

# A Deeper Look into Requests: Insight from Jordanian Speakers of Arabic Vis-À-Vis American English Speaker

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## Abstract

This study sought to investigate the differences between the request strategies used by Jordanian and American speakers. Data for this study were collected via a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) questionnaire, incorporating 16 real-life scenarios in the form of short descriptive statements. In accordance with the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns, participants' responses (n= 30) divided into three groups (Jordanian Non-English Majors, Jordanian English Majors and American participants). The data were analyzed and further classified into three types based on their level of directness: (i) direct (D), (ii) conventional indirect (ID), and (iii) non-conventional indirect requests (NID).

The results of this study indicate that the act of requesting is performed differently by the three groups of participants. The results also showed that strategy (Reference to Preparatory Cond.) was ranked the highest in percent (87.5%, 67.5%) for the two groups American and Jordanian “Male”) respectively, and (86.3%, 76.3%) %) for the two groups American and Jordanian “Female”) respectively. Also, results showed that the strategy (Locution Deliverable) was ranked the lowest by the Jordanian females sample, just (1.9%).

**Keywords:** Speech acts, Directness, Pragmalinguistics, Request strategy, Illocutionary Request, DCT

## 1. Introduction

Language is a socio-cultural phenomenon employed by people to communicate with each other (Jarbou, 2002). The various utilizations of this phenomenon are often attributed to differing social settings and contexts. One of the different contexts that people produce in real life situations is exhibited in the speech act of requesting. Requests are common occurrences in everyday life, often used for sustaining good relations and invariably reducing conflict. This shows the importance of communicating successfully and acquiring communicative competence.

In any language, speech is a powerful tool of communication, the most significant aspect of which lies in the message that the speaker wants to convey. When the hearer understands the function of the message, he or she will behave positively or negatively. We often formulate what we say to fit the context or situation; that is, what we say does not necessarily correspond to what we intend to convey. The meaning beyond the words (or sentences) is sometimes different from the form of words which leads to the study of pragmatics.

Pragmatics is the study of language in use, or that of the speaker meaning. It is defined as the relation of sign to their users and interpreters. It is “how language is used in communication” (Leech, 1983:1). Linguists and language philosophers called the production of performative utterances as speech acts. Not only do they play a role in revealing the main character of the speaker, but also add a stylistic impact on the content involved in any text. Syntactically, texts are realized by different syntactic structures (imperative, interrogative, and declarative) to express the different classes of speech acts (e.g., apologies, requests, etc).

Speakers employ a variety of communicative acts, or speech acts, to achieve their communicative goals, including Searle’s seminal broad categories such as classification, commissives, declarations, directives, expressives, and representatives as well as more specific ones such as apologies, requests, complaints, and refusals (Kasper & Rose, 2001).

To non-native English speakers, pragmatic competence refers to the ability of a second language (L2) learner or a foreign language learner to use the target language appropriately in corresponding social contexts (Nureddeen, 2008; Savignon, 1991; Taguchi, 2009). Pragmatically competent learners need to utilize a range of linguistic forms, socio-cultural norms and rules, and processing skills in real time communication (Taguchi, 2009). However, English pragmatic knowledge and competence have been poorly taught in Jordan for a long period of time. This probably explains why upon completing their English studies, most Jordanian learners of English are often unable to communicate effectively and appropriately in English in social interactions.

The act of requesting has been one of the most frequently examined speech acts in Interlanguage Pragmatics (Schauer, 2009). Performing the act of requesting is rather common and may be affected by different factors. Proper and successful execution of requesting requires that speakers take into consideration several variables including, among others, hearer (addressee), relationship with hearer (level of formality/familiarity), topic, purpose of speech, and the appropriate linguistic forms implemented. Additionally, speakers should also

be aware of cultural differences and what implications requesting has on the face of addressee(s) to ensure successful communication with peoples of varying cultural backgrounds.

The present research aims at examining the strategies and functions of request expressions made by both speakers of Jordanian Arabic and American English, analyzing the different strategies and functions associated with request expressions.

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

Language is an essential means of communication exclusively employed for social interactions. Brown and Yule (1983:1) state that language serves two fundamental functions in human affairs: “[1] function which language serve as in the expression of content (transactional) and [2] functions involved in expressing social relations and personal attitudes (interpersonal).” It follows that speakers employ different ways to express the content of their utterances (transactional) governed by corresponding social relations and attitudes (interpersonal).

