on how variables interact with each other to determine the overall weight of the impositive act).

As the use of direct strategies subsided and the use of non-conventionally indirect strategy mounted generally in (S<H) situations, the use of the conventionally indirect strategy also increased in such situations. In fact, preparatory requests were more dominant in (S<H) situations across all participant groups. The high frequency of using preparatory requests in (S<H) situations is rather expected, since this strategy represents a *negative*-politeness style of communication (see chapter two). By using a *negative*-politeness strategy, S seeks to convey deference towards H.

Preparatory requests were also the most used strategy in (S=H) situations, although in such situations the predicted communicative style is to use *positive*-politeness strategies (see chapter two on *positive* vs. *negative* politeness). By employing a positive politeness strategy, S aims to expresses solidarity and reinforces affiliation with members of the group (cf. Konakahara 2011; Fukushima 1996; Marti 2007). This can be achieved be using strategies such as direct requests which show that there are no boundaries of distance between S and H and use of endearment terms such as '*dear*'. This was the case in Scarcella's (1979) English NSs control data where more imperatives were detected in the situation where S and H are friends.

It seems from the invariable distribution of preparatory requests in different power-allocation situations (speaker-dominant, hearer-dominant, and S=H) in the

present data that the politeness associated with the conventionally indirect strategy is compatible with a wide range of requestive situations. This challenges Brown and Levinson where extreme indirectness (hints) is associated with utmost politeness (cf. Pinker 2007; Pinker *et al.* 2008). Findings from the present study and other request studies promote an alternative connection between indirectness and politeness. It is not absolute indirectness per se but rather *conventional* indirectness that can communicate the most level of politeness (cf. Stadler 2010; Bou-Franch and Gracés-Conejos 2003, Marti 2007; among many others).

From another perspective, the use of the preparatory strategy here might not be entirely a matter of attending to the social variable 'Power' but also a feature of the IL. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, 'Preparatory' seems to be a universal request strategy, though different languages sometimes employ different linguistic forms in realizing it. For example, querying H's ability to do the requested act as in "*Can/Could you do X?*" is more conventional in English, whereas querying H's possibility "*Is it possible for you to do X?*" is more conventional in KA.

As far as the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence is concerned, the invariable use of 'Preparatory' across all three power-allocations suggests that the learners might have overgeneralized the use of this strategy. In other words, the learners

might have not noticed the relation between the use of conventionally indirect strategy and *negative politeness* (where S is supposed to communicate his/her respect to H's autonomy, see chapter two). Thus the learners end up overusing a negative politeness strategy for the situations where a *positive politeness* strategy is believed to be more appropriate (as in S=H situations where S needs to reinforce in-group relations between him/her-self and H). As such, Bialystok's proposal on the importance of *control of processing* to relevant TL input in adult L2 pragmatic development and Schmidt's argument on *noticing* as condition for acquisition are both evoked here (see chapter one).

2.2. 'Distance' and Request Strategy Choice

The present data revealed some influence of the social distance between the requester and the requestee on participants' choice of request strategy. As illustrated in table (9) below, the KA participants (in both the L1 control group and the two NNS groups) opted for nearly twice as many direct requests in situations where S and H are familiar (*-D*) than in situations where S and H are unfamiliar (*+D*). This supports Brown and Levinson where direct requests as perceived as expressing *positive politeness* (see chapter two on Brown and Levinson).

Distance	Request Strategy	Group							
		KA		INL		ADL		BE	
		%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
(-D) Familiar	No HA	7.2%	13	8.3%	15	5.6%	10	2.2%	2
	MD	21.1%	38	21.7%	39	18.3%	33	5.6%	5
	Performative	1.1%	2	2.2%	4	1.1%	2	.0%	0
	LD	3.9%	7	5.6%	10	2.2%	4	.0%	0
	WS	13.9%	25	8.3%	15	10.6%	19	3.3%	3
	Preparatory	50.6%	91	53.3%	96	61.7%	111	87.8%	79
	Hint	2.2%	4	.6%	1	.6%	1	1.1%	1
(+D) Unfamiliar	No HA	4.2%	5	.0%	0	3.3%	4	.0%	0
	MD	8.3%	10	6.7%	8	8.3%	10	5.0%	3
	Performative	.0%	0	.0%	0	1.7%	2	5.0%	3
	LD	.0%	0	.8%	1	.0%	0	.0%	0
	WS	3.3%	4	4.2%	5	5.0%	6	1.7%	1
	Preparatory	80.0%	96	87.5%	105	78.3%	94	83.3%	50
	Hint	4.2%	5	.8%	1	3.3%	4	5.0%	3

Table (9): The use of each request strategy in relation to 'Distance'.

The use of fewer direct strategies in (+D) situations by participants in the present study is in line with the findings of other request studies. For example, in Umar's study, the advanced Arab learners used more MD requests in the situation where S is requesting from his younger brother, hence (-D). In Marquéz-Reiter's (2002 as cited in Meier 2010:81) comparative study of requests produced by peninsular

Spanish NSs vs. Uruguayan Spanish NSs elicited via unstructured role plays (see chapter three on RP as data elicitation instrument), a negative correlation was found between use of directness and social distance between S and H in the situation. Likewise, in Le Pair's (1996) study the participants used more direct strategies in low social distance situations and more indirect strategies in high social distance situations[7].

Fukushima's (2000) findings oppose the pattern observed in the present study and the abovementioned studies where the use of direct requests decreased when requesting from an unfamiliar addressee. Contrary to Brown and Levinson's (1978) claims on the effect of 'Distance' variable, participants in Fukushima's study used more direct requests in (+D) situations. In explaining her findings, Fukushima argues that it is more difficult for speakers to assess the social distance between themselves and the addressee than the power-differential and the imposition of the request. Furthermore, the considerations of social distance could overlap with those of social power, as both variables involve components such as age and social status. For example, close friends

[7] Rose and Ono (1995) administered a preliminary questionnaire where they asked participants to list the last six request situations they have encountered. The most frequently reported situations will be selected for the next data elicitation task. Rose and Ono found that only 2 out of the 180 elicited responses depicted situations that could be characterized as (+D). This finding shows that requesters are generally not comfortable making requests to unfamiliar requestees. If they do they need to perform a request in such a condition, they tend to resort to mitigation either via request strategy choice (for example, by using less direct strategies as discussed above) or use of modification (external and/or internal), or both. In fact, 'Distance' variable was not investigated in Rose and Ono's study (cf. Schauer 2009 who only investigated 'Power' variable (hearer-dominant and S=H) and 'Imposition' variable (high vs. low).

with minimal social distance (-D) usually have the same age and similar roles in the society, hence (S=H).

Another trend in the present study is that the use of 'Preparatory' visibly increased in (+D) situations (especially in the KA data and the learners' data), which also is in line with Brown and Levinson's (1978) claims (see chapter two of the present study). When the S and the H are not familiar with one another, they are expected to use strategies which emphasize the S's respect to the H's personal space and his/her need to feel free from imposition (hence *negative politeness* strategies). This is what strategies such as conventionally indirect requests achieve. As discussed in chapter two, the requestive intent is not expressed directly which shows H that S acknowledges his/her need to be free from imposition, though conventionality sustains the illocutionary force of the request. On the other hand, direct strategies appeal to H's *positive face*, his/her need to feel affiliated with the group. By expressing the requestive intent directly, S communicates affiliation to H and that there is no real need to use formal language between the two.

2.3. 'Imposition' and Request Strategy Choice

According to Brown and Levinson (1978), the most direct strategy MD bears the least degree of politeness (on bald on-record strategy). Marti (2007), comparing her results from Turkish NSs with the results of previous research, also found the

strategy MD to be equally rated as least polite across three L1 groups: English, Hebrew and Turkish. Such a relation between utmost directness and impoliteness was supported by results of the present data as MD requests were used minimally in situations with high imposition requests (see table (10) below, see also Fukushima 2000).

Imposition	Request Strategy	Group							
		KA		INL		ADL		BE	
		%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Low (-R)	No HA	3.3%	6	2.2%	4	2.8%	5	.0%	0
	MD	18.9%	34	20.6%	37	17.8%	32	8.9%	8
	Performative	.0%	0	.6%	1	.6%	1	3.3%	3
	LD	.6%	1	1.1%	2	.0%	0	.0%	0
	WS	6.1%	11	4.4%	8	4.4%	8	2.2%	2
	Preparatory	67.2%	121	70.6%	127	71.7%	129	81.1%	73
	Hint	3.9%	7	.6%	1	2.8%	5	4.4%	4
High (+R)	No HA	10.0%	12	9.2%	11	7.5%	9	3.3%	2
	MD	11.7%	14	8.3%	10	9.2%	11	.0%	0
	Performative	1.7%	2	2.5%	3	2.5%	3	.0%	0
	LD	5.0%	6	7.5%	9	3.3%	4	.0%	0
	WS	15.0%	18	10.0%	12	14.2%	17	3.3%	2
	Preparatory	55.0%	66	61.7%	74	63.3%	76	93.3%	56
	Hint	1.7%	2	.8%	1	.0%	0	.0%	0

Table (10): The use of each request strategy in relation to the (*R*) variable.

As illustrated in table (10) above, the strategy MD is used almost twice as many in situations of low imposition requests than in situations of high imposition requests (cf. Koike 1989 where the participants, beginner-level American learners of Spanish, provided more unmarked commands in the request situation posing a lower imposition). In the same respect, participants in the BE control who produced the lowest percentage of MD requests throughout their data did not use MD at all in any of the high imposition situations and only used this strategy in low imposition situations. Flores Salgado (2011:86) observed a similar pattern in her tape-recorded data, elicited from Mexican EFL learners and American English NSs via an adaptation of the Cartoon Oral Production Task (COPT) which is originally designed by Rose (2000) (see chapter three on Rose's (2000) study and Flores Salgado 's (2011) study). In Flores Flores Salgado 's data, indirect strategies were more frequently used in situation (2), requesting from a man to put out his cigarette, and situation (9), requesting a co-worker to go back to work, both involving a higher degree of imposition for all five participant groups: the American English NSs control, the Mexican Spanish NSs control, the Mexican basic-level learners of English, the Mexican intermediate-level learners and the Mexican advanced-level learners.

While in the present study the use of MD strategy in high imposition situations corroborates Brown and Levinson's hypothesized pattern, the use of the other direct strategies: Performative, WS and LD, did not. For example, the strategies WS and LD were used more in the KA control data and the learners' data in (+R)

situations than in (-R) situations (cf. Schauer 2009 where English NSs produced more WS requests in high imposition scenarios). Likewise, the least direct strategy hints which is expected to occur more in high imposition situations was actually used more in low imposition situations in the present study[8] (in the BE data, the KA data and the ADL data). This was also observed in other studies, such as Schauer (2009:159) where none of the German learners of English or the English NSs used hints in high imposition situations. Schauer argues that the requesters here might have preferred to be more explicit to avoid any misunderstanding on the part of the requestee in understanding the target request. That combined with the mitigative effect of different supportive moves that requesters can employ in such high imposition requests can explain why hints were not frequently used by the participants in high imposition situation as predicted by Brown and Levinson (chapter two). Furthermore, and as observed above in relation to the other social variables 'Power' and 'Distance', these findings could be a result of the interaction of all three variables in the situation, which is the topic of discussion in the next section. Furthermore, Warga (2004 as cited in Schauer 2009:139) contends that in cases where the use of request strategies does not follow from the pattern predicted by Brown and Levinson (1978) whereby less direct requests, the role of the other elements in the request should be considered, namely supportive moves which contribute to the overall politeness value of the request utterance.

[8] Hints should be handled with extra caution in the analysis. As pointed earlier when discussing non-conventionally indirect strategies, not all utterances coded as hints represent actual hints. Sometimes the researcher (or coder) is inclined to code a certain utterance as 'hint' mainly because it lacks the distinguishable syntactic and semantic properties of the other direct or conventionally indirect strategies, as long as a request can still be inferred from such an utterance.

3. The Use of Strategies in Individual Situations

A review of the responses to individual situations in the present study (table (11) below) illustrates the effect of three social variables: 'Power', 'Distance' and 'Imposition' on the use of request strategies. Such a review provides further support for how these variables interact in building up the overall weight of the Face-Threatening Act (FTA) as Brown and Levinson (1978) hypothesize (see chapter two).

Situation	Request Strategy	Group							
		KA		INL		ADL		BE	
		%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
1	No HA	.0%	0	.0%	0	3.3%	1	.0%	0
	MD	30.0%	9	26.7%	8	30.0%	9	20.0%	3
	Performative	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	13.3%	2
	LD	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
	WS	.0%	0	.0%	0	3.3%	1	.0%	0
	Preparatory	70.0%	21	73.3%	22	63.3%	19	66.7%	10
	Hint	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
2	No HA	3.3%	1	3.3%	1	6.7%	2	.0%	0
	MD	13.3%	4	3.3%	1	.0%	0	6.7%	1
	Performative	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
	LD	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
	WS	13.3%	4	3.3%	1	.0%	0	.0%	0
	Preparatory	70.0%	21	90.0%	27	93.3%	28	93.3%	14
	Hint	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
3	No HA	6.7%	2	.0%	0	6.7%	2	.0%	0
	MD	3.3%	1	.0%	0	3.3%	1	.0%	0
	Performative	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
	LD	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0

	WS	3.3%	1	3.3%	1	3.3%	1	.0%	0
	Preparatory	86.7%	26	96.7%	29	86.7%	26	100%	15
	Hint	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
4	No HA	.0%	0	3.3%	1	.0%	0	.0%	0
	MD	56.7%	17	66.7%	20	43.3%	13	6.7%	1
	Performative	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
	LD	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
	WS	10.0%	3	6.7%	2	6.7%	2	.0%	0
	Preparatory	33.3%	10	23.3%	7	50.0%	15	93.3%	14
	Hint	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
5	No HA	3.3%	1	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
	MD	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
	Performative	.0%	0	.0%	0	3.3%	1	6.7%	1
	LD	.0%	0	3.3%	1	.0%	0	.0%	0
	WS	6.7%	2	13.3%	4	10.0%	3	6.7%	1
	Preparatory	76.7%	23	80.0%	24	73.3%	22	66.7%	10
	Hint	13.3%	4	3.3%	1	13.3%	4	20.0%	3
6	No HA	13.3%	4	20.0%	6	10.0%	3	6.7%	1
	MD	13.3%	4	6.7%	2	6.7%	2	.0%	0
	Performative	6.7%	2	6.7%	2	3.3%	1	.0%	0
	LD	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
	WS	23.3%	7	6.7%	2	20.0%	6	.0%	0
	Preparatory	40.0%	12	60.0%	18	60.0%	18	93.3%	14
	Hint	3.3%	1	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
7	No HA	6.7%	2	6.7%	2	.0%	0	.0%	0
	MD	10.0%	3	26.7%	8	30.0%	9	20.0%	3
	Performative	.0%	0	3.3%	1	.0%	0	.0%	0
	LD	3.3%	1	3.3%	1	.0%	0	.0%	0
	WS	3.3%	1	.0%	0	3.3%	1	6.7%	1
	Preparatory	66.7%	20	60.0%	18	63.3%	19	66.7%	10
	Hint	10.0%	3	.0%	0	3.3%	1	6.7%	1
8	No HA	6.7%	2	.0%	0	3.3%	1	.0%	0
	MD	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
	Performative	.0%	0	.0%	0	3.3%	1	.0%	0
	LD	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
	WS	3.3%	1	.0%	0	3.3%	1	.0%	0
	Preparatory	86.7%	26	100%	30	90.0%	27	100%	15
	Hint	3.3%	1	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0

9	No HA	6.7%	2	3.3%	1	6.7%	2	.0%	0
	MD	26.7%	8	23.3%	7	23.3%	7	.0%	0
	Performative	.0%	0	.0%	0	3.3%	1	.0%	0
	LD	20.0%	6	30.0%	9	13.3%	4	.0%	0
	WS	20.0%	6	23.3%	7	26.7%	8	13.3%	2
	Preparatory	26.7%	8	16.7%	5	26.7%	8	86.7%	13
	Hint	.0%	0	3.3%	1	.0%	0	.0%	0
10	No HA	13.3%	4	13.3%	4	10.0%	3	6.7%	1
	MD	6.7%	2	3.3%	1	6.7%	2	.0%	0
	Performative	.0%	0	3.3%	1	.0%	0	.0%	0
	LD	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0
	WS	13.3%	4	10.0%	3	6.7%	2	.0%	0
	Preparatory	66.7%	20	70.0%	21	76.7%	23	93.3%	14
	Hint	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0

Table (11): The use of each request strategy in each individual situation.

For example, in situation (1), a professor asking a student to pass around some handouts, and situation (4), a boss asking his/her assistant to call in for a meeting, both situations involving a low imposition request and a speaker who is superior to the hearer, none of the participants in any group used the least direct strategy hint. The use of the most direct strategy MD was also relatively high in these situations. For example, in situation (4) MD requests were used more than any other situation in the present study, particularly in the KA data and the learners' data. Apparently, due to the high status of S (as boss or professor) and low imposition of the request (-*R*) there was no real need to perform the request with the high level of politeness associated with hints in Brown and Levinson's viewpoint.

The other speaker-dominant situation in the present study is situation (9), where a boss is asking his/her employee to prepare a presentation a week earlier than scheduled. Participants in the KA control group and the two NNS groups used more direct strategies (MD, LD and WS) in this situation although the request involved is of high imposition. The increase in the use of direct strategies in situation (9) despite the high imposition of the target request implies that participants in this situation were more attentive to the 'Power' variable. In other words, the higher status of S as the employer somehow permits his/her use of direct strategies in addressing the subordinate employee, especially when the task involved falls under the addressee's responsibilities. This demonstrates that one variable, 'Power' in this case, can override the other social variables operative within a single situation, especially in hierarchy-oriented cultures/societies (cf. Rose and Ono 1995; also Fukushima 2000 on the complex interaction of social variables in a single situation).

As such, it would be expected that in hearer-dominant situations, participants would use fewer direct strategies and more indirect strategies. This was not always the case in the three hearer-dominant situations in the present study, which include: situation (5), a student asking a professor to revise an incorrectly marked answer, situation (10), a student asking a professor for an extension on a term paper, and situation (7), an applicant asking the employee in charge to update him/her with results of the application. Although hints were used in situation (5) more than any other situation in the present data, hints were never

used in situation (10), though in both situations the request is addressed to a university professor. This finding could be explained in terms of the nature of the request involved in each situation. Situation (5) is intended in the research design to reflect a low imposition request[9] (cf. Konakahara 2011 who used the same situation to represent (-R) request). The professor is responsible for the grading mistake which justifies the student's right to make the request in the first place. However, participants in the present study apparently did not treat the request in situation (5) as low imposition. Though an assessment of participants' perceptions of the degree of imposition of each request in the present study was not carried out which makes it difficult to state precisely how impositive a certain request was perceived, participants' responses to situation (5) strongly suggest that the request was assessed as (+R). The observation that participants from both L1 backgrounds responded to this particular situation in a similar manner, for example by using more hints than the other situations and no MD requests, implies that the two societies (KA and BE) share similar perceptions of the status of academics, whereby academics are highly esteemed. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1996; see also Al-Ali and Alawneh 2010; also Alba-Juez 2007) observe a similar trend, arguing that the high status of faculty members comes from their position at the top of the academic institution. They have control over their students' grades and hence destiny (in passing or failing the course). Although the student is entitled to make the request in such a situation, acknowledging a

[9] As pointed earlier in chapter (4) when discussing the situations in the present study, other studies have employed situational scenarios that are similar to situation (5), for example situation (3) in Konakahara (2011) which also represents (S<H) power differential and (-R) request. However, participants' responses are usually reported in terms of request strategy use and not discussed in relation to individual situations as in the present study.

mistake done by an addressee of such a high status makes the request even more serious. In fact, participants' assessment of the high imposition of the request in situation (5) was observed not only in the request strategy choice but also in the linguistic means used to realize the request strategy (verb choice). Although the situational description specifies the target request as "*You ask the professor to revise your grade*", many participants performed the request using an alternative verb, as in the following examples:

(13) Doctor, is it possible for us to *discuss* my exam paper together? (KA-4-sit.5)

(14) Can you *review* my exam please? (INL-2-sit.5)

Furthermore, the choice of request strategy in situation (5) as opposed to situation (10) could be assessed in terms of the nature of the request involved. In the cases where the participants chose to perform the request in situation (5) using a hint, they often did so by pointing the mistake in grading to the professor. It is not difficult for a rational requestee to realize the next step, an action whereby the grading mistake is rectified. This is not equally applicable to the request in situation (10). If the requester states, for instance, that s/he has not finished writing up the paper due soon, such a statement could be inferred as an apology for failing to meet the deadline assigned. Therefore, and to guarantee the realization of a request and not any other SA, S has to be more specific and explicate that s/he is seeking an extension past the deadline. This is how the

majority of the participants performed the request in this particular situation, either by using conventionally indirect preparatory strategy or direct WS. Nevertheless, and without retrospective feedback from the participants commenting on their request strategy choice in each situation, the above argument remains suggestive rather than conclusive.

Similar to situation (10), more MD requests were used in situation (7) than hints although the addressee has greater power than the speaker here (the addressee is in charge of processing the speaker's application). Situations such as situation (7) in the present study seem to represent routinized situations (Marti 2007:66). It is rather a standard in such a context for the applicant to ask to be notified of the outcome of his/her application. Thus, the overall imposition of the act requested in such situations becomes less face-threatening (although in situation (7) the request is intended as (-R) already).

The three (S=H) situations in the present study similarly demonstrated an intricate intervention of the variables on participants' choice of request strategy. Situation (8), a student asking another student to borrow his/her lecture notes, represents (+R) and (+D). In this situation, participants did not use hints (only one hint occurred in the KA data) and direct requests were also minimally used. The preparatory strategy was the most used request strategy in this situation, ranging from 86.7% in the KA data, 100% in INL data and the BE data, and 90%

in the ADL data. The high distribution of the conventionally indirect strategy here which demonstrates a negative politeness strategy by showing deference to H's personal space (negative face, see chapter two) suggests that participants were trying to reduce the imposition of the request rather than show affiliation with H as a fellow member of the same group (classmates in the same course).

Situation (6) represents another interesting example of how the three social variables come to interact. Although the request was of high imposition, it seems easier to address such a request to a familiar addressee (-D) who is similar to the speaker in status (S=H). Participants used a relatively high number of direct strategies (especially in the KA group and the two NNS groups) as opposed to one hint that occurred in the data in this situation (in the KA control group). However, participants opted-out more in this situation than any other situation in the present study.

