

## **Cross-Cultural Pragmalinguistic Failure in Request Strategies among Iraqi Students at Basra University**

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### **Abstract**

Language learners frequently focus on grammar rules and vocabulary in their second language (L2), yet communication breakdowns can still happen. This is often due to neglecting pragmatic knowledge, which is essential for effective language use. The study investigates pragmalinguistic failure in request strategies by Iraqi students in the fourth stage of the English Department at Basrah University College of Arts, compared to British participants and the factors contributing to this phenomenon. It analyzes directness levels and strategy variations between the two groups. Additionally, it aims to explore the potential influence of the Iraqi students' native language and cultural backgrounds on their choice of request strategies. This study employs a mixed-methods, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

**Keywords :** pragmalinguistic, request strategies, indirectness, modifications, linguistic and cultural differences.

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## الاخفاق التداولي اللغوي عبر الثقافات في استراتيجيات الطلب لدى الطلبة العراقيين في جامعة البصرة

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### المستخلص

يُركز متعلموا اللغة غالبًا على قواعد اللغة والمفردات في لغتهم الثانية، ولكن لا يزال من الممكن حدوث مشاكل في التواصل. غالبًا ما يعود هذا إلى إهمال المعرفة التداولية، وهي ضرورية لاستخدام اللغة بشكل فعال. تبحث هذه الدراسة في الاخفاق التداولي اللغوي في استراتيجيات الطلب التي يقدمها الطلاب العراقيون في المرحلة الرابعة من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في كلية الآداب بجامعة البصرة، مقارنة بالمشاركين البريطانيين والعوامل التي تساهم في هذه الظاهرة. تقوم الدراسة بتحليل مستويات المباشرة والاختلافات الاستراتيجية بين المجموعتين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تهدف إلى استكشاف التأثير المحتمل للغة الأم والخلفيات الثقافية للطلاب العراقيين على اختيارهم لاستراتيجيات الطلب. توظف هذه الدراسة منهجًا مختلطًا يجمع بين الأساليب النوعية والكمية.

كلمات مفتاحية: تداولي لغوي، استراتيجيات الطلبات ، مستوى المباشرة ، الملطقات ، الاختلافات اللغوية والثقافية.

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### **1.1 Introduction:-**

Effective communication involves the exchange of opinions and ideas through various forms of interaction such as questioning, discussing, and persuading (Peeters, 2009: 60). Language operates within unique linguistic and sociocultural frameworks, shaping the communicative competence of its speakers. When attempting to communicate in a foreign language, understanding cultural norms is essential alongside grasping grammatical and structural aspects (Leech, 1983:11). Pragmatics explores language use and function, focusing on contextual meaning conveyed by speakers and comprehended by listeners. Addressing cross-cultural differences in pragmatic language use, particularly in making requests, is crucial for promoting effective communication and intercultural understanding (Yule, 1996:3). The study investigates pragmalinguistic failure in request strategies by Iraqi students in the fourth stage of the English Department at Basrah University College of Arts, compared to British participants and the factors contributing to this phenomenon. It analyzes directness levels and strategy variations between the two groups. Additionally, it aims to explore the potential influence of the Iraqi students' native language and cultural backgrounds on their choice of request strategies.

### **1.2 The Statement of the Problem**

The problem statement emphasizes the necessity for investigating cross-cultural pragmalinguistic breakdowns, specifically in relation to speech acts such as requests. Although there are numerous studies on pragmatic failures in different scenarios, there is a noticeable absence of attention to requests and how language learners, particularly those at Basra University, utilize them. This study seeks to address this gap by examining instances of pragmalinguistic failures among Basra University students, pinpointing their root causes, and suggesting remedies. This research not only aids in comprehending cross-cultural communication but also enriches language education and acquisition, potentially enhancing the communication abilities of Basra University students.

### **1.3 The Aim of the Study**

The primary objective of this study is to delve into cross-cultural pragmalinguistic failure, specifically focusing on how requests are made. It aims to compare request strategies and levels of directness between Iraqi university students and native British English speakers. Additionally,

the study intends to investigate how the students' native language and cultural values influence their choices and use of request strategies. The research outcomes aim to contribute to the field of intercultural communication and language pragmatics by identifying instances of cross-cultural pragmalinguistic failure in request strategies. This research could provide valuable insights for educators, language learners, and intercultural communicators, potentially shaping pedagogical approaches and enhancing intercultural communication competence within educational settings.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The researcher tries to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of proficiency among fourth-stage Iraqi students at Basrah University, College of Arts, English department, in their performance and comprehension of speech acts related to polite requests?
2. How does the absence of pragmatic knowledge (pragmatic competence) in the target language contribute to the occurrence of pragmalinguistic failure? In other words, how do the Iraqi students at the fourth stage struggle with the appropriate performance of request speech acts in English?
3. What is the extent of the impact of the native language and cultural background of Iraqi students on their comprehension of speech acts related to making polite requests, which may lead to potential pragmalinguistic failure?