Pragmatics, a subfield of linguistics developed in late 1970s, studies how people comprehend and produce communicative acts (or speech acts) in conversational exchanges. Crystal (1985: 240) defines pragmatics as “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication”.

According to Searle (1969), speakers usually use language to perform certain functions in the course of communication (e.g., requesting, arguing, ordering, inviting, among others). These communicative functions are almost always carried out within a context. The speaker, on the basis of his/her intent, level of emotions, and relationship with the addressee, chooses a way to express their argument.

The study of speech acts has often been linked to the concept of politeness. According to many researchers (Holmes, 1984; Brown, 2004; Watts, 2003; Thomas, 1983; Kasper 2001, *inter alia*), politeness can be defined as means of expressing consideration for others, i.e., to show concern for social face while interacting.

Searle (1969) crystallized the concepts of illocutionary act and illocutionary force to the extent where one can speak of his Speech Act Theory. Speech act theory is in practice a reference to illocutionary acts. To perform a speech act successfully, certain conditions must be present. Searle proposes four rules on the foundation of these conditions:

1. Propositional Content Rules: specify the kind of meaning expressed by the propositional part of an utterance;
2. Preparatory Rules: delineate the conditions which are pre-requisite to the performance of the speech act;

3. Sincerity Rules: outline the conditions which must obtain if the speech act is to be performed sincerely;

4. Essential Rules: specify what the speech act must conventionally count as. On the basis of the above rules, different speech acts can be easily distinguished for establishing systems of classification for illocutions.

Tabar (2012) focused on realization of requests made by Iranian Persian monolinguals and Turkish-Persian bilingual speakers according to the directness categories introduced by Blum-Kulka et al. (1984). He found that politeness strategies are different in languages in that, hints have been rated as being neutral area in Persian, but they tend to be close to the more polite area in Turkish in Iran. With regard to gender, a comparison reveals that, there are some differences in the use of certain strategies however, in case of requests, females use less direct strategies in Persian and more direct strategies in Turkish in comparison with males.

When requests are addressed to people in lower positions, EFL's tend to use more direct request strategies in performing their request. Also they prefer to use conventionally indirect strategies in addressing their acquaintances and friends when the ranking of imposition is very high. On the other hand, when the requestee is in a higher position, EFL's use more indirect strategies to show their respect and deference. Indirect requests or negative politeness strategies are used to protect both the requester and the requestees' faces. Also EFL's responses are influenced by their linguistic and cultural backgrounds; thus, it is suggested that Tunisian learners of English should be aware of the socio-cultural and pragmatic differences between their L1 (Tunisian Arabic) and English as a foreign language (Aribi, 2012).

### **3. Methods and Procedures**

#### *3.1 Participants*

Three proportional groups of participants were recruited for this study: (1) English majors who are native speakers of Arabic (n=10), (2) non-English majors who are native speakers of Arabic (n=10) and (3) native speakers of American English (n=10). The Jordanian participants were selected from the University of Jordan and Al-Balqa Applied University.

#### *3.2 Data Collection Instrument*

Data for this study was collected via a written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) questionnaire. The DCT comprised of 16 hypothetical situations, each of which calls for performing the act of requesting on the part of the respondent(s). Each item on the DCT represents a social interaction/context that differs from the others in terms of the status relationship among the interactants, e.g., requesting a pen from a classmate [equal to equal], from a professor [lower to higher] and so on. For example, the first scenario on the DCT represents the social situation of a student (low status L) requesting to interview a university president (high status H). Situation 3 represents another situation where a person of an equal status (i.e., student) wants to borrow notes from his/her classmate who is of an equal status with no social distance between them. A complete list of all 16 situations can be found in

Appendix A. Table 1 below describes all situations in terms of speaker's Status relative to the addressee, Power (P) and Social Distance (D) along with a short description.