From another perspective, there seems to be a relation between the nature of the request involved in each situation and the type of preparatory strategy being used. In situations where the request requires some action on the part of H, participants showed a preference for the *ability* preparatory sub-strategy, (see appendix table (1) on the use of each preparatory sub-strategy in each situation). On the other hand, in situations where the request involves the use of some item that belongs to S as in situation (2), where the S asks to borrow the H's mobile,

and situation (3), where the S asks the H for an extra pen and some paper, and situation (8), where the S asks the H to borrow his/her lecture notes, participants opted for the *permission* preparatory sub-strategy to a larger extent.

The effect of each variable on participants' choice of request strategy was statistically calculated. There was a significant main effect for the variables 'Power' and 'Distance' on participants' use of request strategies (p= 0.000 for each variable, see appendix tables (2) and (3). No such significant main effect was found in relation to the 'Imposition' variable (p= 0.431, see appendix table (4). This suggests that participants in the present study paid more attention to social distance relation between the requester and the requestee as well as the power differential between the two than the imposition of the request per se.

A significant main effect was also found for 'group' with reference to each of the three variables (p= 0.000, appendix tables (2), (3) and (4). That is to say participants in different groups differed in their assessment of the social variables and choice of strategy accordingly. The difference occurred more saliently between the two control groups, the KA and the BE (see the graphs and tables above). Fukushima (2000) also found differences in perceptions of power differential, social distance between S and H and the degree of imposition of the requested act between the British data and the Japanese data in her study. In fact, such assessments of situations are not only culture-specific but can

occasionally differ from one speaker to another within the same culture (hence learner-specific) and are also subject to situational variation (Fukushima 2000). As pointed earlier in chapter (4), participants in the two control groups in the present study had different ratings as regards the familiarity with the situations. This could have affected their perception of the values of the variables involved in each situation.

Having discussed the use of request strategies in the preset data and the relation between choice of request strategy and each of the three social variables of (P), (D) and (R), the next section concerns the use of external modification.

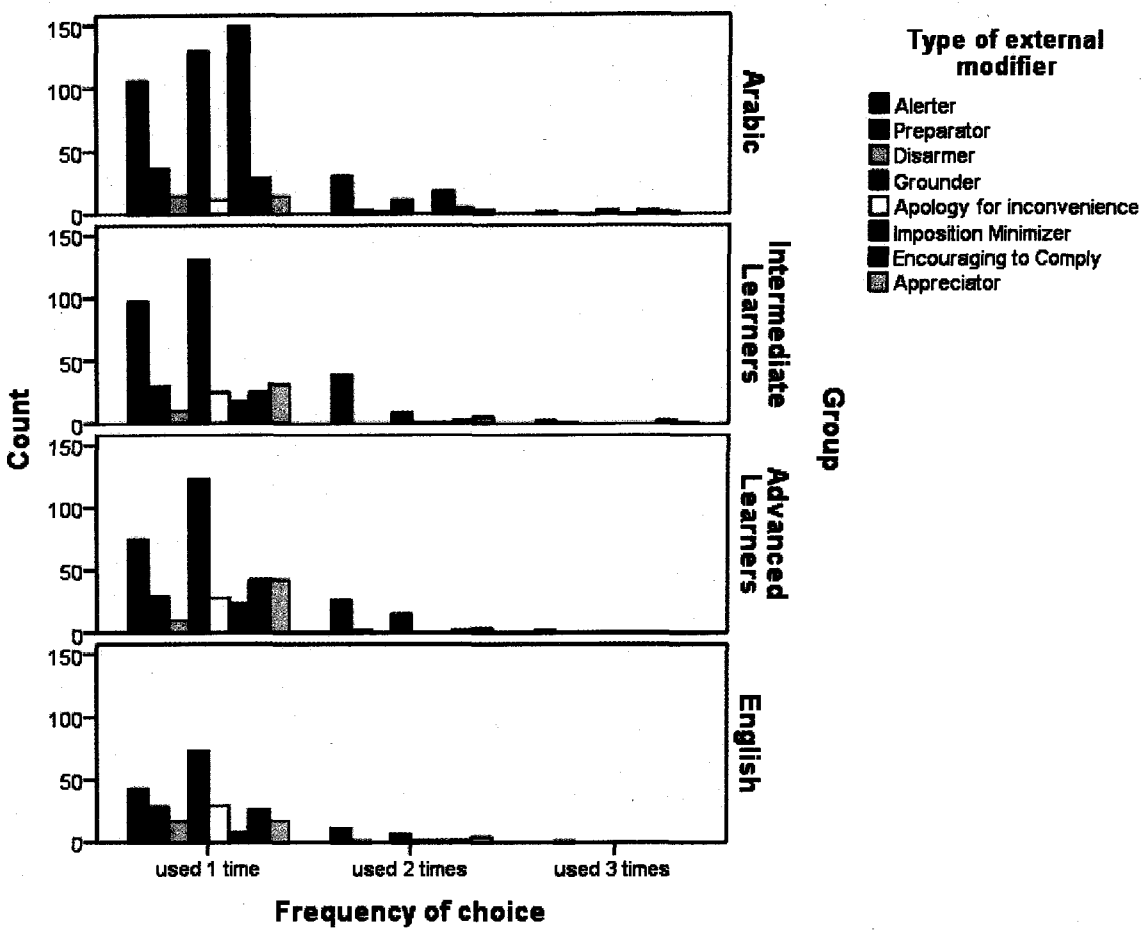
Section (2): External Modification Analysis

1. The Use of External Modifiers

This section delineates the use of request external modification in the present study and the relation between the use of external modifiers and the three social variables (P), (D) and (R).

1.1. Alerter

As discussed earlier in the coding manual for the present study (chapter five), the external modifier alerter has six sub-types: 'Title/Role', 'Name', 'Endearment term', 'Attention getter', 'Greetings', and 'Please' when occurring before the request proper. As illustrated in graph (12) and table (13) below, alerter is the second most occurring external modifier in the data of the two control groups and the ADL group. In the INL data, alerter is the most used external modifier type.



Graph (12): The use of each external modifier in each group'.

[1] A single type of external modifier can occur once, twice, three times within a single response. There were even very few cases where some external modifier types occurred up to four times or five times in a single response. Clearly, in the majority of cases, a single external modifier type occurred only once per response.

External Modifier	Group							
	KA		INL		ADL		BE	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Alerter	169	25.6%	181	36.5%	133	27.7%	65	22.0%
Preparator	42	6.4%	33	6.7%	33	6.9%	33	11.1%
Disarmer	16	2.4%	10	2.0%	12	2.5%	17	5.7%
Grounder	160	24.2%	147	29.6%	153	31.9%	85	28.7%
Apology for Inconvenience	11	1.7%	27	5.4%	30	6.3%	33	11.1%
Imposition Minimizer	198	30.0%	19	3.8%	25	5.2%	10	3.4%
Encouraging H to Comply	45	6.8%	35	7.1%	46	9.6%	28	9.5%
Appreciator	20	3.0%	44	8.9%	48	10.0%	25	8.4%

Table (13): The use of each external modifier in each group.

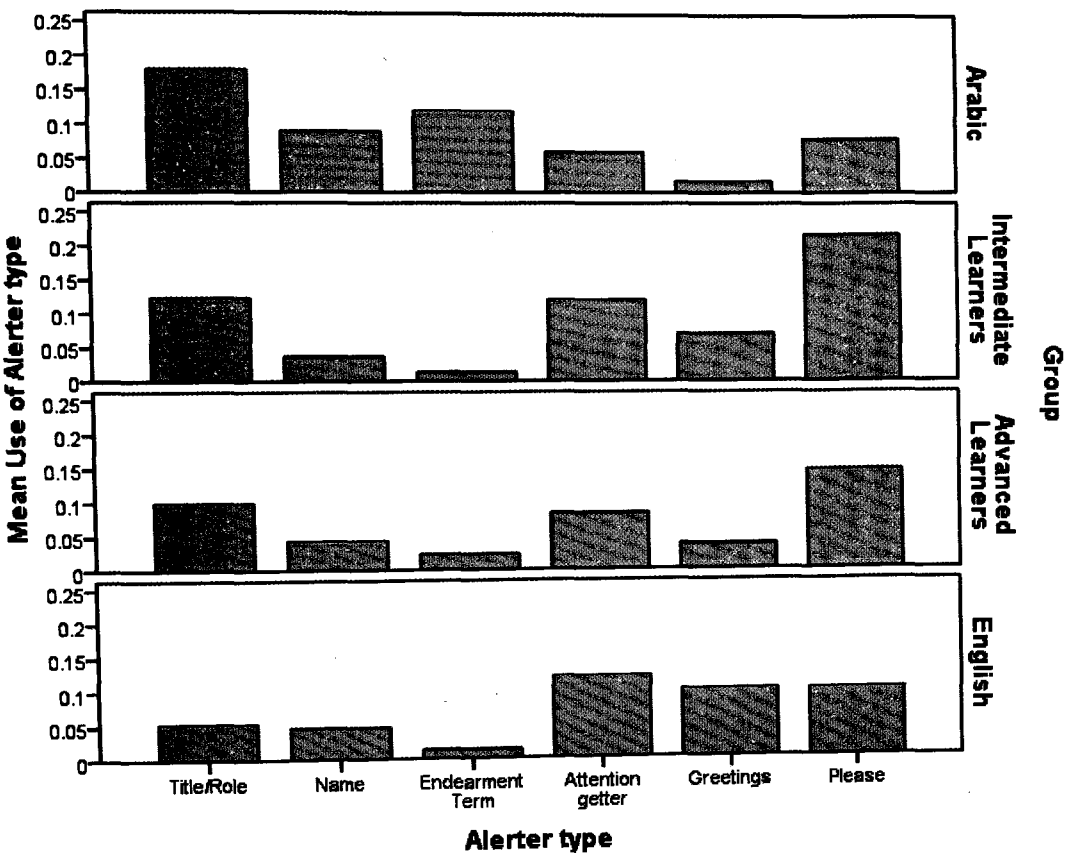
'Alerters' and 'Grounders' were also the most used external modifiers in the learners' data in other ILP studies on requests, for example Schauer (2007) (see also Konakahara 2011; Hassall 2001). In Schauer's study, alerters and grounders occurred early in the first data collection session, shortly after the participants arrived into the TL environment, which suggests that these external modifiers are acquired early at the FL/SL learning process.

Hassall (2001:273), considering research findings from other studies as well as his own, argues that learners seem to prefer the use of external modification to internal modification for a number of reasons. External modifiers are longer and derive their mitigative function explicitly from their propositional content which makes them reflect the intended politeness value more saliently. Secondly, external modifiers are added outside the HA (before or after it) opposed to internal modifiers which are inserted within the request proper (see chapter five). As such, using internal modifiers requires the learner to master the relevant grammatical rules for their placement within requests in the TL. On the other hand, the use of external modifiers such as 'Alerter', for instance, illustrated by types such as '*Attention getters*' as in *'excuse me'*, or '*Please'* at initial position, represent less of a challenge to the learners. According to Bardovi-Harlig's (2009:766) data on ESL learners' recognition of conventional expressions in the Target Language TL[2], '*excuse me*' was among the conventional expressions that are recognized by the learners as being 'often' heard in English. *Conventional expressions* in Bardovi-Harlig's study refer to fixed strings of words which are collocated with certain contexts among NSs of the TL (for example "*No problem*" in situations where S accepts the gratitude of H by diminishing self-credit, or *"Can I get a ride?"* for requesting the action specified). As such, native-like use of conventional expressions requires the learners to master not only *pragmalinguistic* knowledge (knowledge of linguistic forms being used) but also

[2] The learners in this study are from 11 different L1 backgrounds, one of which is Arabic (Bardovi-Harlig 2009:764).

sociopragmatic knowledge (knowledge of context(s) where the use of these linguistic forms is more appropriate; see chapter one).

The abovementioned six 'Alerter' types are examined bellow. Graph (14) and table (15) below illustrate the frequency of using each type in each participant group.



Graph (14): The use of each Alerter type in each group.

Alerter type	Group							
	KA		INL		ADL		BE	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Title/Role	18.0%	54	12.3%	37	10.0%	30	5.3%	8
Name	9.0%	27	3.7%	11	4.3%	13	4.7%	7
Endearment term	12.0%	36	1.3%	4	2.3%	7	1.3%	2
Attention getter	6.0%	18	12.0%	36	8.3%	25	12 %	18
Greetings	1.7%	5	7.0%	21	3.7%	11	10 %	15
Please	8.0%	24	21.7%	65	14.7%	44	10 %	15

Table (15): The use of each Alerter type in each group[3].

Clearly, the most used Alerter type in the KA control data is 'Title/role' whereas the most used Alerter type in the BE control is 'Attention getter', mostly the phrase '*excuse me*' which is quite common in request contexts (see Konakahara 2011 for similar results). Furthermore, participants in the KA control supplied the alerter type 'Endearment term' more than participants in the other groups. The use of this positive-politeness oriented modifier which taps on emphasizing solidarity between the interlocutors is in line with the assumption that Arab

[3] Note that the percentage in each cell in this table represents the use of the alerter type (coded as 1) as opposed to non-use (coded as 0). For example, in the first top cell from the left, the ALERTER type 'Title/Role' is used (18%) of the time and not used (82%) of the time which sums up to a total of 100%.

speakers pertain to *collectivist* cultures (see discussion in the previous section on communication style of collectivist vs. individualist cultures, also chapter two on positive vs. negative politeness). In collectivist cultures, the individual's affiliation with the other members of the same group is emphasized, which is also the function of positive-politeness strategies (cf. Scarcella 1979 on illustrations of positive-politeness strategies). On the other hand, the English NSs in the present study opted for using '*excuse me*' more frequently. Expressions such as excuse me serve to acknowledge the addressee's right to be free from intrusion, hence representing a negative-politeness strategy.

The alerter type 'Attention getter' was used more in the NNS's data than in the KA control data. This suggests that learners were able to notice that elements such as '*excuse me*' are common when performing requests in the TL, which accords with Schmidt's proposal on the role of *noticing* relevant TL input in acquiring L2 pragmatic competence (see chapter one) and Bialystok's argument on the role of *control of processing* task in adult learners. It seems that KA NNS's of English here were able to observe that elements such as '*excuse me*' are used more when making requests in English than in the L1, and implemented this observation in their production of requests in the TL. The same argument can apply in relation to the use of the alerter type 'Endearment term'. The use of 'Endearment term' in the NNS's data approximates the rate of using this alerter type in the BE data. Apparently, the NNS's seem to have noticed that using

'Endearment term' to make requests is not as common in TL English as it is in L1 KA.

The most used alerter type in both NNS groups in the present study is *'please'* (as well as equivalent lexical items such as *'kindly'* which occurred less frequently in the data than *'please'*; see also Martínez-Flor 2008:269 who found *'please'* to be one of the most commonly used modifiers in her study investigating requests and request modification in film data). The high frequency in using *'please'* in the NNS's data in the present study is also reported in other studies. For example, Soler *et al.* (2005) examine the findings of different ILP/CCP studies on the use of request modification and observe that lexical items such as *'please'* are commonly employed in mitigating requests in their data (both as external and/or internal modification) for a number for reasons. Due to its wide distribution in request data, *'please'* has become an explicit indicator for the illocutionary force of a request (Flores Salgado 2011). As the use of *'please'* unmistakably marks the speech act of requesting in the same manner as *directives* do (see chapter two on Searle's typology of Speech Acts), *'please'* serves not only to mitigate the request by bidding for the hearer's cooperation but also emphasizing the requestive intent of the speaker. A lexical item such as *'please'* has another unique feature. It can be placed at the beginning of the request proper, at the end or embedded within the request proper (see chapter five on *'please'* as external or internal modification). Scarcella (1979:284-5) also

observes that elements such as *'please'* often occur prior to directives and represent one of the earliest politeness strategies acquired by adult L2 learners.

In contrast, the use of lexical items carrying an equivalent meaning and/or function to *'please'* in the KA data is relatively infrequent (8%). Such items include for instance ['afya], a shortened form of ['āfya] which translates literally as 'well-being'. This form frequently collocates with requests in KA and serves to plea for the requestee's cooperation[4]. The alerter type *'please'* was also minimally used in the BE data (10%). The NNS's in the present study thus demonstrated a clear case of *overuse* of *'please'*, a phenomenon recognized in SA and ILP/CCP literature when the learners' percentage of using a certain strategy or form is higher (or lower hence *underuse*) than that of the NSs (cf. Barron 2003; Trosborg 1995; also Lin 2009:10; also Bardovi-Harlig 2009:774 on *overgeneralization* of a familiar expression). The fact that the NNS's in the present data used *'please'* more than participants in the both control groups suggests that the recurrent use of *'please'* is neither a feature transferred from L1 KA nor a trait of the TL English. Instead, the overuse of *'please'* here seems to be a feature of the IL, especially at the intermediate level (*'please'* occurred 21.7% of the time in the INL data as opposed to 14.7% in the ADL data). At this level of proficiency, the linguistic resources of INL participants are still limited compared to those of the more advanced ADL participants. Thus, the INL

[4] There are other functions for the lexical item ['afya] in KA. For example, it is used to show encouragement to H in a manner similar to *'good for you'* in English or *'bravo'* in French.

participants resort to using the single-item mitigator *'please'*, whose use does not require considerable processing effort as other mitigators, for example syntactic downgraders (as will be discussed in the third section of this chapter). As learners' proficiency level in the TL develops the use of *'please'* decreases and other mitigation types with linguistically more complex processing effort start to appear in their requests.

From another perspective, the overuse of *'please'* in the learners' data could be explained in relation to the aforementioned Bialystok's model (chapter one). The overuse of *'please'* in the NNS's data here suggests that they do need to control their processing to the other means with mitigative functions available in the TL for request formation and how these mitigative means can be employed. Furthermore, the NNS's need to expand the range of mitigative forms they use in request formation in the TL beyond *'please'* by acquiring new knowledge. This task (*analysis of knowledge*) is perceived as secondary in acquisition of pragmatic competence in adult learners; however, findings of the present study here suggest that both tasks *analysis of knowledge* and *control of processing* are equally important. From another perspective, it could be argued that the overuse of such a salient request indicator as *'please'* by individual learners can potentially lead to *'please'* losing its mitigative function and acquiring an upgrading status[5].

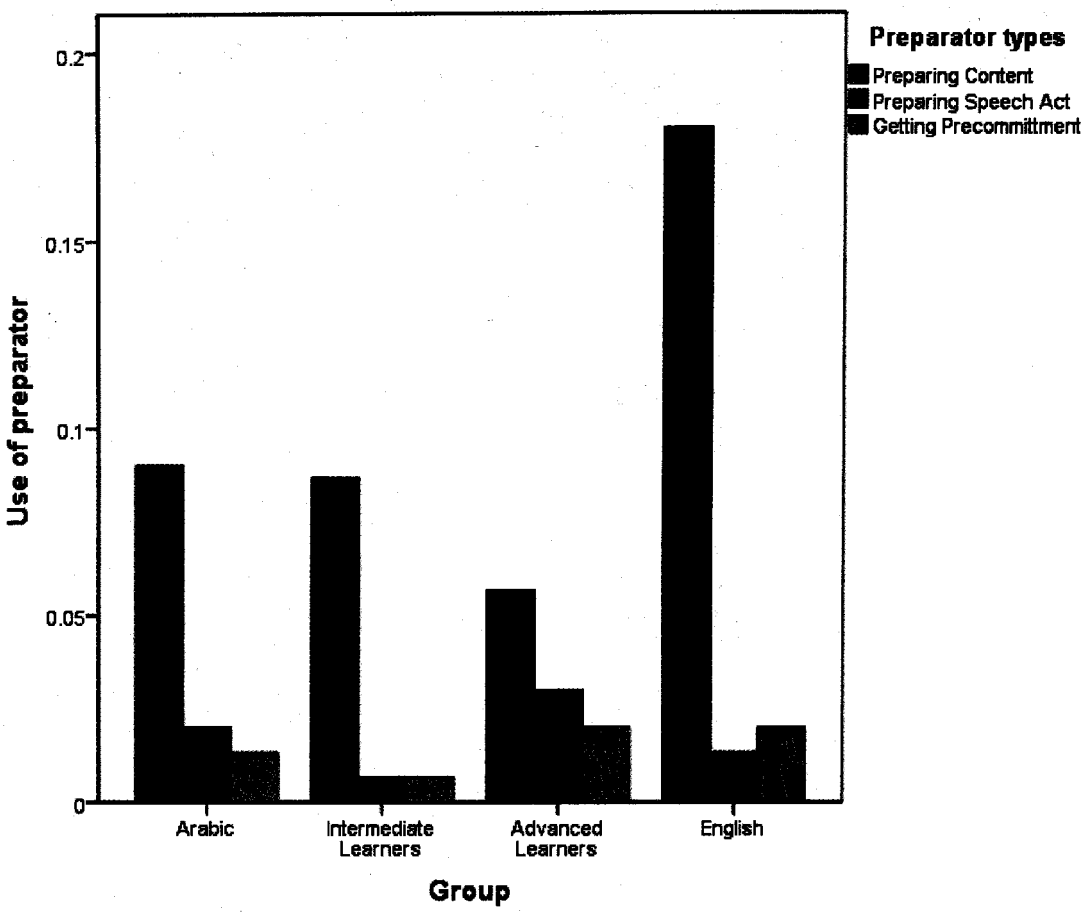
[5] As discussed earlier in chapter (5) under 'Internal Modification' section, *upgraders* include lexical/phrasal items such as 'Intensifiers' as in *'really'* and 'Time-Intensifiers' as in *'now'* or *'ASAP'*, which

Another case of *overuse* in the NNS's data in the present study relates to the Alerter type '*Title/role'*, supplied more by the learners than the English NS's. In fact, there was some influence from L1 KA in the use of this particular 'Alerter' type, particularly in the INL data (cf. Al-Ali and Alawneh 2010 for similar results). A university professor is often addressed in KA by the title '*doctor'*. Some participants in the INL group used '*doctor'* in their responses in the situations addressing a university professor. On the other hand, the ADL participants never used the title '*doctor'* and instead used '*professor'* just as the English NSs did.

1.2. Preparator

There are three 'Preparator' types analyzed in the present study: *preparing the content* (utterances that create a logical context for the request), *preparing the speech act* (statements as in '*I need a favour*') and *getting pre-commitment* (interrogatives as in '*Can you help me out?*'), as discussed in chapter (5). The most used 'Preparator' type in all participant groups is '*preparing the content'* (see graph (16) and table (17) below).

serve to aggravate the effect of the request (as opposed to *downgraders* whose function is to mitigate). They are not included in the present study's analysis because they did not occur sufficiently in the data.



Graph (16): The use of each Preparator type in each group.

Preparator Type	Group			
	KA	INL	ADL	BE
	Count	Count	Count	Count
Preparing Content	27	26	17	27
Preparing Speech Act	6	2	9	2
Getting Pre-commitment	4	2	6	3

Table (17): The use of each Preparator type in each group.