#### **1.5 Hypotheses**

The research looks into the following hypotheses:

1. The variation in request strategies between the English and Arabic languages produces pragmalinguistic failure, stemming from students' efforts to transfer strategies from their native language to the target language.
2. The misunderstanding and performance of polite requests among fourth-year Iraqi students at the University of Basra, College of Arts, English Department, can be attributed to their limited pragmatic competence because they rely on their linguistic competence alone.
3. The Iraqi students' approach to making polite requests is influenced by their culture, leading to misunderstandings and pragmalinguistic failure. These cultural variations between Iraqi and British societies significantly affect how

polite requests are perceived and enacted, as what is considered polite in one culture may be seen as impolite in the other.

### **2.1 Literature Review and Related Studies**

It is widely recognized that when individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds and cultures engage in communication, there is a likelihood of misunderstandings that can result in a breakdown of communication. This phenomenon has captured the attention of numerous researchers, such as Al-Hindawi, Mubarak, and Salman (2014), Al Zumor (2012), and Thomas (1983). Many scholars and researchers are interested in the concept of cross-cultural pragmatic failure. Several significant studies explore various aspects of this phenomenon.

"Pragmatic failure in Iraqi EFL contexts". It is a topic that Al-Hindawi, Mubarak, and Salman (2014) examine Iraqi EFL students' pragmatic performance at all educational levels in an attempt to discover probable pragmatic failures they commit when using English. Their paper posits that (1) the students under study engage in pragmatic failure at all levels, whether pragmalinguistically or sociopragmatically, and (2) their teachers permit such pragmatic failure as long as students generate well-formed sentences. In order to achieve the study's aims and test its hypotheses, the study's sample is submitted to a questionnaire consisting of twenty circumstances, each of which comprises four well-formed utterances, but only one of them is pragmatically adequate to the contexts in which they occur. The study's sample comprises of several levels of students and teachers in order to check the outcomes on various levels. The concept of pragmatic failure is examined both theoretically and practically in this work. In the theoretical section, an attempt is made to identify and describe the concept of pragmatic failure, as well as to illustrate the role it plays in causing problems for EFL learners when they are involved in actual English scenarios. More crucially, the study experimentally evaluates the pragmatic performance of Iraqi English as a foreign language learner for both university students and their professors.

Al Zumor (2012) in his study " A pragmatic analysis of speech acts as produced by Arab ESL learners: a study in interlanguage pragmatics " examined four speech acts: requests, invitations, corrections, and apologies among Arab and British students. The entire study relies on data gathered through the use of a discourse completion questionnaire, which was administered through both oral means (role-play interviews) and written responses (completion of the questionnaire).

After analyzing the data Al Zumor found that Arabs employ different speech act strategies in these interactions, with significant differences when compared to English speakers. Most Arabs tend to use a direct communication style, and social differences have an impact on their speech act performance.

Al Zumor's study concluded that there is a lack of pragmatic competence among Arab students, with a focus primarily on grammar and a neglect of pragmatics. This neglect of pragmatic competence can lead to a lack of understanding and a communication breakdown, which is essential for language use and plays a crucial role in intercultural communication."

Sattar, Lah, and Suleiman (2009), in their study titled "Iraqi Postgraduates' Production and Perception of Requests: A Pilot Study," offer an initial analysis with a focus on pragmatics and sociolinguistics regarding how requests are produced and understood by Iraqi postgraduate students in the English language, driven by the growing number of Iraqi students pursuing higher education in English-speaking countries. Their study utilized a corpus of responses to a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and a Multiple Choice Questionnaire (MCQ) from ten native Arabic-speaking Iraqi students studying at University Sains Malaysia. The findings revealed that while the subjects predominantly favored conventional indirectness as their preferred strategy for making requests, some sociolinguistic deviations were observed in their actual usage. Despite incorporating more components of the semantic formulas required for making requests, the participants exhibited a lack of awareness regarding social and situational norms governing requests. This highlighted challenges faced by Iraqi postgraduates in effectively articulating requests in English, with speech patterns not consistently aligning with those of native English speakers, particularly in terms of appropriateness within specific contexts.

Moreover, Thomas (1983:99) in his study "Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure" examines the nature of pragmatic failure and how students might be assisted in developing pragmatic competence. She indicates regularly to 'cross-cultural' pragmatic failure, which may convey the mistaken impression that pragmatic failure is constrained largely to the exchanges between native and non-native speakers. She has suggested that people have focused on 'what is said' rather than 'what is meant' in language training. She has suggested that making a distinction

between two kinds of pragmatic failure is essential for effective language teaching and learning: failures in pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic.