Table 1. DCT Stimuli According to Speaker Status, Power & Distance

No.	S's Status to H			Power (P)	Distance (D)	Situation
1	L	→	H	-	+	Interviewing a university president
2	E	→	E	=	+	A student borrowing a pen from another at the Registrar's Office
3	E	→	E	=	-	A friend borrowing class notes from another friend
4	E	→	E	=	+	A student asking another student for directions at the university campus
5	E	→	E	=	-	A friend asking another friend to babysit
6	H	→	L	+	-	A manager borrowing a piece of paper from one of his/her employees
7	E	→	E	-	+	A student asking for a ride from his/her professor
8	L	→	H	-	-	A student asking for a letter of recommendation from a professor
9	H	→	L	+	-	A bookstore owner asking one of the employees to work overtime
10	L	→	H	-	+	A new student requests professor to speak louder
11	E	→	E	=	+	Borrowing a lighter in the park
12	L	→	H	-	-	A son/daughter asking his/her father to pass the salt
13	H	→	L	+	+	A customer asking the shop attendant for assistance
14	E	→	E	=	+	A classmate asking another for notes
15	E	→	E	=	-	A friend asking for a napkin from another
16	H	→	L	+	+	Asking a taxi driver to take a different road

### 3.3 Data Collection Procedures

To obtain a greater level of objectivity and capture subtleties that may not be captured by the DCT, structured closed-ended interviews were conducted.

Each participant was individually interviewed by the researcher through the use of a structured interview form consisting of questions revolving around request forms, strategies and functions. The DCT questionnaire was administered in two formats. The first format was formal in which the researcher distributed the Arabic version of the DCT questionnaire to Jordanian English majors as well as non-English majors. The English was version of the DCT questionnaire administered to the American-English speakers.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Data collected for this study were analyzed quantitatively supported by descriptive statistics. Descriptively, the participants' responses were analyzed to determine, frequencies and

percentages for cross-classification purposes, e.g., to determine which requesting strategy (or set of strategies) had the highest frequency in the respondents' choices or alternatively to determine which one had the lowest statistical mean. Qualitatively, the participant's responses to the DCT questionnaire were coded, categorized and analyzed in accordance with the Speech Act Theory and the widely accepted framework of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) coding scheme, proposed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), and revised by Blum-Kulka, House, and Jasper (1989).

#### **4. Results**

As stated above, the Jordanian group consisted of 20 participants equally divided into English majors ( $n = 10$ ) and non-English majors ( $n = 10$ ). Each of them comprised 5 males (50%) and 5 females (50%). The American group also consisted of 10 participants divided into 5 males and 5 females. The age bracket of the sample ranged from 18 to 26 years.

**Jordanian Group (English Majors):** Results show that the strategy Reference to Preparatory Condition ranked the highest 52 with a percentage of 65.0% for male Jordanian "English Majors" (Male) participants, while the strategy Mood Deliverable ranked second in terms of use by the same group with a frequency of 15 and a percentage of 18.8% which is considered as one of the direct strategies; in this strategy, the illocutionary force was often marked by the mood of such verbs as 'give', 'hand', 'go', 'pass', 'take', and so on.. For females, the strategy Reference to Preparatory Condition also ranked the highest with a frequency of 60 and a percentage of 75.0% while the strategy Strong Hints ranked second in terms of use by the same group 7 with a percentage of 8.8%, and Mood Deliverable ranked third level with frequencies number 4 in 5.0% (See Table 2 and Table 3).

**Jordanian Group (Non-English Majors):** Results show that the Reference to Preparatory Condition strategy was ranked the highest among Jordanian "Non-English Majors" groups with a frequency of 56 and a percentage of 70.0% among male participants, and a frequency of 62 and a percentage of 77.5% among female participants. The second most frequently used strategy was the use of implicit performative Mood Deliverable; with a 12.5% of the direct requests among both male and female participants.

**The American Group:** Strategies used by male and female participants show that conventional indirect strategy Reference to Preparatory Condition ranked the highest among male and female participants with a frequency of 70 and a percentage of 87.5% among male participants compared to a frequency of 69 and a percentage of 86.3% among female participants. The strategy Mood Deliverable ranked the second most frequently used strategy among American male participants while Hedged (Implicit) Performative strategy ranked the second most frequently used strategy manifested in the use of implicit performative. (see table 6 and Table 7)

**Comparisons between Jordanian English and Non-English Majors:** To determine the differences between Jordanian English and non-English Major groups, frequencies and percentages are summarized in Table 1. According to the results, the Jordanian males showed that the two groups used the same Reference to Preparatory Condition strategy more often,



taking into account that English Major group used it more frequently (56) than the Non-English group (52). The strategy Mood Deliverable ranked second with a frequency of 15 among non-English major group compared to 10 among English major group. Neither of the two groups used Locution Deliverable strategy any time as shown in Table 8.