In the BE data *'preparing the content'* was used almost twice as many than in data from the other groups, which could be a result of the nature of this 'Preparator' type (cf. Yates 2010:292 where the Australian English NSs prepared their requests with pre-acts such as "*Have you got a moment?*" more frequently than the learners of various L1's). Unlike the other two types *'preparing speech act'* and *'getting pre-commitment'* illustrated by some routinized expressions such as *"I need your help"* and *"May I ask you for a favour?"* (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 2009 on conventional expressions), *'preparing the content'* of the request requires more processing effort to produce a grammatically correct utterance which can preface the upcoming request in a rational manner.

Furthermore, Bardovi-Harlig (2009:782) argues that the learners prefer simple forms to elaborated ones which could explain why the BE participants supplied their requests with the preparator type 'preparing the content' more frequently. For example, in the scenario where S has to express gratitude to H upon an invitation in Bardovi-Harlig's production task, the learners, especially at the lower proficiency level, preferred "*thank you*" to the other more elaborate conventional expressions as in *"that'd be great"* or *"thanks for having/inviting me"*. Such single string conventional expressions are preferable by the learners because they convey the same illocution while sparing the learner from the possibility of producing a form that is not grammatically correct.

From another perspective, the ADL participants mitigated their requests with *'preparing the speech act'* and *'getting pre-commitment'* more than the INL participants, which suggests some kind of developmental pattern. The more advanced NNS's were more attentive to the high distribution of such conventionalized expressions that serve to preface requests in the TL, and employed this pragmalinguistic knowledge in their IL requests. This is reminiscent of Schmidt (1993) on the role of noticing relevant input in the TL in acquisition and Bialystok (1993) on the substantial role of selective attention to L2 norms and their pragmatic functions in adult learners (see chapter one).

1.3. Disarmer

There were no visible differences overall between participants in different groups in the use of the external modifier Disarmer (graph (12) and table (13) above), though participants in the BE control group used Disarmers relatively more frequent than participants in the other groups. Similar results were observed in Schauer (2004) as there was no developmental pattern in the use of the external modifier 'Disarmer'. Disarmers occurred in the first data collection session shortly after the German learners of English have arrived into the Target Language (TL) country and their use did not increase in the other two sessions. This suggests that this type of external modification has some universal value, which is most likely due to its function in disarming potential refusal of the request. The observation that even the less advanced learners were able to supply 'Disarmers'

in their IL requests to a relatively similar degree as the TL NSs supports Bialystok's model (chapter one), that adult learners can rely on pragmatic universals.

1.4. Grounder

As depicted in graph (12) and table (13) above, 'Grounders' (i.e. providing a reason for making the request) are heavily used in the present data. For example, in the BE data and the ADL data 'Grounders' are the most used type of external mitigation (cf. Fukushima 1996 where grounders are also the most used type of supportive moves; also Al-Ali and Alawneh 2010; Martiníez-Flor 2008; Flores Salgado 2011).

The frequent use of 'Grounders' is argued to be a consequence of the prompts in the DCT which point the reason for making the target request as part of the situational description (Hassall 2001). In the following examples from the present data, the Grounders supplied by participants (*italicized*) are copied from the situational description:

(15) Is it okay for me to call using your mobile? *It's important and my phone is off.* (KA-1-sit.2)

From situation (2) where S asks a friend to use his/her mobile phone.

(16) *Because I missed the last two lectures and I didn't take the important notes the professor mentioned.* Would you mind lending me the notes you have been taking from the last two lectures?

(INL-21-sit.8)

From situation (8) where S is student asking another student to borrow his/her lecture notes.

To control the possible effect of the situational prompts on learners' production of 'Grounders', Flores Salgado (2011) presented the situational cues to the Mexican EFL learners in her study in their L1 (Spanish).

The high rate of using external modification, especially 'Grounder', compared to internal modification, could be attributed to the nature of the utterances that serve as external modifiers. External modifiers are more salient, added outside the request proper rather than embedded within it. As such, external modifiers shift the emphasis from the main illocution (i.e. the impositive request) and thus reduce the negative psychological effect concurrent with the making of requests (Færch and Kasper 1989 as cited in Al-Ali and Alawneh 2010:325).

Soler *et al.* (2005) bring forth other reasons why 'Grounders' seem to be the most preferable type of external modification. They argue that 'Grounders' can reflect

both types of politeness: positive and negative, as posited by Brown and Levinson (1978). If the speaker assumes the hearer would be cooperative once s/he understands why the request in question is necessary, then the use of 'Grounder' taps on *positive* politeness. If the speaker shows the hearer that s/he would not have imposed on the hearer unless s/he had a good reason to do so, then the use of 'Grounder' serves *negative* politeness considerations (see chapter two for discussion of negative vs. positive politeness).

In fact, 'Grounder' is used rather frequently by even the less advanced learners who have limited linguistic resources in their IL compared to the more advanced learners. Apparently, 'Grounders', like 'Disarmers', seem to represent universal types of external modification. In the present study, the INL participants supplied 'Grounders' to similar extents as both the ADL participants and the NS's of the TL (29.6% in the INL data, 31.9% in the ADL data, and 28.7% in the BE data, see table (13) above; also see Yates 2010:292 where the requests of the learners of Australian English were dominated by provision of reasons). In the same vein, Flores Salgado (2011) observed that the basic learners in her study with the most limited TL grammatical ability relative to the intermediate and the advanced learners were able to supply 'Grounders' in their requests (Mexican EFL learners elicited via cartoon oral production task COPT). Studies investigating child learners at beginner proficiency levels revealed similar observations on the high distribution of 'Grounders' at early stages of development. For example, Rose (2000) investigates the requests of Cantonese

primary school children at three beginner EFL levels (Primary-Two aged 7, Primary-Four aged 9, and Primary-Six aged 11) using COPT (see chapter three, cf. Flores Salgado 2011 which is based on Rose's instrumental and methodological design). Rose found that requests performed by this particular learner group was lacking supportive moves and mainly consisted of 'Grounders'. By the same token, Soler *et al.* (2005:13) argue that requests of children at first stages of L2 acquisition are mainly characterized by direct strategies mitigated via the politeness marker '*please*' and a few 'Grounders'. This argument is based on longitudinal studies such as Ellis (1992), who investigates two beginner level learners of ESL aged 10 and 11 years old over a period of two years, and Achiba (2003), who investigates her seven-year-old daughter over a period of 17-months stay in the TL community in Australia[6]. Apparently, 'Grounders' are perceived as an important mitigative device in request formation as they legitimize the making of the request in the first place and are thus among the first supportive moves to be acquired.

Participants in the two control groups also supplied 'Grounders' to relatively similar frequencies (24.2% in the KA data and 28.7% in the BE data). However, there are some differences in the manner by which 'Grounders' were employed in requests in the KA data. In KA requests, participants tended to preface their grounders with the conjunction '*because*', as in examples (17-18). On the other

[6] Both studies Achiba (2003) and Ellis (1992) are reported in Kasper and Rose (2002, see also the first section of this chapter on the use of request strategies).

hand, grounders in the BE data occurred either before the request proper (example 19) or after the request proper as an autonomous utterance without the use of the conjunction '*because*' (example 20).

(17) Professor, is it possible for you to give me a chance to submit the assignment within a day or two? *Because I was quite busy studying for the exams.* (KA-11-sit.10)

(18) Is it possible to have your phone for a few minutes? *Because my mobile is out of charge.* (Arb-9-sit.2)

(19) *I've left my note book and pens at home*, can I borrow a sheet and pen. (BE-4-sit.3)

(20) Can you buy me some allergy tablets? *I can't get them here anymore.* (BE-4-sit.6)

In the NNS's data, there were also some instances in both proficiency levels where 'Grounders' were preceded by '*because*' (see Hassall 2001:270 for similar findings). By tending to use the conjunction '*because*' before supplying 'Grounders', the NNS's here seem to demonstrate a case of transfer from an L1 convention into the IL requests. This provides some counterevidence to one of the constraints on transfer (chapter one), whereby the features perceived by the learners as language-specific are believed to be less transferable to the IL than the universal features shared between the L1 and the TL. Of course, there is no

definite clue here as to whether the learners have actually perceived this particular feature as language-specific or not. It could be the case that the learners have simply failed to *notice* (Schmidt 1993) this feature in the TL requests, that unlike L1 requests there is no need to add *'because'* before providing the reason for making the request. From another perspective, the *negative transfer* (chapter one) of this feature from the L1 into the IL could be a result of the learning environment (Foreign Language FL vs. Second Language SL). The NNS's in the present study illustrate the EFL learning context (see chapter four), which is believed to encourage transfer to a larger extent relative to the ESL context (Liu 2002:34).

1.5. Apology for Inconveniencing Hearer (H)

Tokens of apology as in *'I'm sorry but'* occurred remarkably more in the BE control data than in the KA control data (11.1% in the BE control data as opposed to 1.7% in the KA control data, see table (13) above). Umar (2004:72) also found that the English NSs in his study used more 'apology' than the Arab learners. The use of this external modifier represents a *negative-politeness* strategy which is believed to be characteristic of languages such as English (see chapter two). 'Apology for inconveniencing H' acknowledges S's appreciation for H's need to be free from imposition (*negative face*) and apologizes for impending upon it.

The NNS's in the present study supplied 'Apology for inconveniencing H' more than the KA NS's (27 occurrences in the INL data and 30 occurrences in the ADL data as opposed to 11 occurrences in the KA data). This seems to provide grounds for the import of the *control of processing* task in adult learners (Bialystok 1993) and *noticing* relevant input (Schmidt 1993) in order to attain successful acquisition of the TL pragmatic competence (chapter one). Apparently, the NNS's here managed to control their processing and notice the high frequency of negative-politeness strategies in the TL such as the use of the external modifier 'Apology for inconveniencing H' for request mitigation. It should be noted though that the frequency of the relevant input is not always enough to make the language feature in question salient to the learners. Salience is indeed a complex matter (Barron 2006) and it is not always clear why a certain modifier type was salient while other types were not (as in some types of downgraders as will be illustrated in section three).

1.6. Imposition Minimizer

A striking difference between participants in the KA control group and participants in the other three groups was observed in the use of 'Imposition Minimizer'. This external modifier is illustrated by formulaic expressions that translate to "*if you didn't mind*", "*if it's not too much of an imposition/trouble*" as well as prayers of good wish such as '*May god grant you power/well-being*'

occurring prior to the request[7]. Participants in the KA control used 'Imposition Minimizer' in their requests 30% of the time (see table (13) above) as opposed to 3.8% frequency of use in the INL data, 5.2% in the ADL data, and 3.4% in the BE data. Otcu and Zeyrek (2008) also found an excessive use of the external modifier 'imposition minimizers' in their Turkish NS data (for example utterances that translate to '*if it isn't inconvenient for you*' and '*if it isn't a burden on you*'). Apparently, participants in the two NNS groups in the present study were not affected by the high frequency of using this external modifier in requests made in L1 KA.

A possible explanation for why the NNS's data in the present study did not feature an abundant use of 'Imposition Minimizer' compared to the L1 control data relates to the type of utterances that usually serve as 'Imposition Minimizer' (see chapter five). For example, utterances of 'Prayers of Good Wish' which frequently occurred in the KA data as means of minimizing the imposition of the request are essentially characteristic of Arabic. In fact, the frequency of such utterances serving to minimize imposition was also observed in some other studies researching other varieties of Arabic (see for example Nureddeen 2007, Salih 2001). In Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily's (2012:91) cross-cultural analysis of the requests of Saudi Arabic NSs and American English NSs, and Alaoui's (2011) cross-linguistic analysis of requests in English and Moroccan Arabic, the authors

[7] Prayers of good wish that occur after the request proper serve to show gratitude and are hence coded as 'Appreciator' (see the coding manual for the present study in chapter five)

found that religious expressions such as '*allah yijzaka alkhair*' and '*llah yxellik*' (which translate as '*God bless you*' and '*God keep you safe*', respectively) were frequently employed as mitigating devices, especially alongside direct request strategies (cf. Menasan 2004 who also recognizes *religious appeals* as one of the politeness devices in his authentic request data of Persian and Azari). As such religious expressions represent one of the distinctive features of the learners' L1 they were not readily transferable to the IL as the other features. As explained in chapter (1), features which are distinguished as language-specific are less prone to transfer than those perceived as language-neutral. Other factors could also affect the transferability of a given pragmatic feature. For example, Zhang (1992 as cited in Liu 2001:10, also cited in Kasper 1992:222) in her investigation of IL requests produced by Chinese learners of English elicited via Role-Plays argue that transfer is more likely to occur in the discoursal development of a speech event rather than in the one-turn response that are often elicited via the DCT. This implies that DCT limits transferability compared to the other more interactive data elicitation methods such as Role-Play.

1.7. Encouraging Hearer (H) to Comply

There seems to be a developmental pattern in relation to the use of the external modifier 'Encouraging H to comply'. The ADL participants used this external modifier type more than the INL participants (46 occurrences in the ADL data vs. 35 in the INL data, see table (13) above). Apparently, the NNS's at the more

advanced proficiency level who have a more complex linguistic repertoire in the TL have the pragmalinguistic means to produce such utterances which serve to encourage H to comply with the requested action.

From another perspective, there seems to be a relation between the situation and the type of 'Encouraging H to comply' being used. As explained in the coding manual for the present study (chapter five), the external modifier 'Encouraging H to comply' has four sub-types: 'Sweetener', 'Promise of Reward', 'Cost Minimizing' and 'Appealing to H's Benevolence'. For instance, the sub-types 'Sweetener' (example (23) below) and 'Promise of Reward' (example (24) below) only occurred in situation (9) in the present study where S is a boss asking an employee to finish a presentation a week earlier than scheduled.

(23) I need you to have the presentation we talked about earlier by tomorrow. *I'm sure it'll be great.* (ADL-2-sit.9)

(24) Clear your head and start working today... *And if the work requires you to stay overtime, don't worry, this will be compensated.*

(INL-8-sit.9)

Evidently, the situational scenario affects not only the request strategy being employed but also the choice of request modification.

1.8. Appreciator

The external modifier 'Appreciator', which includes tokens of showing appreciation to H as in '*thank you*' or prayers of good wish at request-final position in the KA data (see chapter five), occurred more in the BE data and the NNS's data than in the KA control data (8.4% in the BE data, 8.9% in the INL data and 10% in the ADL data, as opposed to 3% in the KA data, see table (13) table above). This is reminiscent of the use of the external modifier 'Apology for Inconveniencing H' discussed above, which also occurred more in the L2 data and the NNS's data than in the L1 data. While the NNS's ability to employ 'Appreciator' in their IL requests in similar frequencies as the TL NS's suggests that the NNS's succeeded in achieving both Schmidt's *noticing* and Bialystok's *control of processing,* it poses a challenge to the two theories. The two models fail to explain how a certain pragmatic feature evokes the learners' attention and becomes salient which seems to be a condition for successful acquisition. In fact, the two theories further lack the identification of stages of acquisition (as in Kasper and Rose 2002 five-stage scheme for request acquisition in the L2 based on empirical findings from studies on beginner-level child learners).

2. The Use of External Modification in Relation to the Three Social Variables 'Power', 'Distance' and 'Imposition'

Having discussed the use of each external modifier, this section analyses the effect of the three social variables on participants' use of external modification.

2.1. 'Power' and External Modification

Generally speaking, the power of S relative to H affected the use of external modification in the present data in the same manner predicted by Brown and Levinson whereby requesters are expected to mitigate to a higher extent when addressing a superior requestee (see chapter two in the present study). This effect was confirmed statistically yielding a significant main effect (p= 0.000, see appendix table (5) of 'Power' variable on participants' use of external modification. For example, participants used the external modifiers 'Alerter' more in hearer-dominant (S<H) situations than in speaker-dominant or S=H situations, as illustrated in table (18) below.

Power	External Modifier	KA		INL		ADL		BE	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
S < H	Alerter	82	34.7%	79	47.3%	62	37.1%	23	25.3%
	Preparator	16	6.8%	9	5.4%	11	6.6%	11	12.1%
	Disarmer	4	1.7%	4	2.4%	7	4.2%	9	9.9%
	Grounder	49	20.8%	47	28.1%	48	28.7%	26	28.6%
	Apology for Inconvenience	3	1.3%	4	2.4%	7	4.2%	10	11.0%
	Imposition Minimizer	57	24.2%	4	2.4%	4	2.4%	1	1.1%
	Encouraging to Comply	19	8.1%	4	2.4%	10	6.0%	4	4.4%
	Appreciator	6	2.5%	16	9.6%	18	10.8%	7	7.7%
S = H	Alerter	46	17.8%	56	26.8%	27	13.4%	24	16.3%
	Preparator	14	5.4%	11	5.3%	15	7.5%	17	11.6%
	Disarmer	6	2.3%	3	1.4%	3	1.5%	4	2.7%
	Grounder	81	31.4%	74	35.4%	74	36.8%	43	29.3%
	Apology for Inconvenience	3	1.2%	15	7.2%	16	8.0%	17	11.6%
	Imposition Minimizer	83	32.2%	14	6.7%	17	8.5%	8	5.4%
	Encouraging to Comply	22	8.5%	20	9.6%	30	14.9%	23	15.6%
	Appreciator	3	1.2%	16	7.7%	19	9.5%	11	7.5%
S > H	Alerter	41	24.6%	46	38.3%	44	39.3%	18	31.0%
	Preparator	12	7.2%	13	10.8%	7	6.3%	5	8.6%
	Disarmer	6	3.6%	3	2.5%	2	1.8%	4	6.9%
	Grounder	30	18.0%	26	21.7%	31	27.7%	16	27.6%
	Apology for Inconvenience	5	3.0%	8	6.7%	7	6.3%	6	10.3%
	Imposition Minimizer	58	34.7%	1	.8%	4	3.6%	1	1.7%
	Encouraging to Comply	4	2.4%	11	9.2%	6	5.4%	1	1.7%
	Appreciator	11	6.6%	12	10.0%	11	9.8%	7	12.1%

Table (18): Mean frequency and percentage for the use of each external modifier in relation to 'Power'

Similarly, the external modifier 'Disarmer' is used almost twice as many in hearer-dominant situations than in speaker-dominant and S=H situations in the ADL data and the BE data. However, participants in the present study did not always mitigate to a higher extent in hearer-dominant situations relative to speaker-dominant or S=H situations. For example, the external modifier 'Imposition Minimizer' was used more in S=H situations than in S<H situations. Another example relates to the external modifier 'Appreciator', which was used more in S>H situations than in S<H and S=H situations in the KA data. This observation suggests that the use of external modification in a given situation is not determined by a single social variable ('Power' in this case) but by the interaction of all the variables operative in the situation. This subscribes to Brown and Levinson's proposal on how the weight of a request can be assessed by considering all three variables: (*P*), (*D*) and (*R*) (see chapters two and four; also see the discussion of use of request strategies in relation to the three social variables earlier in this chapter). Furthermore, the assessment of each social variable can not only vary across cultures and individuals but also from one situation to another (Fukushima 2000).

2.2. 'Distance' and External Modification

The 'Distance' variable also had an effect on participants' use of external modification, which is statistically significant (at p= 0.000, see appendix table (6). For example, as illustrated table (19) below, the external modifiers 'Apology for

inconveniencing H', 'Imposition Minimizer' and 'Alerter' were employed more in situations where S and H are unfamiliar (+D) in the BE control data.

Distance	External Modifier	Group							
		KA		INL		ADL		BE	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
-D (familiar)	Alerter	103	23.7%	90	28.5%	78	24.7%	27	14.8%
	Preparator	36	8.3%	28	8.9%	23	7.3%	26	14.3%
	Disarmer	15	3.4%	9	2.8%	10	3.2%	15	8.2%
	Grounder	105	24.1%	95	30.1%	103	32.6%	54	29.7%
	Apology for Inconvenience	10	2.3%	18	5.7%	19	6.0%	15	8.2%
	Imposition Minimizer	108	24.8%	12	3.8%	16	5.1%	8	4.4%
	Encouraging H to Comply	40	9.2%	29	9.2%	37	11.7%	23	12.6%
	Appreciator	18	4.1%	35	11.1%	30	9.5%	14	7.7%
+D (unfamiliar)	Alerter	66	29.2%	91	50.6%	55	33.5%	38	33.3%
	Preparator	6	2.7%	5	2.8%	10	6.1%	7	6.1%
	Disarmer	1	.4%	1	.6%	2	1.2%	2	1.8%
	Grounder	55	24.3%	52	28.9%	50	30.5%	31	27.2%
	Apology for Inconvenience	1	.4%	9	5.0%	11	6.7%	18	15.8%
	Imposition Minimizer	90	39.8%	7	3.9%	9	5.5%	2	1.8%
	Encouraging to Comply	5	2.2%	6	3.3%	9	5.5%	5	4.4%
	Appreciator	2	.9%	9	5.0%	18	11.0%	11	9.6%

Table (19): Mean frequency and percentage of use for each external modifier in relation to 'Distance'.

However, and as discussed earlier in relation to the 'Power' variable, the effect of the 'Distance' variable on participants' use of external modification did not follow Brown and Levinson's predicted pattern across all external modifier types. For

example, participants visibly supplied more 'Disarmers' when addressing a familiar (-D) requester. Again, this testifies to the intricate and overlapping effect of all three variables in each situation.

2.3. 'Imposition' and External Modification

In general, participants in all groups in the present study behaved in the same manner in relation to the 'Imposition' variable, using more external modifiers in situations where the imposition of the request is higher, as illustrated in table (20) below. This is in line with findings of existing research, for example, Kobayashi and Rinnert (2003 as cited in Soler *et al.* 2005:11). In Kobayashi and Rinnert's data, elicited via Role-Plays (see chapter three) from Japanese EFL learners in two proficiency levels (high vs. low), high imposition requests featured more supportive moves than low imposition requests (cf. Campillo 2008:211 on the effect of social variables on speakers' use of request modification).

Imposition	External Modifier	Group							
		KA		INL		ADL		BE	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
-R (Low)	Alerter	95	31.1%	113	51.6%	77	41.4%	38	31.7%
	Preparator	17	5.6%	13	5.9%	13	7.0%	16	13.3%
	Disarmer	1	.3%	1	.5%	2	1.1%	1	.8%
	Grounder	60	19.7%	55	25.1%	58	31.2%	33	27.5%
	Apology for Inconvenience	2	.7%	8	3.7%	10	5.4%	16	13.3%
	Imposition Minimizer	118	38.7%	6	2.7%	6	3.2%	1	.8%
	Encouraging to Comply	2	.7%	0	.0%	1	.5%	3	2.5%
	Appreciator	10	3.3%	23	10.5%	19	10.2%	12	10.0%
+R (High)	Alerter	74	20.8%	68	24.5%	56	19.0%	27	15.3%
	Preparator	25	7.0%	20	7.2%	20	6.8%	17	9.7%
	Disarmer	15	4.2%	9	3.2%	10	3.4%	16	9.1%
	Grounder	100	28.1%	92	33.2%	95	32.3%	52	29.5%
	Apology for Inconvenience	9	2.5%	19	6.9%	20	6.8%	17	9.7%
	Imposition Minimizer	80	22.5%	13	4.7%	19	6.5%	9	5.1%
	Encouraging to Comply	43	12.1%	35	12.6%	45	15.3%	25	14.2%
	Appreciator	10	2.8%	21	7.6%	29	9.9%	13	7.4%

Table (20): Mean frequency and percentage of use for each external modifier in relation to 'Imposition'.