Jordanian females in both groups were used the same (Reference to Preparatory Cond.) strategy more often, taking into account that English Majors group used it more frequently (62) than the frequency used by Non-English group (60). Furthermore, English Majors group used the strategy (Mood Deliverable) in the second order (10 times) where Non-English group used the strategy Strong Hints in the second order with a frequency of 7 times.

Jordanian (English and Non-English Majors) vs. American participants: To determine the differences between Jordanian groups and the American group responses, percentages were calculated summarized as shown in Table 3. The Strategy of Reference to Preparatory Condition was used more frequently by the American male Participants with a percentage of 87.5% compared to 67.5% by the Jordanian male participants. In contrast, the Strategy of Mood Deliverable was used more by the Jordanian male participants with a percentage of 15.7% compared to 6.3% by the American male participants. Finally, the Strategy of Explicit Performative was used more by the American male participants with a percentage of 1.2% compared to 0.6% by the Jordanian participants.

Reference to Preparatory Condition Strategy was used more by the American female participants with a percentage of 86.3% compared to 76.3% by the Jordanian female participants. In contrast, the Strategy of Mood Deliverable was used more by the Jordanian female participants with a percentage of 8.8% compared to 1.2% by their American counterparts. Hedged (Implicit) Performative Strategy was used more by the American female participants with a percentage of 5% compared to 1.2% by their Jordanian counterparts. Locution Deliverable Strategy was used more by the Jordanian female participants with a percentage of 1.9%, but was not used at all by their American counterparts. This holds true for the Want Statement Strategy which was used by the Jordanian female participants with a percentage of 3.2%, but not used at all by the American female participants.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage of Request strategies used by Jordanian "Non-English Majors and English Majors" (Male and Female) participants

Strategy	Male participants						Female participants					
	Non- English Majors (N=5)			English Majors (N=5)			Non- English Majors (N=5)			English Majors (N=5)		
	Freq.	Percent	Ranking	Freq.	Percent	Ranking	Freq.	Percent	Ranking	Freq.	Percent	Ranking
Mood Deliverable	15	18.8%	2	10	12.5%	2	4	5.0%	3	10	12.5%	2
Explicit Performative	0	0.0%	7	1	1.2%	7	1	1.2%	7	1	1.2%	4
Hedged (Implicit) Performative	2	2.5%	6	3	3.8%	4	1	1.2%	7	1	1.2%	4
Locution	0	0.0%	7	0	0.0%	9	3	3.8%	4	0	0.0%	9

Deliverable												
Want Statement	4	5.0%	3	2	2.5%	6	2	2.5%	5	3	3.8%	3
Language Specific Suggested F.	4	5.0%	3	4	5.0%	3	2	2.5%	5	1	1.2%	4
Reference to Preparatory Cond.	52	65.0%	1	56	70.0%	1	60	75.0%	1	62	77.5%	1
Strong Hints	3	3.8%	5	3	3.8%	4	7	8.8%	2	1	1.2%	4
Mild Hints	0	0.0%	7	1	1.2%	7	0	0.0%	9	1	1.2%	4
No Reply	0	0%	7	0	0%	9	0	0%	9	0	0%	9
Total	100%			100%			100%			100%		

Table 3. Request strategies used by Jordanian "Non-English Majors and English Majors" with American (Male and Female) participants

Strategy	Male participants				Female participants			
	Jordanian (N=10)		American (N=5)		Jordanian (N=10)		American (N=5)	
	Percent	Ranking	Percent	Ranking	Percent	Ranking	Percent	Ranking
Mood Deliverable	15.7%	2	6.3%	2	8.8%	2	1.2%	6
Explicit Performative	0.6%	7	1.2%	4	1.2%	7	2.5%	3
Hedged (Implicit) Performative	3.2%	6	0.0%	6	1.2%	7	5.0%	2
Locution Deliverable	0.0%	9	0.0%	6	1.9%	5	0.0%	7
Want Statement	3.8%	5	0.0%	6	3.2%	4	0.0%	7
Language Specific Suggested F.	5.0%	3	3.8%	3	1.9%	6	2.5%	3
Reference to Preparatory Cond.	67.5%	1	87.5%	1	76.3%	1	86.3%	1
Strong Hints	3.8%	4	0.0%	6	5.0%	3	0.0%	7
Mild Hints	0.6%	7	1.2%	4	0.6%	9	2.5%	3
No Reply	0.0%	9	0%	6	0.0%	10	0%	7

## 5. Discussion

The study reveals that the English major Jordanian group is more likely to use the strategy of Reference to Preparatory Condition as it ranked first by Jordanian Male participants. This strategy is one of the Conventional Indirect strategies and English Major Jordanian participants tend to use it due to their knowledge and interaction with another culture through their exposure to the English language. This is evident through the tendency of the Jordanian youth use the direct mood especially with friends and colleagues.

Meanwhile, the strategy Mood Deliverable ranked second in terms of use by participants, which is one of the direct strategies. This result confirms the previous one, where the English major Jordanian prefers the indirect mood. On the other hand, Mild Hints strategy ranked the lowest. And this strategy is one of the Non-Conventional Indirect strategies which is realized through contextual elements needed for the comprehension of the request. These results can be explained by the level of intimacy and friendship between the speakers where the social distance of EFL is equal. Learners display closer performance to native speakers (Jalilifar, 2009; Al-Ammar's, 2000). The level of directness increases with decreasing social distance and power between the interlocutors. Indirectness from the speaker's side is preferred for



firm reasons, for instance, to avoid the risk of losing face, to diminish and mitigate the threat, or to smooth the conversational interaction.

And this result is partially in agreement with (Muthusamy and Farashaiyan, 2016) who concluded the use of conventionally indirect expressions (preparatory questions) is preferred for requests more often than other expressions, regardless of power, the social distance and imposition, where request strategies affected the use of mitigating strategies in different situations. There is something that we should consider that social distance and power play a significant role in affecting the speech request strategies. However, it was observed that higher levels of indirectness may lead to higher levels of politeness. Furthermore, people tend to use and pre-request supportive moves mitigating elements and to lessen the force of requests. (Alzeebaree, Yavuz, 2017).

In performing and realizing the speech acts of request, the findings indicated that the females showed extra pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic ability than the males. For English major, female participants, results indicates that the strategy Reference to Preparatory Condition ranked the highest for Jordanian English major (Female) participants, while the Mood Deliverable strategy ranked second in terms of use by participants, which is one of the direct strategies. This result may be explained by the gender differences, where female participants are likely to be more polite and formal, and this is more likely to happen in more than one place and social context. This goes with the suggestion that the females had politer requestive behavior than males and the current study results are in agreement with (Alzeebaree, Yavuz, 2017) who found that females had more of a tendency to use indirect and inexplicit strategies than males which used more direct and explicit strategies of request confirms that.

This result can be understood in light of the social relationship between the students themselves, between students and their professors, the social backgrounds from, the educational level and other social influences. All play a role in raising the level of sophistication in speech and request. The university student must have a level of courtesy in dealing with colleagues, friends and professors. That is why the first strategy Reference to Preparatory Condition acquired the highest rank, followed by the Mood Deliverable. This result is also in line with (Umar, 2004) who conducted a sociolinguistic investigation into the request strategies used by advanced Arab learners of English as compared to those strategies used by native speakers of English, and found that Arab learners of English requests seemed to sound more polite and tactful than their Arabic major counterparts.

American group using direct and indirect request indicates that the Reference to Preparatory Condition ranked first, and this can be viewed in light of the western pattern in speech for using more polite expressions and phrases like can and could. Using can or could and other hedging devices indicates that they are polite, and it evidently shows that they like to use indirect requests in their speech, and this is in agreement with the result of (Umar, 2004) who found that the native speakers of English use more semantic and syntactic modifiers such as, “excuse me”, “sir” and “could you please lend me your dictionary for a while”, than their Arabic counterparts. And (Reiter, 2000) who conducted the first well-researched contrastive pragmatic analysis of requests and apologies in British English and Uruguayan Spanish,

concluded that the results show that higher levels of indirectness together with heavily modified requests are appropriate in British English but not in Uruguayan Spanish where a preference for less tentative requests is expected.