For example, 'Grounders' are supplied more in situations of high imposition requests (+*R*) than in situations of low imposition requests (-*R*) in all four participant groups. Similarly, the external modifiers 'Encouraging H to comply' and 'Disarmer' are infrequently used throughout the data in (-*R*) situations, and

occurred more notably in (+*R*) situations. Schauer (2007) also observed a similar decrease in using external modifiers such as 'Alerters', 'Grounders' and 'Preparators' in both the learners' data (German learners of English at home and those at the study-abroad context) and the NSs' data in situations of low imposition (Schauer 2007 reported in chapter three). In situations of high imposition, on the other hand, participants in Schauer's study employed a variety of external modifiers such as 'Imposition Minimizers', 'Disarmers', 'Appreciators', 'Sweeteners' and 'Promise of Reward'. As Schauer (2009:188) explains, there was no real need in such low imposition situations to employ the more elaborate external modifiers, such as 'Promise of Reward' or 'Sweetener'. Such external modifiers require more processing effort to produce especially by the learners who command restrained linguistic resources. While these finding assert the aforementioned proposal that high imposition requests seem to induce the use of a more varied range of external mitigation, the intricate effect of the other social variables 'Power' and 'Distance' should not be overlooked (see discussion in the previous section on the combined effect of the social variables on the use of request strategies). Another observation to be considered here is the high frequency of supplying external modifiers such as 'Alerter' and 'Grounder' in both 'Imposition' conditions (high and low) in the present data (see and table (20) above). Apparently 'Alerter' and 'Grounder' seem to represent basic types of external modification shared across different languages and are compatible with different types of request situations (high and low imposition requests).

By the same token, Fukushima (1996:674-5) found that participants in her study (British English NSs and Japanese learners) produced unmitigated Head Acts (HA) more in situations of low imposition while mitigated HAs occurred more in situations of high imposition. Such a relation between the imposition of the request and the use of external modification is supported statistically in the present study, with a significant main effect of the variable 'Imposition' on participants' use of external modification (p= 0.000, see appendix table (7).

Although all three social variables in the present study yielded statistically significant main effect on participants' use of external modification, the effect of the variable 'Imposition' is more visible simply by looking at the relevant figures (see table (20) above), which suggests that 'Imposition' seems to override the effect of 'Power' and 'Distance'. The overriding influence of the variable 'Imposition' on the use of external modification in the present study could also be a result of the data collection instrument. In the absence of a life interlocutor, it might have been difficult for the participants to realistically visualize the nature of the relation between the S and the H in the situation. So power relation and familiarity (distance) relation could have been compromised which leaves the participants with assessment of the imposition of the request.

From another perspective, it should be noted that participants in the KA control used the external modifier 'Imposition Minimizer' invariably in both high and low

imposition situations. As evident from graph (12) and table (13) above, KA NSs relied heavily on this particular external modifier to mitigate their requests in general (198 occurrences overall in the KA data). Apparently, there are different cultural perceptions between English NSs and KA NSs as far as the communication of politeness is concerned. Unlike English, politeness is not largely achieved in KA by using the conventionally indirect strategy 'preparatory'. Although 'preparatory' is still commonly used in KA requests (see discussion of use of request strategies earlier in this chapter), using the external modifier 'Imposition Minimizer' also seems to be one of the most recurrent conventional means for performing socially appropriate (polite) requests in KA. The use of 'Imposition Minimizer' in Arabic seems to add a politeness value to even the most direct strategies which are perceived in languages such as English as being the least polite forms for performing a request (cf. Taha 2006 for a similar argument).

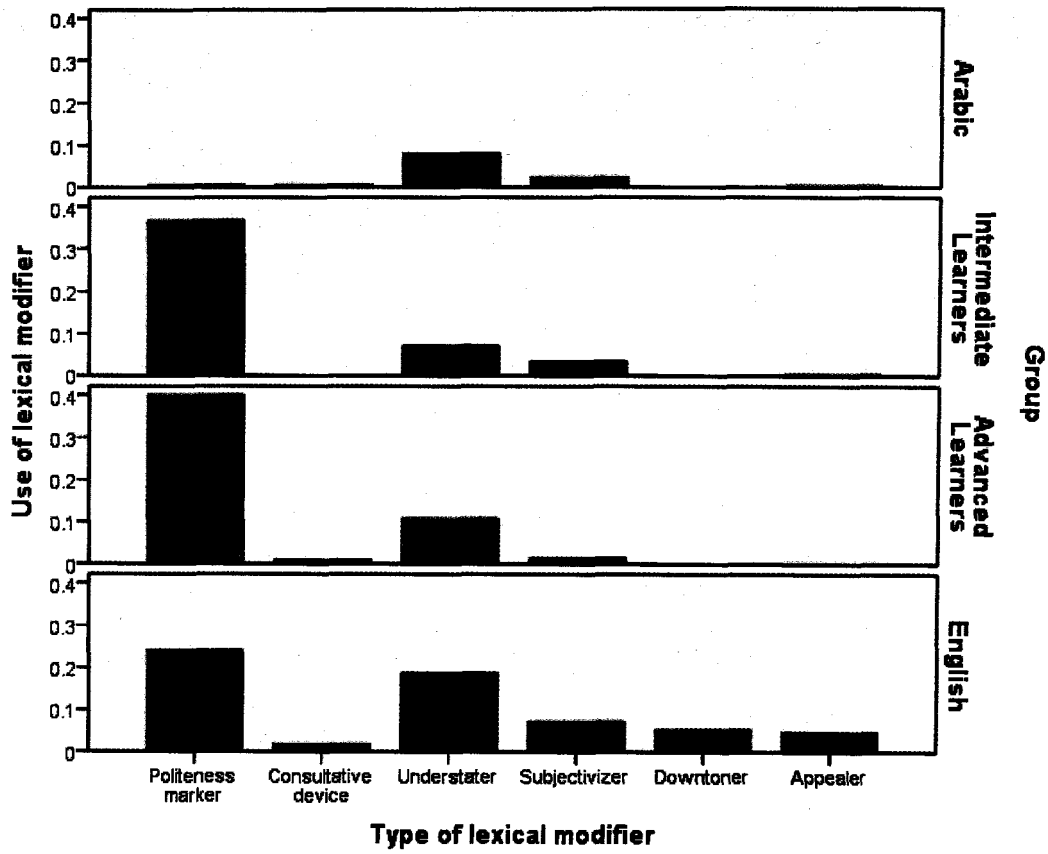
Section (3): Internal Modification Analysis

1. The Use of Internal Modifiers in General

This section explores the frequency of using each internal modifier by looking into the two types of internal modification; lexical/phrasal downgraders and syntactic downgraders.

1.1. Lexical/Phrasal Downgraders

The most remarkable observation when analyzing the frequencies of using lexical/phrasal downgraders in the present data is the overall marginal use of this modification type by participants in the KA control, as depicted in the graph (21) and table (22) below. This is similar to Hassall (2001:263) findings where participants in the Indonesian NSs control group rarely used internal modification and relied more on external modification instead.



Graph (21): The use of lexical/phrasal downgraders in each group.

Lexical/phrasal modifier	Group			
	KA	INL	ADL	BE
Politeness marker	.7%	36.7%	40.0%	24.0%
Consultative device	.7%	.0%	1.0%	2.0%
Understater	8.0%	7.0%	10.7%	18.7%
Subjectivizer	2.3%	3.3%	1.3%	7.3%
Downtoner	.0%	.0%	.0%	5.3%
Appealer	.3%	.3%	.3%	4.7%

Table (22): The use of lexical/phrasal downgraders in each group.

In the KA control data, 'Understater' (illustrated by lexical items that reduce the cost or imposition of the requested item or action such as '*just*', '*for a minute*' and the like, see chapter five) was the most used lexical/phrasal downgrader. 'Understater' occurs as the second most frequent lexical/phrasal downgrader in the BE control data and the NNS's data. Hassall (2001:265) explains the relatively frequent use of the lexical modifier 'Understater' such as '*a little*' in his data (Indonesian NSs and Australian learners of Indonesian at two proficiency levels: low-intermediate and high-intermediate) to the effect of the data collection instrument (interactive Role-Play in his study, see chapters three on Role-Play). In the situational description, adjectives such as '*a little*' is specified to make the request less impositive, which the participants copy into their requests as a way of making the request appear less costly to H.

The most used lexical/phrasal downgrader in the BE control data and the NNS's data was 'Politeness Marker', represented mostly by tokens of *'please'* as well as the less frequent *'kindly'*. In fact, the NNS's *overused* this lexical/phrasal downgrader (24% in the BE control as opposed to 36.7% in the INL group and 40% in the ADL group). The NNS's overuse of *'please'* as lexical/phrasal downgrader here is congruent with the use of *'please'* as 'Alerter' at request-initial position (see the previous section in this chapter on external modification). Al-Ali and Alawneh (2010:322-3) also found *'please'* to be the most used lexical downgrader by the learners (see also Otcu and Zeyrek 2008:277). As the authors argue, *'please'* is customarily used to indicate the illocutionary force of a request as well as a request mitigator. On the other hand, the use of other types of lexical downgraders requires a higher level of pragmalinguistic competence (cf. Soler *et al.* 2005:8 for a similar argument). For example, in the case of the lexical/phrasal downgrader 'Consultative Device' (as in *'Do you think* you could X?'), the *ability* Preparatory *'Could you X?'* is embedded in a clause that consults H's consent to comply with the request. This obviously requires more processing effort than the insertion of *'please'* in the middle or end of the request proper.

It is also worth noticing that *'please'* as 'Alerter' (at request-initial position) was used more frequently by the lower proficiency-level NNS's than the higher proficiency-level NNS's (21.7% in the INL data vs. 14.7% in the ADL data, as pointed earlier in this chapter). Conversely, the politeness marker *'please'* when used as lexical/phrasal downgrader (i.e. at embedded or request-final position)

was supplied more by the ADL participants than the INL participants (40% vs. 36.7%, respectively). This could be explained in terms of the processing effort of using '*please*' at request initial position (as external modifier) compared to the use of '*please*' within the request proper (as internal modifier). It is presumably less challenging to add '*please*' outside the request (at the beginning) than to insert it within the request proper. To insert '*please*' within the request proper, the learner has to have knowledge that the structure "Could you *please* do X?", for instance, is grammatically correct whereas "Could *please* you do X?"* is not. Besides the minimal processing effort of employing '*please*' relative to the other downgrader types, other factors could have contributed to the NNS's overuse of '*please*' in the present study. These factors include for instance the learning environment (Second Language SL vs. Foreign Language FL, see chapter four) and the availability of similar downgrader types in the L1 that are more readily transferrable to the IL (*positive transfer*, see chapter one). As will be discussed in the conclusion chapter, the SL learning context presents a better environment for acquisition than the FL context (Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh 2008; Schauer 2008; Harlow 1990). In the SL context, a more varied range of lexical/phrasal downgraders would expectedly be more available to the learners. From another perspective, the NNS's here might have overused '*please*' simply because it was good enough to carry out their communicative goal, to request politely.

The other lexical modifiers included in the present analysis are 'Subjectivizer' (phrases that present the request as some subjective opinion of S such as '*I'm*

afraid', '*I think*' and the like), 'Downtowners' (adverbials that tone down the impositive force of the request as in '*possibly*', '*perhaps*' and the like), 'Consultative Device' (elements which consult H's consent to comply with the request as in '*Do you think*'), and 'Appealer' (elements that appeal to H's benevolent understanding such as tag questions). These lexical/phrasal downgraders are all limitedly used by participants in both NNS groups. In fact, 'Downtoner' was never used by the NNS's in the present study. This suggests that even at the more advanced level (ADL), its mitigative properties are not yet acquired. Apparently, lexical/phrasal downgraders such as 'Downtoner' are acquired at a later stage of L2 pragmatic development, as illustrated in Barron (2003). In Barron's study, 'Downtoner' was underused by the German ESL learners at the first data collection session (shortly after the learners have arrived into England). However, after spending more time in the TL country, the use of 'Downtoner' increased approximating English NSs norm. Thus, the NNS's have to *notice* (in Schmidt's 1993 sense, see chapter one) and *control their attention* (in Bialystok's 1993 sense, see chapter one) that adverbials such as '*possibly*' do not only bare the propositional meaning of likelihood but can also serve to reduce the imposition of the request when inserted within the request proper.

The limited use of internal modification by the NNS's in the present study is congruent with the findings of other SA studies. For example, Al-Ali and Alawneh (2010) observed an underuse of internal modification and an overuse of external modification in their learners' data (Jordanian Arabic learners of American

English as EFL at undergraduate academic level majoring in English). Woodfield (2008) similarly points that internal modification in general is underrepresented in her learners' data (German and Japanese ESL learners at postgraduate academic level majoring in English) relative to external modification. Such findings implicate that the limited use of internal modifiers in the learners' data compared to external modifiers could be an IL feature. Schauer (2004) also found that internal modifiers such as 'Appealer' (i.e. Tag Question) did not appear in the German ESL learners' data in her study, even after spending a one-year sojourn in the TL country. Soler *et al.* (2005) who report a number of studies that investigated the use of request modification devices observe a similar tendency by the learners to use fewer internal modifiers than the NSs of the TL. For example, in Kasper (1981 as cited in Soler *et al.* 2005:7), the lexical/phrasal downgrader 'Downtoner' was used less frequently in the German learners of English data (elicited via Role-Play, see chapter three) relative to the English control data, while the lexical/phrasal downgrader 'Consultative Device' was never used by the learners. When it comes to external modification, the learners in Kasper's study supplied the type 'Grounder' to similar frequencies as the English NSs. In the same vein, research on migrants preparing for the workplace in Australia in different workplace-related situations elicited via Role-Play show that the learners used a restricted range of lexical and syntactic devices for mitigating their requests. The English NSs, on the other hand, used a variety of mitigative devices more frequently, such as the past continuous forms as in "*I was wondering if*" (i.e. the syntactic downgrader 'Aspect') and minimal

lexical items such as *'just'* (i.e. the lexical/phrasal downgrader 'Understater') among many others (Yates 2010:291-2).

Another study that investigates a TL other than English yet yields similar results is Harlow (1990). She employs written Role-Play questionnaire to investigate the production of requests (among other SAs) by French NS's and American learners of French based on three social variables: age and sex of the addressee and the familiarity between S and H. Harlow (1990:342) found that more than half of the French NSs in her study used downgraders (lexical and syntactic) while the learners rarely used this mitigating device in their IL requests. Harlow attributes the scarcity of downgraders in the learners' requests to a number of possibilities, one of which is *negative transfer* from the L1 (see chapter one). Although the learners' L1 (English) provides a wide range of lexical and syntactic downgraders, the learners were not yet able to manifest this knowledge into their IL. Another possibility is that the learners were more occupied with producing grammatically-correct requests in the TL than polite requests. Furthermore, and as will be discussed in the conclusion chapter, the classroom learning environment is often characterized by an insufficient representation of request mitigating devices. This could have further contributed to the lack of downgraders in the learners' requests in Harlow's study.

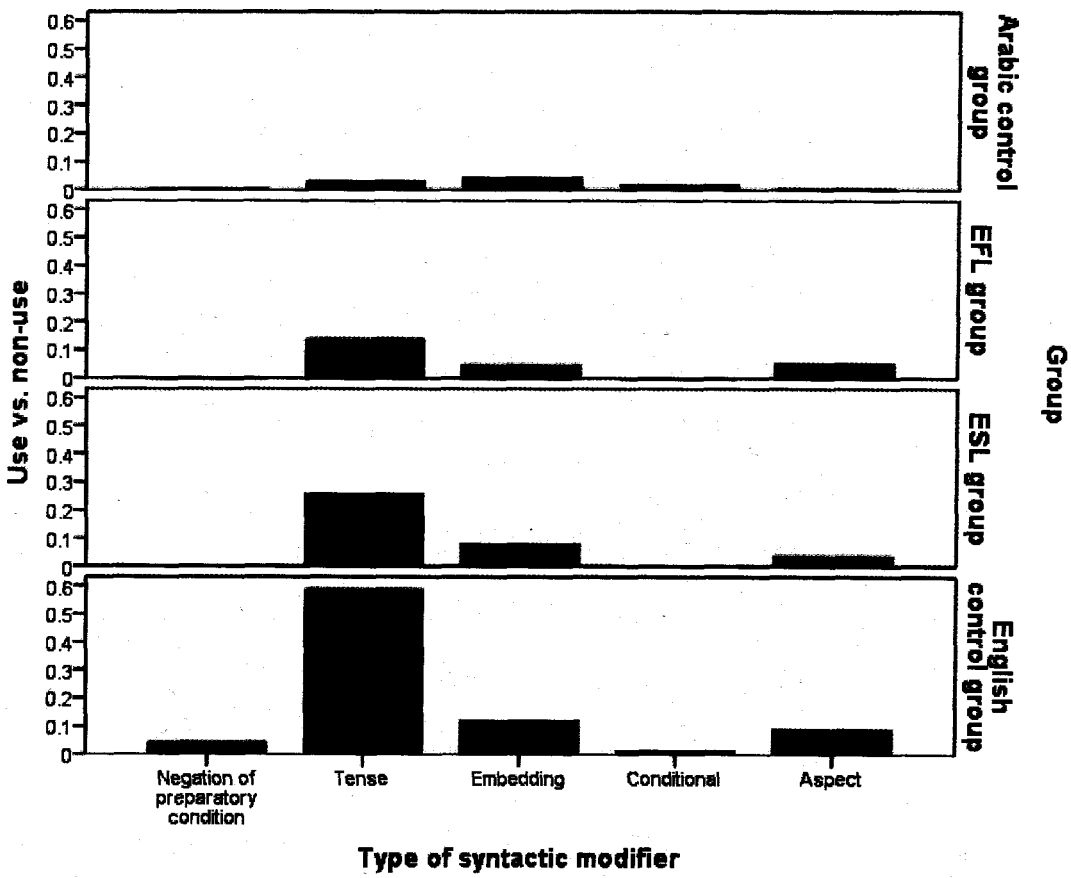
From another perspective, the lack of variety in the use of lexical/phrasal downgraders in the NNS's data in the present study could also be attributed to L1 transfer. Apart from the internal modifiers 'Politeness Marker' such as '*please*' and its equivalences and 'Understater', it is evident that KA NSs do not rely much on lexical/phrasal downgraders in mitigating their requests (see graph (21) and table (22) above). Quantitative analysis provides grounds for this argument, with a statistically non-significant difference between the two NNS groups and the KA control group in the use of lexical/phrasal downgraders (p= .361, see appendix table (9). Hill (1997 as cited in Soler *et al.* 2005:10) also found an underuse of lexical/phrasal downgraders such as 'Downtoner' in his Japanese learners of EFL data elicited via written DCT, which he attributes to possible influence from L1 Japanese.

Furthermore, the visible decrease in using some types of lexical/phrasal downgraders in the NNS's data in the present study and other similar request studies as cited above could be explained in relation to the difficulty of their employment in the request (cf. Hassall 2001:271 on the inherent difficulty for learners to add internal modifiers). The learner need not only acquire the relevant linguistic forms (modifier types) but also be familiar with the rules for their placement in the request in the TL. The lack of pragmatic transparency could be another point to consider here when explaining NNS's overall underuse of lexical/phrasal downgraders. Apart from the 'Politeness Marker' (*please*), the

mitigative effect of some of the other downgrader types is not immediately accessible to the NNS's.

1.2. Syntactic Downgraders

Similar to the use of lexical/phrasal downgraders in the KA data reported above, participants in the KA control group rarely used syntactic downgraders (see graph (23) and table (24) below).



Graph (23) The use of syntactic downgraders in each group.

Syntactic Downgrader	Group			
	KA	INL	ADL	BE
Negation of Preparatory Condition	.3%	.0%	.3%	4.0%
Tense	3.0%	13.7%	25.7%	58.7%
Embedding	4.3%	4.7%	8.0%	12.0%
Conditional	1.7%	.0%	.3%	1.3%
Aspect	.0%	5.0%	3.7%	8.7%

Table (24) The use of syntactic downgraders in each group

The lack of syntactic downgraders in the KA control data is due to the properties of the language itself. Apparently, KA does not rely on a varied range of syntactic modifiers as is the case in English. As discussed in the previous section of this chapter, KA relies on other conventions for request modification such as the use of the external modifier 'Imposition Minimizer', not to mention other paralinguistic elements such as intonation. For example, intonation (rising intonation) is one of the most distinctive elements in identifying *prediction* preparatory, which is one of the most conventional request strategies in KA (see the first section of this chapter on 'Preparatory' types). This is not to say that KA does not have the means for syntactically mitigating a request but rather that syntactic downgraders are more limited in type and usage in KA.

In the case of the syntactic downgrader 'Tense', for instance, speakers of English language have the choice between the present and the past tense form of the modal verb (as in *'can'* vs. *'could'*, *'will'* vs. *'would'*). In KA, on the other hand, only the present tense of *'can'* is used to make requests in the interrogative form as in (25.a.). The past tense is only used to enquire about an event or action occurring in the past as in (25.b.), or narrate a past event/action in a statement[1], as follows:

25.a.	*Can you distribute* the papers?	(KA-17-sit.1)
	tigdirīn	twaz'īn
	can-Present-2nd-Sng-Fem.	*distribute*-2ndSng-Fem.
25.b.	Were you able to distribute the papers?	
	gidartay	twaz'īn
	can-Past-2nd-Sng-Fem.	*distribute*-2nd-Sng-Fem.

Example (25.a) is used by the participant to perform the request in situation (1) (a professor asking a student to distribute the handouts). Example (25.b), on the other hand is used to make genuine questions, enquiring about H's ability on a past event. In this respect, Al-Aqra' (2001) points out that the written version of Arabic (Modern Standard Arabic MSA) does not have the same extended set of

[1] Aljenaie (2001) identifies five types of modals that precede the main verb in Kuwaiti Arabic: [abi] 'want', [lazim] 'obligation/necessity', future modal [raaḥ] 'go', [ḍal] 'remain' and [kaan] 'was' (cf. Al-Aqra' 2001 on modals in MSA). Apparently, the first two [abi] and [lazim] can be associated with requests, the former occurring more frequently in the present study data.

modals for request formation available in languages such as English (see chapter two; also see Lin 2009 on lack of tense distinction in modals as in *can* vs. *could* in Chinese, also Menasan 2004 on the lack of auxiliaries and modalities in Persian and Azari requests and the availability of other devices to mark politeness such as verb endings). The only illustration of the syntactic downgrader 'Tense' in KA data is demonstrated in the request strategy WS, where some participants used the past tense of the verb '*want*', as in the following examples:

(26) *I wanted* your phone for a few minutes. (KA-25-sit.2)

baġeit

want-1st person-Past.

(27) *I wanted* you to notify the rest of the staff of tomorrow's meeting.

(Arb-9-sit.4)

baġeit-ič

want-1st person-Past-you-Fem.

The second observable type of syntactic mitigators in the KA data is 'Embedding', namely *appreciative* embedding. It is in fact the most used type of syntactic downgraders in the KA data. *Appreciative* embedding in KA is characterized by using a formulaic expression which indicates wishful thinking [yā reit] or [yā leit] and is equivalent to '*It would be great*' in English. This

expression in KA could occur either with the conditional clause indicator *'if'* (example 28) or without it (example 29).

(28) *It would be great if* I photocopy from your notebook the pages where you wrote down the points on previous lectures. (KA-12-sit.8)

(29) *It would be great (if) you notify* the rest of the staff of the meeting's time[2]. (KA-10-sit.4)

It should be noted though that the structure of *appreciative* embedding in KA is less complex than in English. In KA, *appreciative* embedding only requires the addition of the wishful thinking indicator [yā reit] at the beginning of a request proper which has the structure of *prediction* preparatory (example 43 below). Whenever [yā reit] is removed from the request proper, it can stand independently as a *prediction* preparatory request. In English, however, *appreciative* embedding requires the inversion of the word order of the *ability* interrogative "*Could you X?*" as follows: "*It would be great if you could X*".

(30) fa-yāreit txalṣīn

wishful thinking indicator *finish*-2nd person-Present

It would be great (if) you finish the report today. (Arb-sit.9-21)

[2] Examples such as (42) in the Kuwaiti Arabic data are translated by adding *'if'* in brackets, so that the resulting translation sounds like proper English. The brackets are to indicate that *'if'* is not used in the original KA response.

The examples above demonstrate how 'Embedding' is available in different languages, which suggests that it could be a universal feature. Assuming the universality of 'Embedding' as request mitigator could explain why even the less advanced NNS's in the present study were able to successfully employ this syntactic downgrader (see graph (23) and table (24) above; also see De Paiva 2010). It further corroborates the argument that the learners' L1 is one of the most prominent sources for developing their pragmatic competence in the TL (cf. Bialystok 1993 in chapter one).

In the English data (both the BE data and the NNS's data), 'Tense' was the most used type of syntactic downgrading. The syntactic downgrader 'Past Tense' was also among the top five most used internal modifiers in both the German ESL learners' data and the English NSs' data in Schauer's (2004:265-6) study, which include: 'Past Tense', 'Politeness Marker', 'Downtoner', 'Consultative Device' and 'Understater'. Based on their wide distribution in her data, Schauer contends that the use of these internal modifiers (similar to external modifiers such as 'Alerter' and 'Grounder') seems to be compatible with different request situations (whether the request is of high or low imposition and for different power allocations between S and H).

The NNS's requests in the present data demonstrated a far less usage of the syntactic downgrader 'Tense' compared to the BE control requests (58.7% in the

BE data, 25.7% in the ADL data and 13.7% in the INL data, see table (24) above). Al-Ali and Alawneh (2010) similarly found that the NSs (of American English) in their study used far more syntactic modification such as 'Past Tense' than the Jordanian learners (cf. Takahashhi 1996 for similar results). Similar findings were obtained from longitudinal study-abroad data as in Schauer (2009) and Barron (2003). Schauer's study investigates request formation by nine German learners of English over a period of one academic year in the TL, using a special computerized version of a production questionnaire (Multimedia Elicitation Task). Barron (2003) investigated thirty-three Irish learners of German on the production of requests, offers and refusals, using three types of data (written free discourse completion task FDCT, metapragmatic assessment questionnaire and Role-Play) over a period of one academic year in the TL. Both authors also found more lexical/phrasal downgraders than syntactic downgraders in the learners' data in their studies.

Although the NNS's in the present study *underused* the syntactic downgrader 'Tense' in their requests relative to the English NSs, the more advanced NNS's used this mitigator type almost twice as many as the less advanced NNS's (25.7% in the ADL data and 13.7% in the INL data, see table (24) above). Apparently, this suggests a developmental pattern (cf. Otcu and Zeyrek 2008; also Flores Salgado 2011:184 for similar results). As their level of proficiency develops, their pragmalinguistic ability to integrate syntactic elements into request mitigation in the TL also increases. Kasper and Rose (2002) observe a

similar pattern in their five-stage model for the development of requests, which is based on the results of some longitudinal studies including Ellis (1992), Achiba (2003) and Schmidt (1983) (for further details of this model see the first section of this chapter on request strategy choice). Kasper and Rose comment that as the learners' proficiency level increases, their use of the ability modal '*can*' and willingness modal '*will*' decreases in favour of the past tensed 'could' and 'would'. The investigation of more proficiency levels (such as beginner) and use of more data types other than the written DCT are needed to confirm the developmental pattern proposed here. This represents a possible agenda for future research as will be discussed in the conclusion chapter.

The second most used type of syntactic downgraders in the English data (BE data and NNS's data) is 'Embedding' of three types: '*tentative*' (example 31) '*appreciative*' (example 32) and '*permission*' (example 33).

(31) *I wondered if* you could pick me up some when you go to Europe. (BE-15-sit.6)

(32) *I would really appreciate it if* you would inform me as soon as a position becomes available. (ADL-16-sit.7)

(33) *Do you mind if* I photocopy your notes? (ADL-4-sit.8)

The BE participants used all three types of this syntactic downgrader in their requests more than the NNS's and the KA NS's (see graph (23) and table (24) above). Furthermore, all instances demonstrating *tentative* embedding by using the formulaic expression '*is there any chance/way that X?*' occurred in the BE control data (except for one instance in the ADL data in 'ADL-25-sit.10'). This might indicate that even the advanced NNS's in the present study have not yet mastered the grammatical skills required to embed a request in such a structure (*"Is there any chance X?"*). Flores Salgado (2011) observes a similar trend in her data (Mexican EFL learners) where the learners rarely used this structure '*Is there any way that you/I do X?*' which is often employed in the American control data. However, there is no definite evidence that the NNS's here have not produced *permission* embedded requests of this kind because they lack the relevant linguistic means, especially at such an advanced proficiency level. The learners could have acquired the relevant linguistic forms but have not yet properly mastered the pragmalinguistic ability for their distribution (Flores Salgado 2011:186). It could also be the case that the learners have opted for other structures which requires less processing effort, such as the more conventionalized '*I would appreciate it if*' which illustrates *appreciative* embedding, or the less complex and shorter '*I wonder if*' which illustrates *tentative* embedding.

The ADL participants in the present study supplied twice as many instances of 'Embedding' than did the INL participants. This suggests a development towards

the TL norm, whereby the more advanced NNS's were more capable of producing syntactically modified embedded requests, approximating the NS's of the TL. Apparently, the NNS's ability to recognize and employ formulaic pragmatic expressions such as '*I would appreciate it if X*" and '*I wonder if X*" in the TL increases with proficiency (Churchill and DuFon 2006:13).

Another relevant observation here is that some of the NNS's who managed to employ syntactic downgraders in their requests still exhibited some occasional grammatical difficulties (cf. Otcu and Zeyrek 2008; Woodfield 2008; Lin 2009:14; Flores Salgado 2011 who found that even the advanced learners in their data experienced such difficulties). This resulted in grammatically ill-formed structures as in the following examples representing *permission* Embedding:

(35) *Would you mind lend* me your notes to copy them please?

(INL-15-sit.8)

(36) *So would you mind to give* me more time to do it please?

(INL-7-sit.10)

Obviously, the participants here missed out on the continuous aspect (gerund) '*–ing*' that should be used in such a syntactic pattern 'Would you mind VP-*ing*'. Another example of non-target-like forms produced by some NNS's is related to the *permission* preparatory structure '*May I X?*, which occurred as '*May you X?*'.

(37) *May you* please distribute these handouts among your colleagues?

(INL-14-sit.1)

Although most of the above examples come from INL data, the ADL participants in the present study also produced non-target-like requests occasionally. Such examples seem to argue against the pattern whereby grammatical competence is believed to precede pragmatic competence (Thomas 1983). As Thomas contends, even the very advanced learners who performed high on the grammaticality task in the TL have failed to attain target-like performance on the pragmatic task (cf. Hoffman-Hicks 1992; Bardovi-Harlig 1999; Bataineh and Bataineh; Flores Salgado 2011 2008 for a similar argument). The abovementioned findings of the present study thus propose the reverse pattern, whereby certain aspects of the learners' pragmatic competence preceded their grammatical competence. The learners were able to broaden their range of modal verbs available in the TL for expressing the request strategy 'Preparatory' yet failed to master the relevant grammatical rules whereby permission modal '*may*' is only used as a speaker-oriented structure.

The other types of syntactic modifiers that occurred in the present data include 'Aspect' (for example '*I was wondering if X?*' as opposed to '*I wonder if X?*'), 'Conditional' (for example *'If you could X?'*) and 'Negation of Preparatory Condition' (for example 'You couldn't do X, could you?'). Overall, these syntactic

modifier types are used to a relatively limited extent compared to the more frequent types 'Tense' and 'Embedding' (see graph (23) and table (24) above). This is in line with the findings of other SA studies which also found a marginal use of these types of syntactic downgraders. For example, Flores Salgado (2011) found that the syntactic pattern '*I was wondering if + Agent + Modal Verb + VP*' (which illustrates the downgrader type 'Aspect' in the present study) was rarely used in the Mexican EFL learners' requests, even by the advanced learners. On the other hand, the American English NSs in Flores Salgado's study often used this structure '*I was wondering if X*' in their requests, along with a varied range of other syntactic mitigators such as '*Is there any way + that + Agent + Modal Verb + VP?*' (i.e. *permission* embedding, see chapter five). Flores Salgado argues that learners tend to opt for the less complex syntactic pattern such as '*Modal Verb + Agent + VP?*' mainly because of their formal simplicity. This could explain the large gap between using 'Tense' and the use of the other syntactic downgraders in the present data. Another study with similar findings is Schauer (2004:266) where none of the German learners of English in a study-abroad context in her study used the internal modifiers 'Tag Questions' and 'Negation' in any of the situations. This suggests that these syntactic mitigators are not yet acquired by the learners at this stage of L2 development. Apparently, even after a sojourn in the TL community, these modifier types seems to be among the most difficult modifier types to master and need explicit instruction on their use to be successfully acquired by the learners.

The considerable difference between the English NS's and the NNS's in employing different types of syntactic downgraders in the present study provides grounds for the argument that this type of request modification is more challenging to attain than the other types of modification. In the case of external modification, for example, participants can simply add the mitigative utterance before or after the request proper. However, syntactic modification requires a higher level of grammatical knowledge. As Al-Ali and Alawneh (2010:322) put it, the mitigative properties of syntactic downgraders are not inherent in their grammatical meaning and are instead acquired as a pragmatic meaning (cf. Woodfield 2008:247 on the difficulty of applying internal modification by learners). Accordingly, the mitigative properties of syntactic downgraders tend to be acquired unconsciously as speech routines by NSs of the language (Al-Ali and Alawneh 2010). The learners, on the other hand, need to notice that there is more than a single form-function relation involved in syntactic downgraders. For example, the syntactic downgrader 'Aspect' which grammatically marks progressive has another mitigative function which reflects the requester's tentativeness towards making the request (as in "I was *wondering* if you could X"). As such, findings of the present study (and the studies cited above) seem to support Schmidt's (1993) proposal on the import of *noticing* relevant TL input and Bialystok's (1993) proposal on the import of *control over processing* in the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence in adult learners. It seems that in most of the time the NNS's have failed to notice and control their attention to the extra mitigative function of such syntactic modifiers.

2. The Use of Internal Modification in Relation to the Variables: 'Power', 'Distance' and 'Imposition'

Having discussed the use of both types of internal modification, this section analyses the effect of the three social variables on participants' use of lexical/phrasal downgraders on the one hand and the use of syntactic downgraders on the other.

2.1. Lexical/Phrasal downgraders and the Three Social Variables

2.1.1. 'Power' and Lexical/Phrasal Downgraders

The main effect of the variable 'Power' on participants' use of lexical/phrasal downgraders in the present study was statistically significant (p=.000, see appendix table (11). For example, the most frequent lexical/phrasal downgrader in the present data 'Politeness Marker' (as in 'please' at embedded or request-final position) was used more in hearer-dominant situations than speaker-dominant situations and (S=H) situations by participants in the two NNS groups (see table (25) below). Similarly, participants in the BE control used the lexical/phrasal downgraders 'Understater', 'Subjectivizer', 'Downtoner' and 'Appealer' more in hearer-dominant situations than in speaker-dominant situations. As Soler *et al.* (2005:5) argue requesters in a lower power position, such as a student opposite his/her lecturer or an employee opposite his/her employer, will need to employ more modification devices when making a request to such higher status requestees.

Power	Lexical modifier	Group			
		KA	INL	ADL	BE
S < H	Politeness Marker	.0%	40.0%	45.6%	22.2%
	Consultative Device	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.2%
	Understater	5.6%	2.2%	4.4%	17.8%
	Subjectivizer	5.6%	5.6%	2.2%	8.9%
	Downtoner	.0%	.0%	.0%	4.4%
	Appealer	1.1%	.0%	1.1%	2.2%
S = H	Politeness Marker	.8%	37.5%	35.0%	16.7%
	Consultative Device	.8%	.0%	.8%	1.7%
	Understater	14.2%	15.8%	23.3%	33.3%
	Subjectivizer	1.7%	3.3%	1.7%	11.7%
	Downtoner	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	Appealer	.0%	.8%	.0%	10.0%
S > H	Politeness Marker	1.1%	32.2%	41.1%	35.6%
	Consultative Device	1.1%	.0%	2.2%	2.2%
	Understater	2.2%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Subjectivizer	.0%	1.1%	.0%	.0%
	Downtoner	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.2%
	Appealer	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%

Table (25): 'Power' and the use of lexical/phrasal downgraders.

2.1.2. 'Distance' and Lexical/Phrasal Downgraders

The main effect of the variable 'Distance' on participants' use of lexical/phrasal downgraders in the present study was significant (p=.000, see appendix table (12). An example of the effect of this variable on the use of lexical/phrasal mitigation is observed in the lexical/phrasal modifier type 'Politeness Marker'. 'Politeness Marker' was employed more frequently in situations where S and H

are unfamiliar (+*D*) by all the participants in the present data, as demonstrated in table (26) below.

Distance	Lexical modifier	Group			
		KA	INL	ADL	BE
(-D) familiar	Politeness Marker	1.1%	31.1%	34.4%	20.0%
	Consultative Device	.6%	.0%	1.7%	1.1%
	Understater	10.0%	1.7%	7.2%	20.0%
	Subjectivizer	2.8%	2.2%	1.7%	8.9%
	Downtoner	.0%	.0%	.0%	5.6%
	Appealer	.0%	.6%	.6%	2.2%
(+D) Unfamiliar	Politeness Marker	.0%	45.0%	48.3%	30.0%
	Consultative Device	.8%	.0%	.0%	3.3%
	Understater	5.0%	15.0%	15.8%	16.7%
	Subjectivizer	1.7%	5.0%	.8%	5.0%
	Downtoner	.0%	.0%	.0%	5.0%
	Appealer	.8%	.0%	.0%	8.3%

Table (26): 'Distance' and use of lexical/phrasal downgraders

Another example relates to the lexical/phrasal downgrader type 'Understater' (adverbials which underrepresent the proposition of the request, as in "Can I use your phone *quickly*?"), used more in unfamiliar hearer (+*D*) situations than in familiar hearer (-*D*) situations by participants in the two NNS groups (cf. Soler *et al.* 2005:5 who argue that more modification devices are expected in requests

addressed to unfamiliar requestees). Similar results were observed in other SA studies, such as Harlow (1990). Investigating requests produced by French NSs and American learners of French as FL using a written Role-Play, Harlow observed that participants tended to acknowledge the unfamiliarity between themselves and the addressee by adding more downgraders (lexical and syntactic). This resulted in lengthier requests in (+D) situations.

2.1.3. 'Imposition' and Lexical/Phrasal Downgraders

Similar to the variables 'Power' and 'Distance', the variable 'Imposition' also demonstrated a significant main effect on participants' use of lexical/phrasal downgraders in the present study (significant interaction at p= .002, see appendix table (13). For example, the lexical/phrasal downgraders 'Consultative Device', 'Downtoner', 'Subjectivizer' and 'Appealer', which occurred almost exclusively in the BE control data, occurred more in high imposition situations than in low imposition situations (see table (27) below.

Imposition	Lexical modifier	Group			
		KA	INL	ADL	BE
Low (-R)	Politeness Marker	1.1%	43.9%	47.8%	32.2%
	Consultative Device	.6%	.0%	.0%	2.2%
	Understater	8.9%	10.0%	15.6%	20.0%
	Subjectivizer	1.1%	2.2%	1.1%	4.4%
	Downtoner	.0%	.0%	.0%	3.3%
	Appealer	.6%	.0%	.6%	4.4%
High (+R)	Politeness Marker	.0%	25.8%	28.3%	11.7%
	Consultative Device	.8%	.0%	2.5%	1.7%
	Understater	6.7%	2.5%	3.3%	16.7%
	Subjectivizer	4.2%	5.0%	1.7%	11.7%
	Downtoner	.0%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
	Appealer	.0%	.8%	.0%	5.0%

Table (27): The use of lexical modification in each group.

On the other hand, the use of the two lexical/phrasal modifier types 'Politeness Marker' and 'Understater' in relation to the 'Imposition' variable did not follow from the same pattern, whereby more mitigation is expected in high imposition situations (see chapter two on Brown and Levinson, also chapter four). That is, participants used more illustrations of 'Politeness Marker' and 'Understater' in situations of low imposition requests (-*R*) than high imposition requests (+*R*). A possible explanation for the increase in using lexical downgraders in low

imposition situations here could be that participants in high imposition situations have already resorted to other means for mitigating their requests, such as the use of conventionally indirect request strategy 'Preparatory' and the use of external modification (see the discussion in the previous sections in this chapter on request strategy choice, and use of external modification). Thus, 'Politeness Marker' and 'Understater' are employed in low imposition situations to maintain a basic level of politeness, especially when considering the combined effect of the other two variables 'Distance' and 'Power' that come into play in situations of low imposition. This is line with Eslami and Nora's findings on Persian learners of English (2008:323), where participants perceived the construct '*please*-VP' as being more appropriate for low imposition request contexts. Similarly, Trosborg (1995) found that the learners in her study (Danish learners of EFL) used the politeness marker '*please*' infrequently whereas the English NSs did not used it at all. Trosborg attributes this finding to the nature of situations in her study which all involve high imposition requests. Thus, it seems that requesters prefer the use of the more elaborate external modifiers for performing high imposition requests. External modifiers are usually longer than internal modifiers, which seems to have made their mitigative effect more salient.

2.2. Syntactic Downgraders and the Three Social Variables

2.2.1. 'Power' and Syntactic Downgraders

Statistically speaking, the variable 'Power' was found to have a significant main effect on participants' use of syntactic modification in the present study (p= .000, see appendix table (14). Considering the most used syntactic modifier in the data (i.e. 'Tense'), participants in the KA control and the two NNS groups used this syntactic downgrader more in hearer-dominant (S<H) situations than in speaker-dominant (S>H) or equal power (S=H) situations (see table (28) below).

Power	Syntactic modifier	Group			
		KA	INL	ADL	BE
S < H	Neg. of Preparatory Condition	1.1%	.0%	1.1%	.0%
	Tense	4.4%	18.9%	36.7%	46.7%
	Embedding	6.7%	6.7%	12.2%	11.1%
	Conditional	2.2%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Aspect	.0%	6.7%	5.6%	13.3%
S = H	Neg. of Preparatory Condition	.0%	.0%	.0%	10.0%
	Tense	1.7%	9.2%	20.8%	56.7%
	Embedding	3.3%	5.8%	9.2%	16.7%
	Conditional	1.7%	.0%	.8%	.0%
	Aspect	.0%	6.7%	5.0%	8.3%
S > H	Neg. of Preparatory Condition	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Tense	3.3%	14.4%	21.1%	73.3%
	Embedding	3.3%	1.1%	2.2%	6.7%
	Conditional	1.1%	.0%	.0%	4.4%
	Aspect	.0%	1.1%	.0%	4.4%

Table (28) 'Power' and use of syntactic downgraders

Similarly, the KA NS's and the NNS's employed 'Embedding' (the second most used syntactic modifier in the present data) more in (S<H) situations than (S>H) or (S=H) situations. Another illustration is observed in the use of the syntactic modifier 'Aspect'. Participants in the BE control group syntactically modified their requests using 'Aspect' more in (S<H) situations than (S>H) and (S=H) situations (see Schauer 2009:173 for comparable results in S<H, -R situations).

2.2.2. 'Distance' and Syntactic Downgraders

The main effect of the variable 'Distance' on participants' use of syntactic modification in the present data was also significant (at p= .000, see appendix table (15). Some of the examples that illustrate such an effect are observed in the use of the syntactic modifiers 'Tense' and 'Aspect'. These two types were used more in (+D) situations[3] (see table (29) below.

[3] With the exception of the KA data where the participants used 'Tense' slightly more in (-D) situations.

Distance	Syntactic modifier	Group			
		KA	INL	ADL	BE
Familiar (-D)	Neg. of Preparatory Condition	.0%	.0%	.6%	3.3%
	Tense	4.4%	9.4%	21.7%	55.6%
	Embedding	4.4%	6.1%	8.3%	15.6%
	Conditional	2.8%	.0%	.6%	1.1%
	Aspect	.0%	3.9%	2.8%	6.7%
Unfamiliar (+D)	Neg. of Preparatory Condition	.8%	.0%	.0%	5.0%
	Tense	.8%	20.0%	31.7%	63.3%
	Embedding	4.2%	2.5%	7.5%	6.7%
	Conditional	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.7%
	Aspect	.0%	6.7%	5.0%	11.7%

Table (29) 'Distance' and use of syntactic downgraders.