A language-specific suggestory formula is a conventionally indirect strategy whereby the requestor suggested that the addressee (requestee) perform the task. This strategy was ranked the third. It was realized by different syntactic structures including (a) declarative statement, (b) WH-questions and (c) YES/NO questions. It is known that indirect request relies heavily on the hearer's interpretation of the request. The hearer can perceive the utterance as either a question or a request. However, it depends more on the situation in which the addressed and the addressee occur. This strategy is more likely to be adopted by the minority, that the one who requests – in this context- should be more specific, asking for help, favorer or a specific thing, not for an opinion. That's why it ranked lastly among the three.

Thus, (Want Statement) strategy ranked as the lowest in terms of frequency. A want statement included utterances which state the speaker's desire that the hearer carries out the request, marked by the use of such verbs as 'want', 'need' and 'wish'. The direct strategy has an illocutionary force or meaning as well as the speaker explicitly conveying his/her intention and needs, so this strategy is rare only with the close friend, as noted that the speakers are behaving indirectly in their speech basically associated with the aim of politeness in English than direct speech acts. That's why it ranked lowest.

With regard to the female American participants, results showed Reference to Preparatory Condition ranked the highest, while the Hedged (Implicit) Performative strategy ranked as the second most frequently used strategy manifested in the use of implicit performative, as one of the direct requests. This result is similar to those of the males and this pattern was also found to be present in the linguistic behavior, where the cultural and environmental context, makes a particular class of young speaks the same way. The American female responses are similar to their male counterpart's responses. This is perhaps attributed to the unity of language and influences, which is expressed by (Al-Ammar's ,2000) who studied the changes among native speakers of English and Saudi students in requestive behaviour according to the social situations when communicating with their respective communities. The level of directness increases with decreasing social distance and power between the interlocutors. The findings also indicated that English and Arabic share a rich set of requesting strategies. This finding lends support to the issue of universality in speech act behavior.

People of different languages and cultures may have access to the same range of speech acts and realization strategies, yet, they can differ in the strategies they choose. (Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily, 2012) The results of the current study are in contrast with (Abdul Sattar, 2009) who revealed that, Arab English learners were not always consistent with native speakers in terms of appropriateness to the situation. Although they have spent many years studying English, they are not aware of the social and situational rules affecting request making, and not capable of performing adequate requests in English.

Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily, 2012 showed that conventional indirectness was the most preferred strategy among American natives, and they were found to choose conventional indirectness

in most of the situations even when they were addressing their inferiors. Meanwhile, the only situation in which AENSs opted for direct strategy was when the rate of imposition was low and the relationship between the speaker and the hearer was very intimate (-Distance). So, the less familiar the informants were, the more likely it was for them to request indirectly. Accordingly, it could be argued now that , the more polite it is, the more indirect an utterance is.

Thus the directness in some Arabic context compatible with behavior where the solidarity politeness system (-Power, -Distance) can be found. And directness in some cultures should not be considered impolite, but rather should be seen as a way of expressing affiliation, connectedness, camaraderie and closeness (Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily, 2012)

Al-Ali and Alawneh, 2010 reported that, while Jordanian learners were collective and more formal, American were found more individualistic and less formal. Learners prefer to use politeness markers because they can be used both as politeness markers and as markers of illocutionary force. The over employment of politeness signs could be explained also with reference to the learners' pragmatic ability.

Accordingly, students from both sides transfer their language pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic norms in their performance of requests, but the ANS students did that to a larger extent. What has been stated as a problem right at the beginning of the study, through the demarcation lines between ANSE and JE major students and the J-Non-English Students has been proved as one factor explaining the differences between the two speakers' performance of requests. The differences between both groups could be attributed to the different conditions of instruction as explicitly stated at the beginning of this research.

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the sociolinguistic variations in the performance of the speech act of requests by American English speakers (NSAE), selected primarily from Boston, Massachusetts, and Jordanian speakers of Arabic. Both English and non-English major participants were selected primarily from the University of Jordan and Al-Balqa Applied University. The two groups had to respond in writing to situations that were meant to elicit requests. The core of requests can be classified into three types based on their level of (in) directness: (i) conventional direct (D), (ii) conventional indirect (ID), and (iii) non-conventional indirect requests (NID). While Direct (D) Strategies of Requesting include (Mood deliverable, Explicit performative, Hedged performative, Locution performative, Want statement), the Conventional Indirect (ID) include (Language-Specific Suggestory Formula, Reference to Preparatory conditions) and lastly, the Non-Conventional Indirect (NID) include (Strong Hints, Mild Hints).