On the other hand, some of the other syntactic modifiers were used more in (-D) situations such as 'Embedding'. This is in line with the previous discussion on the combined effect of variables on the use of each request strategy and mitigation type. That is to say, if the effect of a given variable such as 'Distance' here did not follow from Brown and Levinson's hypothesized pattern (that more modification is expected in situations where there is greater social distance between S and H, see chapter two) then another variable (or more) could be more prominent within the same situation. For instance, although 'Embedding' here, and contrary to the hypothesized pattern, is used more in (-D) situations, this syntactic modifier is actually used more in hearer-dominant situations than in

speaker-dominant situations (see table (29) above), and is used more in (+R) situations than in (-R) situations (see table (30) below) which indeed accords with the hypothesized pattern.

2.2.3. 'Imposition' and Syntactic Downgraders

Unlike what is observed in relation to the variables 'Power' and 'Distance' in the present data (see the preceding two sub-sections), the significance test suggests an absence of a main significant effect between the variable 'Imposition' and the use of syntactic modification (at p= .129, see appendix table (16). Looking at table (30) below, the only syntactic modifier that is used saliently more in (+R) situations than in (-R) situations in all participant groups include 'Embedding'.

Imposition	Syntactic modifier	Group			
		KA	INL	ADL	BE
Low (-R)	Neg. of Preparatory Condition	.6%	.0%	.6%	2.2%
	Tense	3.3%	14.4%	26.1%	55.6%
	Embedding	3.3%	1.7%	6.1%	6.7%
	Conditional	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.1%
	Aspect	.0%	3.9%	2.8%	8.9%
High (+R)	Neg. of Preparatory Condition	.0%	.0%	.0%	6.7%
	Tense	2.5%	12.5%	25.0%	63.3%
	Embedding	5.8%	9.2%	10.8%	20.0%
	Conditional	4.2%	.0%	.8%	1.7%
	Aspect	.0%	6.7%	5.0%	8.3%

Table (30) 'Imposition' and use of syntactic downgraders.

It should be noted though that while there was no significant main effect of 'Imposition' on participants' use of syntactic modification in the present study, the interaction between 'Imposition' and syntactic modifier type was significant (at p= .000, see appendix table (16). This relation can be observed in the use of the other syntactic modifiers in the present data. For example, 'Tense' was used 63.3% of the time in (+R) situations and 55.6% in (-R) situations in the BE data. Similarly, 'Aspect' was used more in high imposition situations in the NNS's data than in low imposition situations.

Section (4): Summary of the Results in Relation to the Research Questions (RQ)

In this section, the abovementioned results of the present study are summarized with reference to the RQs specified earlier at the beginning of this chapter (see also chapter one).

RQ.1. How do participants in the two NS's control groups differ in their use of request strategies and supportive moves (external and internal modification)?

Participants in the two control groups differed markedly in their choice of request strategy, mainly regarding the degree of directness of the selected strategy. Participants in the KA control opted for using the direct strategies to a greater extent. The direct strategies MD, LD and WS occurred almost three times more in the KA NSs data than in the BE data. Conversely, the BE NSs showed an overwhelming preference for using the conventionally indirect strategy 'Preparatory'. This particular strategy was also the most used strategy in the KA data, which testifies to the universality of query preparatory in request formation.

As regards the use of external modification, there were no statistically significant differences between the KA control group and the BE control group in their use of external modification (at p= .333, see appendix table (8). The most salient differences though between the two control groups can be detected in the use of

two external modifiers 'Imposition Minimizer' and 'Apology for Inconveniencing H'. The external modifier 'Imposition Minimizer' visibly dominated requests in the KA data and was limitedly used in the BE data. As such, 'Imposition Minimizer' appears to be one of the most conventional means for mitigating requests in KA, which could also explain the high frequency of direct requests in the KA data relative to the BE data. The use of 'Imposition Minimizer' in direct requests serves to soften their impositive requestive force. The BE NS participants, on the other hand, seemed to prefer the external modifier 'Apology for Inconveniencing H', which occurred three times more in the BE data than in the KA data. This negative-politeness oriented strategy (acknowledging H's need to be free from imposition, see chapter two) reduces the imposition of the request by showing appreciation to the requester for taking the time and enduring such an imposition. Though both languages (KA and English) offer linguistic means for externally mitigating a request, they differ in the conventions preferred by their NSs for demonstrating external modification.

Regarding the use of lexical/phrasal downgraders, the two control groups differed markedly (significant difference at p= .000, see appendix table (9). The KA data was nearly devoid of lexical/phrasal downgraders. For example, the most used lexical/phrasal downgrader in the KA control data is 'Understater' and the percentage for its overall use was relatively low (8% only). It could be argued thus that KA relies more on external modification for request mitigation compared to English where requests are mitigated both externally and internally.

As far as syntactic modification is concerned, there was also a significant difference between the KA group and the BE group (at p= 0.000, see appendix table (10). Apart from a few occurrences of appreciative 'Embedding' (in conventional expressions as in [yā leit] denoting wishful thinking such as "*It would be great if you could*") and 'Tense' (by using the past tense of the verb *'I wanted'* in WS request strategy), the KA NSs in the present study infrequently used syntactic modifiers in their requests. On the other hand, participants in the BE group used syntactic modifiers far more frequently, employing a variety of syntactic modifiers.

RQ.2. How does proficiency level affect interlanguage request formation in terms of request strategy and supportive moves? (i.e. differences between the two NNS's groups)

Overall, the two learner groups did not differ in their choice of request strategy. Regarding the use of supportive moves, proficiency did not seem to have affected the use of external modification and the use of internal modification of the type lexical/phrasal downgraders. That is to say, both the INL participants and the ADL participants supplied the same types of external modifiers and lexical/phrasal downgraders to similar frequencies. The lack of differences between the two learner groups could be explained in light of the criteria for selecting the participants representing the two proficiency levels for the present study (see chapter four). Although the more advanced NNS's (ADL) have had the

opportunity of exposure to the TL in its native environment during their study-abroad period in the United Kingdom for no less than three years, they have been settled back in their L1 environment by the time of data collection. This could have compromised their target-like performance in the production of requests, thus contributing to minimize the difference in request formation between the less advanced (INL) NNS's and the more advanced (ADL) NNS's. However, there was an effect of proficiency on the use of the external modifier 'Alerter' of the type 'please'. The ADL participants used this type less frequently than the INL participants, thus moving towards a more target-like use of this external modifier type.

The most marked difference between the two proficiency levels in the present study was observed in the use of internal modification of the type syntactic downgraders (statistically significant difference at p= .016, see appendix table (10). The most obvious effect of proficiency in the use of syntactic modification was illustrated by the type 'Tense', for instance, used 25.7% of the time in the ADL data and 13.7% in the INL data. Furthermore, the ADL participants supplied different types of 'Embedding' more frequently than did the INL participants. This corroborates findings of previous research (cf. Schauer 2009; Barron 2003; Al-Ali and Alawneh 2010; Takahashi 1996, for example) suggesting that mitigating requests by means of syntactic choices are mastered at a later stage of TL acquisition relative to the other features of request modification as in external modification and lexical/phrasal downgrading.

RQ.3. Which learner group behaved more like the L1 control group on the one hand and the TL control group on the other in terms of request strategy and supportive moves?

Participants in both learner groups behaved more like the L1 control group in their choice of request strategy. The difference between the KA control group and each learner group was statistically non-significant (at p= 1.000 for the INL group and p=.803 for the ADL group). The similarity between the NNS's data and the L1 control data was demonstrated by the use of visibly more direct requests than the NSs of the TL. While these findings provide evidence for L1 transfer in the IL, they suggest that proficiency was not a motivating factor for L1 transfer in performing requests in the TL, as both groups transferred from their L1 to similar degrees (see chapter one for constraints in transfer). While L1 transfer seems to be the most likely reason for such a lack of significant difference between the NNS's IL requests and their L1 requests, it is not the only reason. It should also be considered that IL features could coincide with L1 properties.

As regards the use of supportive moves, the NNS's in both proficiency levels did not differ from the participants in the L1 group or participants in the TL group in their use of external modification. The observation that participants in all groups supplied various types of external modifiers to comparable frequencies indicates that this type of modification is shared across different languages and is characterized as one of the most essential means for request mitigation. Since

the NNS's in both proficiency levels used external modification to relatively similar extents, it seems that the ability to express utterances that serve as external modifiers is acquired at an earlier stage of acquisition even by the less advanced NNS's with a more limited linguistic capacity in the TL.

Regarding the use of internal modification of the type lexical/phrasal downgraders, requests of NNS's in both proficiency levels were more reflective of the requests of participants in the L1 group. For example, both the KA NS's and the NNS's in the present study did not supply lexical/phrasal downgraders as abundantly as did the English NSs. The only marked difference between the KA NS's and the NNS's is observed in the use of the lexical/phrasal downgrader 'Politeness Marker' as in '*please*' and its equivalences. While the KA NSs rarely supplied this downgrader, 'Politeness Marker' was the most used lexical/phrasal downgrader in the NNS's data. On the other hand, each learner group differed significantly when compared to the TL group (significant statistical difference at p= .000, see appendix table (11). In fact, this lexical/phrasal downgrader was used almost twice as many in the NNS's data than in the TL data (hence *overuse*). It could be argued thus that inserting elements such as '*please*' is one of the earliest means for illustrating lexical/phrasal internal mitigation, and is sustained throughout the development of IL requests even after other TL means are acquired.

On the other hand, the use of syntactic internal modification is the only aspect of request formation in the present study that reflected a departure from the L1 norms, particularly by the more advanced NNS's. The ADL participants used more syntactic modifiers than the KA NSs, specifically the types 'Tense', 'Embedding' and 'Aspect'. The difference between the ADL data and the L1 data in the use of syntactic downgraders was statistically significant (at p= .016, see appendix table (10). Although the ADL participants did not modify their requests syntactically to the same frequency and as did the English NSs, the ADL participants employed syntactic modification more than the INL participants. In fact, the INL participants clearly reflected L1 requestive norms (transfer) where syntactic modification is rather limited. The difference between the INL data and the KA data in the use of syntactic modification was statistically non-significant at p=.422, see appendix table (10). As such, and although linguistic proficiency does not guarantee target-like pragmatic performance (cf. Thomas 1983; Hoffman-Hicks 1992; Bardovi-Harlig 1999; Bataineh and Bataineh 2008; Flores Salgado 2011; also see chapter one) it seems that a more advanced linguistic competence is necessary for mastering the pragmalinguistic rules for some aspects of request formation such as the application of syntactic modification.

RQ.4. Which request strategy and modifier type is most used in relation to each participant group on the one hand and the situation on the other?

The conventionally indirect strategy 'Preparatory' is the most used request strategy in all four groups' data, although participants in the BE control employed this strategy relatively more than participants in the other groups. Considering individual situations, 'Preparatory' was also the most used request strategy in most of the situations across all groups. In fact, 'Preparatory' in some situations was the only request strategy being used 100% of the time (see aforementioned table (11). The only two situations where the use of 'Preparatory' was not dominant in all participant groups are situation (4), a boss asking his/her assistant to announce a meeting, and situation (9), a boss asking his/her employee to prepare a presentation ahead of schedule. Participants in the KA control and the INL group used twice as many MD requests in situation (4) than 'Preparatory' requests. Similarly, participants in the INL group used more direct requests (including MD, LD and WS) in situation (9), while participants in the KA control and the ADL group supplied the direct strategies MD, LD and WS to relatively similar extents as the conventionally indirect preparatory. It seems that the clearly marked power differential between the speaker as the superior in the work place and the hearer as the subordinate affected participant's choice of request strategy, making them more comfortable with using the direct, authoritative strategies (cf. Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily 2012:91 for a similar observationin the Saudi Arabic NSs data). The only participant group in the

present study who produced more preparatory requests in these two speaker-dominant situations (and all other situations for that matter) is the BE control. While these findings support Brown and Levinson's proposal on the role of the (P) variable in determining the overall weight of the request (see chapters two and four), they imply that this role is culturally-sensitive. These findings further provide a counter-argument to Brown and Levinson's hypothesized relation between politeness and indirectness. Indirectness (hints) was not the preferred strategy in the hearer-dominant situations, in situations addressing an unfamiliar (+D) requestee or those involving high imposition requests. Instead, the ruling majority of participants in both societies (KA and BE) used the conventionally indirect strategy 'Preparatory' in such situations.

As regards the use of external modification per group, the most used external modifier is 'Imposition Minimizer' in the KA control data, 'Grounder' in the BE control data, 'Alerter' in the INL data and 'Grounder' in the ADL data. Looking at individual situations, the external modifier 'Grounder' is the most used type in most of the situations in the present study (see appendix table (17). This suggests that the mitigative function of 'Grounders' is suitable for different situational scenarios with different values (both high and low) for the social variables of 'Power', 'Distance' and 'Imposition'. For example, 'Grounder' was the most used external modifier in all participant groups in situation (2) (a friend asking to borrow another friends' mobile) where a low imposition (-R) request is made to an equal status (S=H) familiar (-D) requestee. 'Grounder' was also the

most used external modifier in situations involving high imposition requests (+R), such as situation (8), a student asking to borrow another student's lecture notes, (that is S=H and +D), and situation (9), a boss asking employee to finish presentation task ahead of schedule (that is S>H and -D)[1].

As for the use of internal modification of the type lexical/phrasal downgraders, the 'Politeness Marker' is the most used type in the BE data and the NNS's data. Participants in the KA group employed 'Understater' more than the other lexical/phrasal downgraders (see table (21) and graph (22) above). From individual situations perspective, 'Politeness Marker' is also the most used type of lexical/phrasal downgraders in most of the situations in the present study data (see appendix table (18). It seems that lexical elements such as *'please',* due to their high distribution in requests, have acquired another function as a request indicator.

Regarding syntactic downgraders, 'Embedding' namely *appreciative* embedding, was the most used syntactic downgrader in the KA group. In the BE data and the NNS's data, the most used type of syntactic downgraders was 'Tense'. Looking at each situation individually, 'Tense' was also the most used syntactic downgrader in most situations across all four participant groups (see appendix table (19). This finding seems to be related to the high frequency of using the

[1] Except in the KA control group where 'Imposition Minimizer' is the most used external modifier in situation (8), followed by 'Grounder'.

past tense of modal verbs such as '*could*' and '*would*' in request formation in English.

This examination of the use of request strategies and modifiers in individual situations provides further support for Brown and Levinson (1978) on how the three social variables of 'Power', 'Distance' and 'Imposition' affect the manifestation of politeness in request formation. In general, the participants in all groups tended to use direct strategies to a lesser extent and/or employ mitigative devices to a larger extent in hearer-dominant (+P) situations, in situations where S and H and unfamiliar (+D) and/or when making high imposition requests (+R).

Chapter (7):

Conclusion

1. Summary of the Results of the Present Study and Concluding Remarks

The present study is a cross-cultural investigation of request formation by Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) non-native-speakers (NNS) of English at two proficiency levels: intermediate (INL) and advanced (ADL). The data elicited via DCT open-ended questionnaire is analyzed for the request strategies used to realize the core request and the mitigation devices that occur in the request's immediate context. Mitigation devices entail two types depending on their positioning in the request: external and internal modification, the latter type includes: lexical/phrasal downgraders and syntactic modifiers.

The request strategies employed by both the INL and the ADL participants were more in line with the strategies used by the KA NS's. The NNS's showed a greater tendency than the English NS's to use direct strategies, particularly in the distribution of the most direct strategy Mood Derivable (MD). This provides evidence for L1 influence at the request strategy level and thus supports the role of transfer in establishing the IL pragmatic competence. The NNS's preference for direct strategies here could be explained in light of factors besides L1 transfer. These factors include, for example, the effect of the data elicitation instrument. In the DCT format, there is no live interlocutor to provide feedback that the requestive intent has been successfully delivered. Thus, the participants might have felt the need to express the requestive intent more explicitly to avoid

confusion. Likewise, and since there is no interactive addressee in the DCT request situations, the requester might evaluate the threat of the request upon the requestee's face as less serious than it actually is. This might have decreased the need for tentativeness in expressing the target request. In other words, the successful delivery of the intended message could have gained priority over the interpersonal aspect of maintaining the requestee's face wants. In fact, other request studies reported in previous chapters show a similar tendency by learners of English from various L1's towards using more direct strategies than the English NS's. Investigating a new L1-perspective (KA), the findings of the present study serve to reconfirm the perception NNS's tendency to use more direct requests than the English NS's as an IL feature. While such a tendency could validly be perceived as an IL feature, it could also be attributed to the learning context. Learners often hear their teachers use direct requests, due to the higher status of the instructors relative to their students. This limits the learners' exposure to the full range of the other available indirect request strategies (cf. Woodfield 2008; Lin 2009; Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh 2008; Bardovi-Harlig 2001 for a similar discussion).

While the findings of the present study highlight direct strategies as one of the most conventional linguistic means for request formation in KA, the conventionally indirect strategy 'Preparatory' seems to be equally conventionalized. In fact, 'Preparatory' was the most used strategy in all four participant groups in the present study. Detecting such a high distribution of

'Preparatory' requests in this new language in ILP/CCP research (KA), the present study reconfirms the universality of conventionally indirect strategies as proposed in other request studies investigating learners from other L1's. The universality of using 'Preparatory' is explained by its ability "to achieve a balance between both pragmatic clarity and the need to avoid coerciveness", as Woodfield (2008:242) puts it.

Conventionally indirect requests in the present study are employed in different situations, involving different power status and familiarity relation between S and H, and in both high and low imposition requests. The dominance of 'Preparatory' in the present study's data conforms to the postulation that argues against Brown and Levinson's (1978) conception of politeness (see chapter two), whereby politeness increases as the level of directness decreases. In this sense, off-record strategies (i.e. non-conventionally indirect strategies or hints) are most polite in Brown and Levinson's view. Instead, the findings of the present study strengthen the argument advocated in existing research whereby politeness is reflected more in conventionally indirect strategies as in 'Preparatory' (cf. Sifianou 1999; 1993 among many others). Conventionally indirect strategies require less processing effort and yield greater cognitive effects. The need to infer the indirect meaning is blocked and made explicit by conventionality, which makes conventionally indirect requests more relevant from a relevance-theoretic perspective (see chapter one). Besides, there is more to politeness than the simple indirectness-politeness relation that Brown and Levinson establish. For

example, as illustrated in chapter (6), direct strategies in the KA control data were almost always accompanied by external modifiers such as 'Imposition Minimizer' (cf. Menasan 2004 who also found that politeness in his Persian and Azari request data is manifested in other devices and not only via indirectness). Such findings highlight that other elements such as the use of mitigative devices can add up to the overall politeness evaluation of a given request strategy. The ability to employ request modification depending on the context of the request is highlighted in the present study as an important aspect of request formation. This ability, which is not sufficiently covered in existing ILP/CCP research, represents an essential pragmatic function for NNS's who aim to produce requests appropriately in the Target-Language (TL).

As far as the types of the 'Preparatory' strategy are concerned, participants in the two NNS groups did not seem to follow the pattern of their L1 NS's. The KA NS's showed preference for *possibility* 'Preparatory' (as in "*Is it possible to X?*"). The NNS's used *ability* 'Preparatory' (as in "*Can/Could you X?*") most frequently, which is also the most used 'Preparatory' type in the English control data. This demonstrates that adult learners need to establish new L2 representations in developing their pragmatic competence in the TL, a task underestimated in Bialystok's acquisitional model (1993, see chapter one). Findings of the present study show that adult NNS's need to both control their attention to the differences between their L1 and the TL in request production (see also Schmidt 1993 on *noticing* relevant TL input) as well as acquire the pragmalinguistic means that are

more conventional for requesting appropriately in the TL. For example, the NNS's must notice that *ability* 'Preparatory' is more conventional for requesting in TL English whereas in L1 KA *possibility* 'Preparatory' is more prominent. It is also important for the NNS's to expand their TL linguistic repertoire and add up new structures for expressing different strategy types.

From another perspective, there seems to be an instructional effect on the prevalence of *ability* requests in the NNS's data in the present study. *Ability* requests are overwhelmingly illustrated in ELT textbooks as one of the most common strategies for request formation in English (Campillo 2008; also Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010). At the pragmalinguistic level, it could be the case that in languages such as KA, the literal meaning of *ability* 'Preparatory' as a genuine question of hearers' ability to perform the act overrides that of an indirect request. On the other hand, inferring an indirect request from a *possibility* 'Preparatory' structure is more feasible. The indirect request meaning here outperforms the literal meaning (that is 'yes/no' question of the possibility of the request to happen) by means of conventionality.

Another conventionalized 'Preparatory' type that was commonly used in all language groups in the present study was *permission*. However, different languages seem to employ different pragmalinguistic conventions in expressing this strategy type. The KA NS's prefer speaker-oriented questions of possibility

such as *"Is it possible for me to X?"* and other interrogatives checking for hearer's permission as in *"Is it okay to X?"*. The English NS's used the permission modal '*may*' as in *"May I X?"*, speaker-oriented questions of ability such as "*Can/could I X?*", and expressions verifying hearer's permission such as "*Would you mind X?*". While the most conventional structures for making requests in English by NS's and learners of various L1's are well-documented in existing research, only a few studies identifies some of the most conventional request structures in Arabic, and none whatsoever on Kuwaiti Arabic. By specifying the most commonly used structures for request formation by NS's in a new language variety, the present study establishes a valuable database for cross-cultural and linguistic comparison with other languages already treated in the relevant literature. Such a comparison helps reveal some pragmatic universals across different languages as well as some language-specific features.

There were no differences overall between participant groups in the use of external modification. However, certain modifiers such as 'Alerter' and 'Grounder' occurred significantly more frequently. It seems that these two types represent some of the basic units for externally modifying a request. The KA NS's further demonstrated a frequent use of the external modifier 'Imposition Minimizer', which was invariably used in different situations (i.e. different power status and familiarity relations between S and H, and different degree of request imposition). Apparently, 'Imposition Minimizer' is one of the most conventional forms for externally modifying a request in KA. It frequently occurs with the most direct

strategy (MD) and functions to reduce its relatively higher degree of imposition upon H (as discussed above using MD strategy is another pragmatic convention for performing requests in KA). The external modifier 'Imposition Minimizer' was not used to the same frequency by the NNS's. This gives support to the proposal that transferability of a given language feature can be constrained by its perception as language-specific (see chapter one). It seems that the NNS's here were able to perceive that forms such as *"If you wouldn't mind"* or religiously oriented formulaic expressions of good wish produced prior to the request proper (such as *"May God keep you well"*) are not frequent in request modification in TL English as they are in L1 KA. Alternatively, English relies on other pragmatic conventions for request modification, such as the use of the conventionally indirect strategy 'Preparatory', the use of syntactic modification (as in past tense *'Could/Would'* vs. *'Can/Will'* in *"Could/Would* you do X?"), and others. The present study thus results in a more comprehensive database that comprises not only the strategies for realizing the core request but also the other linguistic elements that mitigate the imposition of the request, both externally and internally. The coding scheme for the present data is also rather comprehensive, combining and adapting categories and sub-categories of a number of coding manuals from leading request studies on various L1's. Such a coding manual allows the identification of a more versatile range of illustrations of a single request strategy or modifier type and is potentially applicable to a wide range of other language. It is also culturally-sensitive to language-specific forms such as

religious expressions that are highly frequent in Arabic language varieties for minimizing request imposition.

Another difference between the KA group and the two NNS groups in use of external modification relates to the types 'Apology for Inconveniencing Hearer' and 'Appreciator'. The NNS's supplied these two types more frequently than the KA NSs, which is more consistent with the English NS's requests. This suggests a developmental pattern towards the TL requestive norms. It seems that the NNS's here have established the knowledge (*declarative* knowledge) that such external modifiers are more conventional for requesting in English and invested this knowledge in their interlanguage requests (hence *procedural* knowledge). This finding could further illustrate Bialystok's (1993) *control of processing* component (see chapter one). Apparently, the NNS's were able to notice (Schmidt 1993, see chapter one) that external modifiers such as 'Apology for Inconveniencing H' and 'Appreciator' are available and used for mitigating requests in their L1 KA, but are not as frequent as they are in English requests.

When examining internal modification of requests in the present study, two types are taken into account: lexical/phrasal downgraders and syntactic downgraders. The use of lexical/phrasal downgraders featured another trace of L1 influence on the interlanguage requests. Lexical/phrasal downgraders occurred insignificantly in the KA requests, which are largely mitigated by means of external modifiers

such as 'Imposition Minimizer' (cf. Eslami and Nora 2008:321 for a similar observation in their Persian data). Apart from the overuse of the 'Politeness Marker' (basically '*please*' and its equivalences at embedded or request final position), the NNS's in both groups used lexical/phrasal downgraders limitedly. In fact, the NNS's overuse of '*please*' could be attributed to the effect of instruction. If a certain semantic formula is strongly associated with a certain pragmatic function, as in the relation between '*please*' and requests, this formula is overtly emphasized in the classroom (cf. Mir 1992 as cited in Bardovi-Harlig 2001: 26 on expressions such as '*I'm sorry*' in apologies). From another perspective, the selection of prospective participants in the present study might have contributed to this lack of significant differences in the use of lexical/phrasal downgraders between the two proficiency levels of NNS's. The advanced-level (ADL) NNS's here have had ample opportunities of contact with English NS's during their minimum of three-years sojourn in the United Kingdom. However, at the time of the data collection process these NNS's have been well settled back in Kuwait where English is practiced in a Foreign Language (EFL) environment (see chapter four on EFL vs. ESL). The EFL learning context represents an impoverished environment not only for acquisition but also practice of English compared to the ESL context (cf. Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010:424; Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh 2008:179; Bardovi-Harlig 2001:26; Schauer 2009; Churchill and DuFon 2006). In the EFL learning context, there is little opportunity of learning English through natural interaction with its NS's, which is the case in the Arab world (Rabab'ah 2005)[1].

[1] For further discussion of the causes of the weakness of the Arab learners of English in the Arab world see

Schauer (2008:408) further argues that even in the more beneficial ESL learning context there are other factors that could impact the development of learners' pragmatic competence. These factors include, for instance, length of stay in the TL environment, amount of exposure to the TL norms, individual differences in acquisition, and learners' preoccupation with grammatical correctness whereby the learners tend to pay more attention to producing grammatically correct utterances than pragmatically target-like utterances. Furthermore, explicit awareness-raising instruction of pragmatic form-function relations (*pragmalinguistic* knowledge, see chapter one) and their appropriate contexts of use (*sociopragmatic* knowledge) is another crucial factor in developing TL pragmatic competence (cf. Schmidt's 1993; also Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh 2008). These practices are crucial in both SL and FL learning contexts.

From another perspective, there is the argument that grammatical competence and pragmatic competence are not necessarily acquired in the same course. As Thomas (1983:110) notes, fluent speakers who attained high level of grammatical proficiency in the TL may not be equally competent as far as pragmatic competence is concerned (cf. Hoffman-Hicks 1992; Bardovi-Harlig 1999; Bataineh and Bataineh 2008; Salgado 2011 for a similar argument). In other words, being *grammatically* proficient in the TL does not guarantee that the learner would be equally competent pragmatically. This could explain why certain

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Rabab'ah (2005). One of the references Rabab'ah reports is Zughoul (1983) which examines the curricula of a number of English departments at Arab universities, one of which is Kuwait University.

aspects of requestive behaviour of the ADL NNS's in the present study were not significantly different from those of the INL NNS's.

As regards the other type of internal modification, there was an overall shortage of using syntactic downgraders in both the KA data and the NNS's data relative to the English data. This is reminiscent of the findings observed when investigating the use of lexical/phrasal downgraders. Aside from the syntactic modifiers 'Tense' (i.e. opting for the past tense as in *'could'* instead of *'can'*) and 'Embedding' (i.e. embedding the request in a conditional clause that shows tentativeness, appreciation, or permission, see chapter five), the NNS's data lacked the variety and frequency of using syntactic modification found in the English requests. However, failing to employ lexical/phrasal downgraders and syntactic downgraders sufficiently is not solely a matter of L1 transfer. It rather seems to be an IL feature as it is observed in learners' data in other request studies (see chapter six). Once more, the present study serves to verify the universality of a particular pragmatic feature (lack of lexical/phrasal downgraders and syntactic downgraders in request formation) from a new L1 perspective, KA. Such global IL features that are recurrent in learners' data from different L1's should be considered when discussing the development of request formation in the TL. That is to say, the learners' pragmatic competence in the TL must not exclusively be measured up against the NS's norms, which is the prevailing trend in ILP (Cook 1999), without crediting such IL features.

The lack of syntactic modification in the NNS's data could also be attributed to other factors such as their imperfect command of the TL and the effect of ELT course materials. The form-function relation between the syntactic modifiers and their mitigative effect on requests is not as transparent as the other types of modification. For example, in external modification, the type 'Grounder' mitigates the request by making it legitimate. Likewise, in lexical/phrasal internal modification, the type 'Politeness Marker' (as in '*please*' at embedded or request-final position) marks the requestive intent and bids for the requestee's cooperation. The employment of syntactic downgraders in requests requires a higher level of linguistic processing in the TL as they seem to be less pragmatically translatable from the L1 to the IL.

Regarding the effect of classroom instruction on the use of syntactic downgraders in TL requests, ELT textbooks do not sufficiently illustrate the internal modification aspect of request formation (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 2001; Martínez-Flor 2008; Usó-Juan 2008; Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010; Campillo 2008). In this sense, Gotor and Dalmau (2007:85) observe a similar trend in their investigation of the speech act (SA) of apology. They argue that learners tend to rely on simple routinized forms to ensure that the resulting SA is linguistically (grammatically) correct, what is recognized as *avoidance technique*.

> "Their reluctance to employ more elaborate explicit apologies and pragmatically constrained intensifiers does not denote lack of sociocultural

awareness, but stems from the need, a common tendency among second language learners, to play it safe by providing an answer which contains no 'mistakes' "

Gotor and Dalmau (2007:90)

While the NNS's proficiency level in the present study did not seem to have an effect on request strategy choice (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 2001:27 for a similar argument) or use of external modification and internal modification of the type lexical/phrasal downgraders, proficiency level seems to have affected the use of syntactic downgraders. The advanced NNS's employed syntactic downgraders to greater frequency than did their intermediate NNS's, which suggests a developmental pattern. As syntactic downgraders represent a more complex type of modification, the ability to successfully employ syntactic downgraders in TL requests seems to be developed at a later stage.

Another aim for the present study is to investigate the effect of the three social variables: status/power of S relative to H, distance (familiarity) between S and H, and the imposition of request (high vs. low) on participants' responses (see chapter two on Brown and Levinson 1978 politeness theory; also chapter four). The present data testifies to Brown and Levinson's proposal on the effect of these variables on the directness of the request strategy being employed. In fact, the three variables seem to have an effect not only on the request strategy used but also on the use of different types of request modification. In general,

participants tended to use less direct strategies in contexts where S has less power than H, where S and H are unfamiliar and/or where the request is of high imposition. Similarly, participants modified their requests to a higher extent in such contexts, though this pattern did not apply equally across all modifier types.

Nevertheless, and although the use of direct strategies relatively subsided in such situations, participants in the present study did not opt for the least direct strategy (hints), which in Brown and Levinson's view bears the highest level of politeness. Alternatively, participants chose conventionally indirect strategy 'Preparatory' far more frequently. While the findings of the present study corroborates with some aspects of what Brown and Levinson postulate, that indirectness *communicates* politeness, it shows that politeness is not associated with ultimate indirectness per se (cf. Fukushima 1996; Sifianou 1999; 1993; Wierzbicka 1991; Yates 2010) but rather conventional indirectness (cf. Le Pair 1996; Umar 2004:54; also Morgan 1991 in chapter two on *short-circuited implicature* explaining how conventionally indirect forms can be established). Conventionality thus is more effective in communicating politeness because it abides by expectations of speakers of the same community on what represents appropriate speech. Of course, cross-cultural assessment of participants' perception of the value of the three social variables in each situation could be useful in understanding the extent to which participants subscribe to these variables in planning and executing their requests, another intriguing aspect for future research.

2. Limitations to the Present Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The research at hand revealed some insightful observations regarding the production of requests by KA NSs and KA learners of English as Foreign Language EFL (in two proficiency levels: intermediate INL and advanced ADL). Both groups, the NSs and the learners, represent a new target population in ILP/CCP research and speech act (SA) studies (see chapters two and three). Though the results yielded here are beneficial in understanding the formation and development of requests by participants in this particular population, these results should be handled with caution regarding their generalizability. There were unavoidable limitations to the present research that could have impacted the representativeness of the induced findings.

To begin with, the greatest difficulty faced while conducting the research at hand regards the data collection process, especially in the two learner groups. Participants in the learners groups who are not filling the questionnaire in their L1 were not quite willing to take part, assuming that the questionnaire is aimed at testing their proficiency level in English. Further, the KA participants were not offered a reward upon their participation as was the case when collecting data from the English NSs. Kuwaitis usually take part in such questionnaires out of sheer willingness to help the researcher (who is a part of their community) to obtain his/her data, not expecting some material (cash) reward. Al-Ali and

Alawneh (2010, reported previously in chapter two) observed a similar trend among the Jordanian Arabic learners of English in their study. Participants in this group did not offer material reward when using the external mitigator 'Promise of Reward' but instead tended to show appreciation and/or indebtedness to the requestee. As such, asking KA participants to fill in the DCT for the present study was quite an imposition. Therefore, the DCT had to be kept as concise as possible to guarantee that sufficient numbers of participants would agree to contribute. The researcher thus had to compromise the administration of further questionnaires that would induce some useful data, such as a rating questionnaire eliciting participants' assessments of the three social variables 'Power', 'Distance' and 'Imposition' in each situation in the DCT (see for example, Fukushima's 1996 study) and a verbal report eliciting participants' feedback on their own performance.

In future research, there should be better circumstances for administering such studies on the production and development of speech acts by KA participants. For example, having a teaching position at Kuwaiti University, the researcher could select undergraduate students as target population. To motivate them to participate in the research, their participation could be counted as part of their course credit. Furthermore, as a faculty staff member, the researcher would have access to the research assistants in the academic department. A research assistant could be offered a worthy reward so that s/he becomes more committed to the research. With such help in the data collection and analysis

process, especially if more than one research assistant is involved, larger amounts of data could be obtained within the same time frame for the present study which is entirely conducted by the researcher.

Under such facilitative circumstances, other research paradigms could be adopted, such as the administration of a longitudinal study. As they trace certain participants over a prolonged period of time (see chapter three), longitudinal studies should reveal more specific insights on the development of the population under investigation (Bardovi-Harlig 2001). Furthermore, other proficiency levels could be investigated, such as children at beginner EFL level, a group that received little attention in existing ILP/CCP literature (see chapter four on challenges of conducting research on young participants). The inclusion of other less advanced proficiency levels could reveal other non-linear kind of IL development. Future research could also draw on more than a single data source. Written DCT data could be further supplemented by interactive Role-play data or possibly authentic data. Likewise, assessment data could be incorporated to a larger extent to address various topics, as in participants' justification for 'opting-out' (Flores Salgado 2011).

3. Implementations for the Teaching of Pragmatic Competence in Second/Foreign Language Classroom

Following the recently increasing interest in the pragmatic component of language acquisition, recent publications in the field of language teaching are focusing on how pragmatic competence can be taught to maximize target-like production.

First, target language *input* must be enhanced (Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010; Martínez-Flor 2008; also Schmidt 1993). There is some empirical evidence that foreign language (FL) context represents an impoverished learning environment relative to the second language (SL) context (Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh 2008; Schauer 2008; Harlow 1990; also see chapter four on the distinction between FL vs. SL learning context). In the SL context, the learner can experience a more versatile use of the target language (TL) by its native speakers (NS) in its native environment. In the FL context, on the other hand, the most prominent source of input is usually the textbook and the supplementary listening and/or visual material, if available (Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010). Such English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks provide decontextualized listing of the most appropriate linguistic forms for the performance of a given SA, requests as far as we are concerned (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 2001 on the general incapacity of textbooks as reliable source for pragmatic input). These forms are selected based mostly on the intuition of a limited number of NSs of the TL

(usually the authors of the textbooks), rather than a well-established empirical investigation of the most common forms for performing the target SA in the TL (Martínez-Flor 2008; Usó-Juan 2008; Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010; Campillo 2008).

Thus, while ELT textbooks provide an elementary source of pragmalinguistic forms that can be used to perform requests, they fall short on demonstrating the context-sensitive sociopragmatic dimension of request formation (see chapter one on *pragmalinguistic* vs. *sociopragmatic* knowledge). ELT textbooks' data does not sufficiently demonstrate elements of the context where the request is being used and the concurrent social variables such as the power/status of the speaker (S) relative to the hearer (H), age and gender of the interlocutors, the social distance between S and H (whether they are acquainted or not), the degree of imposition of the request (more demanding or less serious), the setting where the request is performed (formal setting, for example in an academic institution, as opposed to informal setting, for example in a social gathering among family or friends), and the like. The combined effect of such contextual information determines not only the linguistic forms to be selected for the realization of the target request but also the degree of mitigation expected (see chapter six on the effect of such variables on participants' responses).

Accordingly, SA studies conducted under the umbrella of ILP/CCP research represent a rich data source for ELT textbooks on the illustration of the SA of requesting. Instead of relying on the personal experience of ELT textbooks' authors in specifying the most common (conventional) linguistic forms for performing a request in English, ELT textbooks' authors could make use of the more systematic data resulting from interlanguage (ILP) and cross-cultural pragmatics (CCP) speech act studies. Data of such studies are elicited from a larger sample of English NSs. In addition, the situational prompts for eliciting data in these studies represent a more varied range of potential contexts where the target SA can occur. These contexts are often enriched with relevant information on the power differential and familiarity degree between S and H as well as the imposition of the request, which inevitably affect the formation of the request (in terms of request strategy and degree of modification, see chapter six). ELT textbooks' developers could utilize these situations not only to illustrate a wider range of contexts for request formation in the TL, but also as prompts for practice (hence *output*) where the learners can verify their understanding of the relevant *input*[2] (cf. Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010; Martínez-Flor 2008; also Soler *et al.* 2005, Beltrán and Martínez-Flor 2004, Harlow 1990).

[2] Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010 (also Martínez-Flor 2008) propose that the TL input could be further enhanced by the integration of audio-visual techniques in the language learning context, such as the use of segments from televised shows, computer-mediated communication CMC (González-Lloret 2008), and even modern age web-based discourse such as twitter and social media (Zappavigna 2012). It is also crucial to trigger learners' awareness to the relevant input, through pragmatic awareness-raising instruction (both *explicit* and *implicit*, see Schmidt's (1993) *noticing* hypothesis discussed in chapter one; also see Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh 2008; also Malaz *et al.* 2011) and providing assessment on the learners' performance, hence *feedback*.

This is how research such as the present study becomes beneficial to the pedagogical process. In addition to adding up to the existing body of research on English NSs' performance of requests, the present study researches a new learner population (Kuwaiti Arabic learners of English), not treated in ILP/CCP speech act studies. The differences between this learner group and the English NSs could reveal some important information such as the effect of the L1 on learners' interlanguage requests and the areas where the learners fall short from attaining target-like request formation. This in turn can contribute to the understanding of the learning process and the improving of the teaching process of this particular aspect of pragmatic competence in KA learners of English, and by extension in Arab learners of English.

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Appendix

Appendix (A): The cover-sheet for the rating questionnaire including the participants' consent form as provided by the University of Essex.

Appendix (B): The rating questionnaire for the present study.

Appendix (C): The table of significance of interaction between the ratings of the Kuwaiti participants and the ratings of the English participants.

Situational set	Significance of Interaction	Group	Version	Mean
(1)	.126	Arabic	Sit.1	2.500
			Sit.2	3.036
		English	Sit.1	2.133
			Sit.2	3.267
(2)	.046	Arabic	Sit.3	3.000
			Sit.4	2.821
		English	Sit.3	2.267
			Sit.4	2.667
(3)	.028	Arabic	Sit.5	3.214
			Sit.6	2.607
		English	Sit.5	2.800
			Sit.6	3.200
(4)	.014	Arabic	Sit.7	3.393
			Sit.8	2.714
		English	Sit.7	2.667
			Sit.8	2.800
(5)	.912	Arabic	Sit.9	3.107
			Sit.10	3.071
		English	Sit.9	2.200
			Sit.10	2.200
(6)	.004	Arabic	Sit.11	2.929
			Sit.12	3.393
		English	Sit.11	3.600
			Sit.12	2.933
(7)	.000	Arabic	Sit.13	2.786
			Sit.14	3.679
		English	Sit.13	3.267
			Sit.14	2.733
(8)	.440	Arabic	Sit.15	3.429
			Sit.16	3.179
		English	Sit.15	3.267
			Sit.16	3.133
(9)	.001	Arabic	Sit.17	2.536
			Sit.18	2.964
		English	Sit.17	2.733
			Sit.18	2.267
(10)	.336	Arabic	Sit.19	3.071
			Sit.20	3.321
		English	Sit.19	3.600
			Sit.20	3.667

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

FORM OF CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

CONFIDENTIAL

Title of project / investigation:

The acquisition of communicative competence in English by Kuwait Arabic non-native speakers of English: the case of request production.

Brief outline of project, including an outline of the procedures to be used:

The following questionnaire is a preliminary study to an investigation of how Kuwaiti Arabic native speakers produce requests in English.

There are 20 paragraphs representing different situations between two people; a speaker and hearer. In each situation, the speaker requests something of the hearer. You may (or already have) come across similar situations in your everyday life. Please read each situation carefully and rate how frequent you think it is by ticking in the corresponding box.

Your time and participation are very much appreciated.

I, ... ***(participant's** full name) agree to take part in the above named project / investigation, the details of which have been fully explained to me and described in writing.

Signed ..... Date .....
(Participant)

I, NUSHOUR ALDUAIJ ..... ***(Investigator's** full name) certify that the details of this project / investigation have been fully explained and described in writing to the subject named above and have been understood by him / her.

Signed: NUSHOIUR..... Date: 6 DEC 2010 .....
(Investigator)

*Please type or print in block capitals

Situation (1) *Sara has newly been promoted to head of a department different from the department she has been working in. Since Sara is not acquainted with the staff at the new department, she asks one of the employees to arrange a meeting to introduce her to the staff.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (2) *Alex is a new lecturer at the university teaching for the first time. In the first day of one of the courses he's teaching, Dr. Alex asks one of the students sitting in the front row to take the handouts which he prepared for the class and give them out to the students.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (3) *Nora is the head of the department. Next week, a delegation of academics from outside UK will be visiting the department. Nora asks one of her most proficient employees to prepare a presentation and present it to them. By the end of the working day, Nora receives an e-mail that the visitors will be arriving tomorrow in the afternoon. Nora asks her employee to work on the presentation today and have it ready first thing tomorrow morning.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (4) *Nora is the head of the department. Her department is organizing a workshop next week and she assigns one of her best employees to take charge. The official working hours might not be enough to carry out all the organizational tasks and Nora needs to go over the details with her employee. She asks her employee to stay in late after the working hours.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (5) *Henry is the head of the department. He needs to call in for a staff meeting tomorrow. He asks his assistant to notify the staff of the meeting.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (6) *Andrew is a lecturer at the university. Today he returned the graded exam papers to the class and one of his students who attends another course with him needs to discuss her paper with him. Dr. Andrew advises her to come see him today at 12. Before he leaves the class, Dr. Andrew learns that there is a teaching staff meeting @12. He asks his student to come see him at 1 instead.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (7) *Emma is a college student enrolled in course with a professor who has never taught her before. Today, this professor returned the graded exam papers to the students. After the class, while Emma and her classmates were discussing their grades she discovers that the professor has incorrectly marked her paper for one of the questions. She asks the professor to correct her grade.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (8) *Fey is an employee. A new boss has recently been assigned and Fey hasn't met him yet. Fey needs to take couple of days off from the total number of vacation days she's entitled to. Fey applies for a leave and asks the new boss to sign her application form.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (9) *Emma is a college student writing an assignment paper for one of her courses, due tomorrow. She tried to finish the paper on time but couldn't because she has been preparing for the final exams in her other courses at the same time. The professor teaching this course has taught Emma before and knows her. Emma understands that all professors must correct the papers early to submit students' grades on time. She asks her professor to extend the due date for her anyway.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (10) *Rachel is a college student. In one of her courses, the midterm exam is due by the end of the week but Rachel caught a very bad cold and couldn't study. The professor teaching this course has taught Rachel before and knows her. Rachel understands that if she didn't take the exam this week with the rest of the class the professor will have to come up with different questions for her to guarantee that she doesn't know the exam questions in advance. She asks her professor to let her take the exam next week.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (11) *Ben has recently graduated from college and applying for a job. The job application form requires that applicants attach a letter of recommendation. Ben asks one of the professors who taught him in college to write him a letter of recommendation.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (12) *Ben has recently applied for a job and the application form requires that applicants attach a letter of recommendation. In his next visit, Ben provided the letter of recommendation along with the other required documents. He asks the employee in charge of processing his application to let him know as soon as anything comes up.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (13)
Louisa is at the library trying to study for a difficult exam. The student sitting next to Louisa receives a mobile phone call and starts talking loudly. Louisa is distracted and asks the student to keep it down.