The results showed that the male participants in the Jordanian and American groups used the same Reference to Preparatory Condition strategy, but was more often used by the American group. For the Mood Deliverable strategy, it was noted that Jordanian group used it more than the American. And for the Explicit Performative strategy, the findings showed that it was used more by the Jordanian group than the American group. Hedged (Implicit)

Performative strategy was used by American group relatively more than the Jordanian group did. Within the Jordanian group, the use of the Locution Deliverable strategy was higher than that of the American group. This also holds true for the strategy “Want Statement”. While, across two groups, with regards to the strategy Language Specific Suggested Formula it was relatively used more often by the American than the Jordanian group. However, the Jordanian group appeared to be using the strategy of Strong Hints more than the American group, unlike the strategy of Mild Hints which was used more by the American than the Jordanian group.

The results showed that the American female participants used the Reference to Preparatory Condition strategy more often than their Jordanian counterparts. For the Mood Deliverable strategy, it was noted that Jordanian group used it more than the American. And for strategy Explicit Performative, the findings showed that it was used more by the Jordanian group than the American group. But, Hedged (Implicit) Performative strategy was used by American group relatively more than the Jordanian group. The Locution Deliverable strategy was also used more by the Jordanian group than the American group. This also holds true for the strategy Want Statement. Across two groups, as for the strategy of Language Specific Suggested Formula it was used relatively more by the American group than the Jordanian group. The Jordanian group appeared to be using the strategy of Strong Hints more than the American group. Finally, the use of Mild Hints strategy was higher among than American group than the Jordanian group.

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## Appendices

### A. Discourse Completion Task

1. You are writing your thesis and need to interview the president of a university whom you don't know. You know the president is very busy, but still you want to ask her/him to spare one or two hours for your interview. What would you say? .....  
.....  
.....
2. For registration you need to fill out a couple of forms. You search all of your pockets and cannot find a pen. You want to ask another student who is sitting next to you in the department hall. What would you say? .....  
.....  
.....
3. You were absent last Friday history class that you are enrolled in. So you decide to borrow your friend's notes to catch up with the rest of the class. What would you say to get this friend to lend you the notes? .....  
.....  
.....
4. You are going to visit your friend, who lives in the college dormitory. You are on campus, but you don't know where the room is? You are going to ask a student for the location of the dorm. How would you ask the student? .....  
.....  
.....
5. It's 7:00 a.m. and you want to go to work. You have to leave your daughter alone because her babysitter is late. You decide to ask your friend, who lives in your neighbourhood to take care of your little daughter in the meanwhile. What would you say? .....  
.....  
.....



6. You are the manager of a company. You are in a meeting with the other members of your company. You need to write some notes, but you realize that you do not have any paper. You turn to the person sitting next to you and you know her/him very well. What would you say? .....  
.....  
.....
7. Your class has just finished and you need a ride home. Your fellow classmate who was supposed to give you a ride is absent. As you come out of the class, you see an assistant professor. You decide to ask him/her to give a lift to you. What would you say?  
.....  
.....  
.....
8. You are applying for a scholarship, and you decide to ask a professor, who knows you very well as your academic advisor, to write a recommendation letter for you. What would you say to ask her/him to do this favor for you? .....  
.....  
.....
9. You are the owner of a big bookstore. It is the beginning of the semester, and you are very busy. Today you want to extend business hours by an hour. So, you decide to ask your clerk whom you know quite well, to stay after store hours. What would you say?  
.....  
.....  
.....
10. You attend the first class of a new course. You cannot hear the professor well. You want to request him to speak louder. What would you say?  
.....  
.....  
.....
11. You are in a Park and you want to smoke a cigarette. You do not have a light and you see a stranger smoking while sitting on a bench. What would you say?  
.....  
.....