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (14) *Louisa is a college student. She has missed the first two lectures in one of her courses. In today's lecture the professor emphasizes the importance of the points he made in class as most of the exam questions come from them. Louisa needs to get the notes for the lectures she missed but doesn't know anyone in this class. Louisa asks to borrow the notes of the student sitting next to her.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (15) *Danielle is a college student attending a lecture. The professor starts explaining some important points. She wants to write them down but forgot to bring her notebook and pencil case. Danielle doesn't know the student sitting next to her but notices she's taking down notes. Danielle asks this student sitting next to her for a spare sheet of paper and a pen.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (16) *Danielle is a college student attending a lecture. The professor starts explaining some important points from the course-book but Danielle couldn't follow because she left her course-book at home. Danielle doesn't know the student sitting next to her but notices she has the course-book. Danielle asks this student to let her share her course-book.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (17) *Sam has a friend who is travelling to Europe. Sam couldn't find her favourite perfume in UK which she bought from Europe. Sam realizes that asking for couple of bottles of this perfume might be heavy to carry. She asks her friend to bring her some bottles of the perfume and that she'll pay her back in GB Pounds.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (18) *Sam has a friend who is travelling to Europe. Sam needs some allergy tablets which are no longer available in UK and are only sold in Europe now. The tablets must be kept at a cool temperature so her friend will have to carry them in hand luggage which might be inconvenient. Sam asks her friend to bring her some boxes of these allergy tablets and that she'll pay her back in GB Pounds.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (19) *Mark's car is at the service centre this week. Mark's friend is studying at the same college as Mark and does not live far away. Mark needs to get to the university and so he asks his friend for a ride.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Situation (20) *Alex's mobile phone has run out of battery and he needs to make a quick phone call. Alex asks his friend to let him use his mobile phone.*

How often do you come across a situation of this type in your life?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Many thanks for your participation.

Table (1): Use of each 'Preparatory' sub-strategy in each situation.

Situation	Preparatory type	Arabic group	EFL Group	ESL group	English Group
		Column N %	Column N %	Column N %	Column N %
(1)	Ability	6.7%	50.0%	36.7%	46.7%
	Willingness	.0%	20.0%	23.3%	20.0%
	Possibility	46.7%	.0%	3.3%	.0%
	Permission	6.7%	3.3%	.0%	13.3%
	Availability	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Prediction	10.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
(2)	Ability	.0%	3.3%	6.7%	.0%
	Willingness	.0%	.0%	6.7%	13.3%
	Possibility	6.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Permission	60.0%	90.0%	80.0%	80.0%
	Availability	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Prediction	3.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%
(3)	Ability	.0%	13.3%	20.0%	13.3%
	Willingness	.0%	6.7%	10.0%	.0%
	Possibility	43.3%	.0%	3.3%	.0%
	Permission	20.0%	40.0%	33.3%	53.3%
	Availability	20.0%	36.7%	20.0%	33.3%
	Prediction	3.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%
(4)	Ability	3.3%	16.7%	33.3%	93.3%
	Willingness	.0%	3.3%	10.0%	.0%
	Possibility	20.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Permission	.0%	3.3%	3.3%	.0%
	Availability	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Prediction	6.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%
(5)	Ability	3.3%	60.0%	36.7%	40.0%
	Willingness	.0%	6.7%	30.0%	20.0%
	Possibility	50.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Permission	13.3%	13.3%	10.0%	13.3%
	Availability	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Prediction	10.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
(6)	Ability	10.0%	40.0%	50.0%	80.0%
	Willingness	.0%	13.3%	6.7%	6.7%
	Possibility	10.0%	.0%	3.3%	6.7%
	Permission	16.7%	6.7%	.0%	.0%
	Availability	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Prediction	16.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%
(7)	Ability	3.3%	40.0%	36.7%	26.7%

	Willingness	.0%	13.3%	30.0%	33.3%
	Possibility	20.0%	3.3%	.0%	6.7%
	Permission	13.3%	3.3%	.0%	.0%
	Availability	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Prediction	23.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%
(8)	Ability	3.3%	23.3%	26.7%	.0%
	Willingness	.0%	13.3%	20.0%	20.0%
	Possibility	10.0%	.0%	10.0%	6.7%
	Permission	63.3%	63.3%	30.0%	73.3%
	Availability	.0%	.0%	3.3%	.0%
	Prediction	6.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%
(9)	Ability	3.3%	13.3%	26.7%	93.3%
	Willingness	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Possibility	6.7%	3.3%	.0%	.0%
	Permission	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Availability	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Prediction	10.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
(10)	Ability	.0%	40.0%	33.3%	40.0%
	Willingness	.0%	10.0%	23.3%	.0%
	Possibility	30.0%	10.0%	6.7%	13.3%
	Permission	26.7%	10.0%	13.3%	40.0%
	Availability	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Prediction	6.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%

Table (2): The main effect of factors 'group' and 'Power', and the interaction between these factors on participants' use of request strategies.

Tests of Model Effects

Source	Type III		
	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Group	23.164	3	.000
Power	84.299	2	.000
Group * Power	9.765	6	.135

Dependent Variable: 1st Request type used

Model: (Threshold), Group, Power, Group * Power

Table (3): The main effect of factors 'group' and 'Distance', and the interaction between these factors on participants' use of request strategies.

Tests of Model Effects

Source	Type III		
	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Group	15.861	3	.001
Distance	55.177	1	.000
Group * Distance	11.397	3	.010

Table (4): The main effect of factors 'group' and 'Imposition', and the interaction between these factors on participants' use of request strategies.

Tests of Model Effects

Source	Type III		
	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.
(Intercept)	4976.060	1	.000
Group	36.582	3	.000
Imposition	.620	1	.431
Group * Imposition	2.999	3	.392

Table (5): The main effect of factors 'group' and 'Power', and the interaction between these factors on participants' use of external modification.

Tests of Model Effects

Source	Type III		
	Wald Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
(Intercept)	795.379	1	.000
Group	3.601	3	.308
Ext_modifier	486.999	7	.000
Power	15.297	2	.000
Group * Ext_modifier	221.815	21	.000
Group * power	11.225	6	.082
Ext_modifier * power	184.796	14	.000
Group * Ext_modifier * power	199.673	42	.000

Table (6): The main effect of factors 'group' and 'Distance', and the interaction between these factors on participants' use of external modification.

Tests of Model Effects

Source	Type III		
	Wald Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
(Intercept)	985.324	1	.000
Group	9.600	3	.022
Ext_modifier	538.457	7	.000
distance	44.348	1	.000
Group * Ext_modifier	300.885	21	.000
Group * distance	7.093	3	.069
Ext_modifier * distance	92.526	7	.000
Group * Ext_modifier * distance	39.396	21	.009

Table (7): The main effect of factors 'group' and 'Imposition', and the interaction between these factors on participants' use of external modification.

Tests of Model Effects

Source	Type III		
	Wald Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Group	5.483	3	.140
Ext_modifier	467.240	7	.000
Imposition	188.491	1	.000
Group * Ext_modifier	249.847	21	.000
Group * imposition	.358	3	.949
Ext_modifier * imposition	208.310	7	.000
Group * Ext_modifier * imposition	40.068	20	.005

Table (8) **Significance test for the differences between groups in relation to the use of external modification.**

Pairwise Comparisons

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	df	Sequential Bonferroni Sig.	95% Wald Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Arabic control group	EFL group	.11[a]	.017	1	.000	.07	.16
	ESL group	.01	.027	1	.621	-.04	.07
	English control group	-.03	.024	1	.333	-.09	.02
EFL group	Arabic control group	-.11[a]	.017	1	.000	-.16	-.07
	ESL group	-.10[a]	.022	1	.000	-.15	-.05
	English control group	-.15[a]	.017	1	.000	-.19	-.10
ESL group	Arabic control group	-.01	.027	1	.621	-.07	.04
	EFL group	.10[a]	.022	1	.000	.05	.15
	English control group	-.05	.027	1	.263	-.11	.02
English control group	Arabic control group	.03	.024	1	.333	-.02	.09
	EFL group	.15[a]	.017	1	.000	.10	.19
	ESL group	.05	.027	1	.263	-.02	.11

Pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means based on the original scale of dependent variable Frequency of choice

a. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table (9) **Significance test for the differences between groups in relation to the use of lexical/phrasal downgraders.**

Pairwise Comparisons

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	df	Sequential Bonferroni Sig.	95% Wald Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Arabic group	EFL group	.00	.000	1	.361	.00	.00
	ESL group	.00	.000	1	.361	.00	.00
	English group	.07[a]	.017	1	.000	.03	.12
EFL group	Arabic group	.00	.000	1	.361	.00	.00
	ESL group	.00	.000	1	.146	.00	.00
	English group	.07[a]	.017	1	.000	.03	.12
ESL group	Arabic group	.00	.000	1	.361	.00	.00
	EFL group	.00	.000	1	.146	.00	.00
	English group	.07[a]	.017	1	.000	.03	.12
English group	Arabic group	-.07[a]	.017	1	.000	-.12	-.03
	EFL group	-.07[a]	.017	1	.000	-.12	-.03
	ESL group	-.07[a]	.017	1	.000	-.12	-.03

Pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means based on the original scale of dependent variable Use of lexical modifier p

a. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table (10) **Significance test for the differences between groups in relation to the use of syntactic downgraders.**

Pairwise Comparisons

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	df	Sequential Bonferroni Sig.	95% Wald Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Arabic control group	EFL group	.00	.000	1	.422	.00	.00
	ESL group	.00[a]	.000	1	.016	.00	.00
	English control group	.09[a]	.020	1	.000	.04	.14
EFL group	Arabic control group	.00	.000	1	.422	.00	.00
	ESL group	.00[a]	.000	1	.016	.00	.00
	English control group	.09[a]	.020	1	.000	.04	.14
ESL group	Arabic control group	.00[a]	.000	1	.016	.00	.00
	EFL group	.00[a]	.000	1	.016	.00	.00
	English control group	.09[a]	.020	1	.000	.04	.14
English control group	Arabic control group	-.09[a]	.020	1	.000	-.14	-.04
	EFL group	-.09[a]	.020	1	.000	-.14	-.04
	ESL group	-.09[a]	.020	1	.000	-.14	-.04

Pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means based on the original scale of dependent variable Use vs. non-use

a. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table (11): The main effect of factors 'group' and 'Power', and the interaction between these factors on participants' use of lexical/phrasal downgraders.

Tests of Model Effects

Source	Type III		
	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.
(Intercept)	1778.723	1	.000
Group	434.178	3	.000
Lex_modifier	758.208	5	.000
Power	546.200	2	.000
Group * Lex_modifier	968.996	11	.000
Group * Power	284.710	6	.000
Lex_modifier * Power	2015.992	9	.000
Group * Lex_modifier * Power	4804.632	7	.000

Table (12): The main effect of factors 'group' and 'Distance', and the interaction between these factors on participants' use of lexical/phrasal downgraders.

Tests of Model Effects

Source	Type III		
	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.
(Intercept)	1542.415	1	.000
Group	674.678	3	.000
Lex_modifier	870.838	5	.000
Distance	48.808	1	.000
Group * Lex_modifier	1302.390	11	.000
Group * Distance	96.978	3	.000
Lex_modifier * Distance	516.669	5	.000
Group * Lex_modifier * Distance	3184.937	6	.000

Table (13): The main effect of factors 'group' and 'Imposition', and the interaction between these factors on participants' use of lexical/phrasal downgraders.

Tests of Model Effects

Source	Type III		
	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.
(Intercept)	1563.137	1	.000
Group	713.977	3	.000
Lex_modifier	940.119	5	.000
Imposition	9.653	1	.002
Group * Lex_modifier	760.159	11	.000
Group * Imposition	292.635	3	.000
Lex_modifier * Imposition	521.419	5	.000
Group * Lex_modifier * Imposition	2962.538	6	.000

Table (14): The main effect of factors 'group' and 'Power', and the interaction between these factors on participants' use of syntactic downgraders.

Tests of Model Effects

Source	Type III		
	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.
(Intercept)	4089.333	1	.000
Group	111.615	3	.000
Synt_modifier	3526.872	4	.000
Power	66.605	2	.000
Group * Synt_modifier	929.486	9	.000
Group * Power	865.731	6	.000
Synt_modifier * Power	169.030	6	.000
Group * Synt_modifier * Power	2063.335	9	.000

Table (15): The main effect of factors 'group' and 'Distance', and the interaction between these factors on participants' use of syntactic downgraders.

Tests of Model Effects

Source	Type III		
	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.
(Intercept)	1895.813	1	.000
Group	1360.129	3	.000
Synt_modifier	1658.695	4	.000
Distance	44.464	1	.000
Group * Synt_modifier	681.182	9	.000
Group * Distance	486.286	3	.000
Synt_modifier * Distance	93.512	4	.000
Group * Synt_modifier * Distance	5.436	5	.365

Table (16): The main effect of factors 'group' and 'Imposition', and the interaction between these factors on participants' use of syntactic downgraders.

Tests of Model Effects

Source	Type III		
	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.
(Intercept)	1678.073	1	.000
Group	1123.126	3	.000
Synt_modifier	1696.829	4	.000
Imposition	2.306	1	.129
Group * Synt_modifier	573.217	9	.000
Group * Imposition	.867	3	.833
Synt_modifier * Imposition	247.971	4	.000
Group * Synt_modifier * Imposition	7.797	5	.168

Table (17): Use of each external modifier in each situation.

Situation	External Modifier	KA group	INL group	ADL group	BE group
(1)	Alerter	32.5%	72.2%	54.5%	61.5%
	Preparator	5.0%	.0%	18.2%	.0%
	Disarmer	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Grounder	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Apology for Inconvenience	.0%	5.6%	.0%	.0%
	Imposition Minimizer	60.0%	.0%	9.1%	.0%
	Encouraging H to comply	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Appreciator	2.5%	22.2%	18.2%	38.5%
(2)	Alerter	26.5%	14.3%	7.7%	9.5%
	Preparator	2.0%	.0%	.0%	4.8%
	Disarmer	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Grounder	46.9%	78.6%	80.8%	57.1%
	Apology for Inconvenience	.0%	3.6%	3.8%	4.8%
	Imposition Minimizer	22.4%	3.6%	.0%	.0%
	Encouraging H to comply	2.0%	.0%	3.8%	14.3%
	Appreciator	.0%	.0%	3.8%	9.5%
(3)	Alerter	22.7%	41.9%	23.3%	31.0%
	Preparator	.0%	2.3%	.0%	.0%
	Disarmer	2.3%	2.3%	3.3%	.0%
	Grounder	25.0%	25.6%	40.0%	20.7%
	Apology for Inconvenience	2.3%	14.0%	23.3%	41.4%
	Imposition Minimizer	47.7%	7.0%	3.3%	.0%
	Encouraging H to comply	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Appreciator	.0%	7.0%	6.7%	6.9%
(4)	Alerter	28.6%	41.9%	70.8%	40.0%
	Preparator	2.9%	2.3%	4.2%	40.0%
	Disarmer	0%	2.3%	.0%	0%
	Grounder	0%	25.6%	12.5%	20.0%
	Apology for Inconvenience	0%	14.0%	0%	0%
	Imposition Minimizer	57.1%	7.0%	0%	0%
	Encouraging H to comply	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Appreciator	11.4%	7.0%	12.5%	0%
(5)	Alerter	43.9%	62.9%	45.8%	31.0%
	Preparator	.0%	2.9%	5.1%	6.9%
	Disarmer	.0%	.0%	1.7%	3.4%
	Grounder	30.5%	31.4%	35.6%	44.8%
	Apology for Inconvenience	.0%	.0%	3.4%	10.3%
	Imposition Minimizer	23.2%	2.9%	5.1%	3.4%

	Encouraging H to comply	1.2%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Appreciator	1.2%	.0%	3.4%	.0%
(6)	Alerter	15.2%	20.2%	9.8%	1.9%
	Preparator	8.6%	9.0%	13.0%	20.4%
	Disarmer	4.8%	2.2%	2.2%	5.6%
	Grounder	26.7%	24.7%	26.1%	24.1%
	Apology for Inconvenience	1.9%	6.7%	6.5%	1.9%
	Imposition Minimizer	23.8%	9.0%	14.1%	13.0%
	Encouraging H to comply	16.2%	15.7%	21.7%	27.8%
	Appreciator	2.9%	12.4%	6.5%	5.6%
(7)	Alerter	23.6%	39.3%	48.0%	33.3%
	Preparator	23.6%	14.3%	20.0%	50.0%
	Disarmer	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Grounder	1.8%	.0%	4.0%	.0%
	Apology for Inconvenience	1.8%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Imposition Minimizer	41.8%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Encouraging H to comply	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
	Appreciator	7.3%	46.4%	28.0%	16.7%
(8)	Alerter	11.7%	32.7%	17.0%	27.9%
	Preparator	6.7%	4.1%	5.7%	11.6%
	Disarmer	.0%	.0%	.0%	2.3%
	Grounder	31.7%	38.8%	32.1%	27.9%
	Apology for Inconvenience	.0%	4.1%	3.8%	7.0%
	Imposition Minimizer	43.3%	4.1%	5.7%	2.3%
	Encouraging H to comply	6.7%	12.2%	17.0%	11.6%
	Appreciator	.0%	4.1%	18.9%	9.3%
(9)	Alerter	19.6%	14.3%	22.7%	17.1%
	Preparator	9.8%	10.0%	3.0%	2.9%
	Disarmer	6.5%	4.3%	3.0%	11.4%
	Grounder	32.6%	37.1%	42.4%	40.0%
	Apology for Inconvenience	5.4%	10.0%	10.6%	17.1%
	Imposition Minimizer	15.2%	1.4%	3.0%	2.9%
	Encouraging H to comply	4.3%	15.7%	9.1%	2.9%
	Appreciator	6.5%	7.1%	6.1%	5.7%
(10)	Alerter	33.3%	34.8%	27.7%	18.2%
	Preparator	3.0%	4.3%	3.6%	.0%
	Disarmer	4.0%	5.8%	7.2%	18.2%
	Grounder	23.2%	36.2%	31.3%	29.5%
	Apology for Inconvenience	2.0%	5.8%	6.0%	15.9%
	Imposition Minimizer	15.2%	2.9%	1.2%	.0%
	Encouraging H to comply	18.2%	5.8%	12.0%	9.1%
	Appreciator	1.0%	4.3%	10.8%	9.1%

Table (18): Use of each lexical/phrasal downgrader in each situation.

Situation	Lexical/phrasal Downgrader.	KA group	INL group	ADL group	BE group
		Count	Count	Count	Count
(1)	Politeness Marker	0	18	19	7
	Consultative Device	1	0	0	0
	Understater	0	0	0	0
	Subjectivizer	0	0	0	0
	Downtoner	0	0	0	0
	Appealer	0	0	0	0
(2)	Politeness Marker	1	17	13	3
	Consultative Device	0	0	0	0
	Understater	10	2	10	11
	Subjectivizer	0	0	0	0
	Downtoner	0	0	0	1
	Appealer	0	0	0	0
(3)	Politeness Marker	0	10	13	5
	Consultative Device	0	0	0	1
	Understater	5	15	17	4
	Subjectivizer	0	0	0	1
	Downtoner	0	0	0	1
	Appealer	0	0	0	3
(4)	Politeness Marker	1	7	13	7
	Consultative Device	0	0	0	0
	Understater	0	0	0	0
	Subjectivizer	0	0	0	0
	Downtoner	0	0	0	0
	Appealer	0	0	0	0
(5)	Politeness Marker	0	15	18	5
	Consultative Device	0	0	0	1
	Understater	0	1	1	2
	Subjectivizer	1	4	1	1
	Downtoner	0	0	0	1
	Appealer	1	0	0	1
(6)	Politeness Marker	0	7	8	1
	Consultative Device	1	0	0	0
	Understater	1	0	0	1
	Subjectivizer	1	2	2	3
	Downtoner	0	0	0	2
	Appealer	0	1	1	2
(7)	Politeness Marker	0	12	10	2

	Consultative Device	0	0	0	0
	Understater	1	0	0	1
	Subjectivizer	1	0	1	2
	Downtoner	0	0	0	0
	Appealer	0	0	1	0
(8)	**Politeness Marker**	0	11	8	1
	Consultative Device	0	0	0	0
	Understater	1	2	1	4
	Subjectivizer	1	2	0	1
	Downtoner	0	0	0	1
	Appealer	0	0	0	1
(9)	Politeness Marker	0	4	5	2
	Consultative Device	0	0	2	1
	Understater	2	0	0	0
	Subjectivizer	0	1	0	0
	Downtoner	0	0	0	1
	Appealer	0	0	0	0
(10)	**Politeness Marker**	0	9	13	3
	Consultative Device	0	0	0	0
	Understater	4	1	3	5
	Subjectivizer	3	1	0	1
	Downtoner	0	0	0	1
	Appealer	0	0	0	0

Table (19): Use of each syntactic downgrader in each situation.

Situation	Syntactic Downgrader	Arabic group	EFL Group	ESL group	English Group
		Count	Count	Count	Count
(1)	Negation of Preparatory Condition	0	0	0	0
	Tense	0	10	9	11
	Embedding	0	0	0	0
	Conditional	0	0	0	1
	Aspect	0	1	0	2
(2)	Negation of Preparatory Condition	0	0	0	0
	Tense	1	0	2	5
	Embedding	0	1	3	3
	Conditional	0	0	0	0
	Aspect	0	0	0	0
(3)	Negation of Preparatory Condition	0	0	0	2
	Tense	0	2	5	7
	Embedding	0	0	2	0
	Conditional	0	0	0	0
	Aspect	0	2	1	0
(4)	Negation of Preparatory Condition	0	0	0	0
	Tense	3	3	7	12
	Embedding	1	0	0	0
	Conditional	0	0	0	0
	Aspect	0	0	0	0
(5)	Negation of Preparatory Condition	1	0	0	0
	Tense	0	9	13	9
	Embedding	2	0	3	1
	Conditional	0	0	0	0
	Aspect	0	2	3	4
(6)	Negation of Preparatory Condition	0	0	0	3
	Tense	0	6	7	11
	Embedding	1	3	2	4
	Conditional	2	0	1	0
	Aspect	0	3	3	4
(7)	Negation of Preparatory Condition	0	0	1	0
	Tense	2	2	11	6
	Embedding	3	2	3	2
	Conditional	0	0	0	0
	Aspect	0	2	1	2
(8)	Negation of Preparatory Condition	0	0	0	0
	Tense	1	3	21	10

	Embedding	3	3	4	3
	Conditional	0	0	0	0
	Aspect	0	3	2	1
(9)	Negation of Preparatory Condition	0	0	0	0
	Tense	0	0	3	10
	Embedding	2	1	2	3
	Conditional	1	0	0	1
	Aspect	0	0	0	0
(10)	**Negation of Preparatory Condition**	0	0	0	0
	Tense	2	6	9	6
	Embedding	1	4	5	2
	Conditional	2	0	0	0
	Aspect	0	2	1	0