- .....  
.....
12. You are at a dinner table with your family. You have some soup and you like it to be a bit salty but the salt is far away from you. It is close to your dad and you want to ask him to pass you the salt. What would you say to him?  
.....  
.....  
.....
13. You are in the mall shopping for a new pair of jeans. You entered a shop to check-out different styles. You found a pair which you like. You want to ask the shop assistant to hand you the chosen pair of jeans. What would you say to him/her?  
.....  
.....  
.....
14. You are in class at university and you cannot catch up with your professor by taking full-notes. Those notes are important for the final exam. You want to ask one of your classmates to photocopy his/her notes. What would you say to him/her?  
.....  
.....  
.....
15. You are walking in the street with your friends. You are eating a sandwich. Some of the ketchup is on your shirt and you want to ask your friends for extra-napkins. What would you say to him/her?  
.....  
.....  
.....
16. You are in a taxi going to work in the morning. The roads are jammed and you want to ask the taxi-driver to take another road to save time. What would you say to him/her?  
.....  
.....

**B. Results section 1**

Supplementary table 1. Request strategies used by Jordanian "Non-English Majors" (Male) participants (N=5)

Strategies	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15	q16	Total	%	Ranking
Mood Deliverable	1	0	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	2	2	1	1	2	15	18.8%	2
Explicit Performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	7
Hedged (Implicit) Performative	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2.5%	6
Locution Deliverable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	7
Want Statement	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5.0%	3
Language Specific Suggested F.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	4	5.0%	3
Reference to Preparatory Cond.	2	3	4	5	5	2	4	3	4	4	4	3	1	3	3	2	52	65.0%	1
Strong Hints	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	3.8%	5
Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	7
No Reply	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	7
Total																	100%		

Supplementary table 2. Request strategies used by Jordanian "Non-English Majors" (Female) participants (N=5)

Strategies	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15	q16	Total	%	Ranking
Mood Deliverable	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	4	5.0%	3
Explicit Performative	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.2%	7
Hedged (Implicit) Performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.2%	7
Locution Deliverable	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	3.8%	4
Want Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2.5%	5
Language Specific Suggested F.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2.5%	5
Reference to Preparatory Cond.	4	3	5	5	5	4	3	3	3	4	4	5	3	3	3	3	60	75.0%	1
Strong Hints	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	7	8.8%	2
Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	9
No Reply	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	9
Total																	100%		

Supplementary table 3. Request strategies used by Jordanian "English Majors" (Male) participants (N=5)

Strategies	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15	q16	Total	%	Ranking
Mood Deliverable	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	10	12.5%	2
Explicit Performative	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.2%	7
Hedged (Implicit) Performative	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3.8%	4
Locution Deliverable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	9
Want Statement	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2.5%	6
Language Specific Suggested F.	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	4	5.0%	3
Reference to Preparatory Cond.	2	5	4	4	4	2	4	2	5	3	4	3	4	5	3	2	56	70.0%	1
Strong Hints	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3.8%	4
Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1.2%	7

No Reply	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	9
Total																			100%	

Supplementary table 4. Request strategies used by Jordanian "English Majors" (Female) participants (N=5)

Strategies	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15	q16	Total	%	Ranking	
Mood Deliverable	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	2	0	10	12.5%	2	
Explicit Performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.2%	4	
Hedged (Implicit) Performative	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.2%	4	
Locution Deliverable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	9	
Want Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3.8%	3	
Language Specific Suggested F.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1.2%	4	
Reference to Preparatory Cond.	5	5	3	5	4	2	5	3	2	5	5	1	5	5	3	4	62	77.5%	1	
Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.2%	4	
Mild Hints	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.2%	4	
No Reply	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	9	
Total																			100%	

Table 5. Request strategies used by American (Male) participants (N=5)

Strategies	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15	q16	Total	%	Ranking	
Mood Deliverable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	5	6.3%	2	
Explicit Performative	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.2%	4	
Hedged (Implicit) Performative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	6	
Locution Deliverable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	6	
Want Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	6	
Language Specific Suggested F.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3.8%	3	
Reference to Preparatory Cond.	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	4	0	70	87.5%	1	
Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	6	
Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.2%	4	
No Reply	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	6	
Total																			100%	

Table 6. Request strategies used by American (Female) participants (N=5)

Strategies	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15	q16	Total	%	Ranking
Mood Deliverable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.2%	6
Explicit Performative	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2.5%	3
Hedged (Implicit) Performative	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5.0%	2
Locution Deliverable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	7
Want Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	7

Language Specific Suggested F.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2.5%	3
Reference to Preparatory Cond.	1	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	3	69	86.3%	1
Strong Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	7
Mild Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2.5%	3	
No Reply	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	7
Total																		100%	

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