She argues that the impacts of the two forms of pragmatic failure are similar and that distinguishing between them is difficult. However, the distinction is critical for the language instructor since the foreign learner may likely link sociopragmatic decisions with value judgments, and the language teacher must tread carefully in this potentially volatile area. Pragmatic and sociopragmatic failure indicate two distinct types of pragmatic decision-making. The first is language-specific, and the teacher should be able to do it pretty easily. The second is culturally specific, reflecting the student's system of values and ideas, and should not be 'repaired,' but rather noted and discussed.

## 2.2 Pragmatic failure

To determine the meaning of a speech, one must take into account not just its explicit meaning but also the contextual and pragmatic elements in which it is uttered.

The term "pragmatic failure" describes a situation where language users make incorrect or unsuitable language choices in different communication settings. Thomas (1983:91) posits that individuals experiencing pragmatic failure may lack a deep understanding of the sociocultural and contextual norms that dictate language usage. Essentially, they might not be fully aware of how to use certain language expressions appropriately in particular situations. Therefore, to tackle pragmatic failure, language learners must grasp the nuances of language use like politeness and contextual appropriateness. Exposure to real language usage, cultural immersion, and explicit teaching of pragmatics are crucial. Pragmatic failure can lead to misunderstandings and negative perceptions, emphasizing the need for incorporating pragmatic instruction into language education for successful intercultural communication.

According to Thomas (1983: 91), pragmatic failure is characterized by the "inability to understand 'what is meant by what is said'." She further explains that pragmatic failure occurs when a listener interprets a speaker's statement differently from the intended meaning or impact (ibid: 94).she focuses on cross-cultural pragmatics, where communication difficulties can arise between individuals with differing linguistic or cultural backgrounds, extending beyond interactions solely between native and non-native speakers.

Riley (1984:127) expands on the concept of pragmatic failure, suggesting that it occurs when we struggle to fully grasp a speaker's intention during communication, leading to difficulties in translating spoken words into intended meanings. He emphasizes that pragmatic failure encompasses various communication issues that impede understanding of the speech context, serving as a broad term to describe such challenges.

### **2.3 Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure**

Misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication between individuals from different cultural backgrounds often result from an inability to choose the appropriate words to convey meaning. This failure is termed "cross-cultural pragmatic failure." Second-language learners often face challenges in cross-cultural communication due to a lack of knowledge in pragmatic and cultural aspects. Since cross-cultural communication involves interaction among people from diverse cultural backgrounds, it requires a strong understanding of both the linguistic and pragmatic aspects of the target language. Recognizing the factors contributing to cross-cultural communication failures can help non-native speakers avoid encountering cross-cultural pragmatic failure (Nouichi, 2014:42).

According to Thomas (1983: 91), the term "cross-cultural" extends beyond interactions solely between native and non-native individuals. It encompasses any interaction among individuals who, within a specific domain, lack similar linguistic or cultural backgrounds. This could include interactions between workers and management, members of ethnic minorities and police, or even between university instructors and new undergraduate students, particularly in the context of academic writing.

Pragmatic failure is a major source of cross-cultural communication breakdown. When interlocutors from different speech communities encounter communication challenges, this is referred to as cross-cultural pragmatic failure. It is a misunderstanding in communication that occurs between interlocutors due to problems with language use, particularly among foreign language speakers (Charlebois, 2003: 35).

### **2.4 Types of Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure**

Thomas (1983:101) outlines two distinct types of pragmatic failure: pragmalinguistic failure (Which is the subject of this study) and sociopragmatic failure. Pragmalinguistic failure occurs



when there are inaccuracies in transferring speech act techniques from one language (L1) to another (L2), or when the pragmatic intent assigned by the speaker to an utterance differs systematically from what native speakers of the target language typically attribute to it. On the other hand, sociopragmatic failure pertains to societal constraints governing language use. While pragmalinguistic failure primarily involves linguistic issues stemming from differences in how pragmatic force is encoded in language, sociopragmatic failure arises from varying cultural perceptions of appropriate linguistic behavior.

### **2. 5 Causes of Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure**

According to Thomas (1983:101), pragmalinguistic failure occurs when a speaker's intended pragmatic force in an utterance differs systematically from what native speakers of the target language commonly attribute to it, or when conversational strategies are improperly transferred from the speaker's native language to the target language. This failure can stem from two main causes: "teaching-induced errors" and "pragmalinguistic transfer." The latter involves the improper transfer of speech act strategies between languages or the transfer of expressions from the native language to the target language, which may be equivalent in syntax and semantics but carry different pragmatic meanings due to varying "interpretive bias." Jaworski (1994:51) suggests that grammatical transfer is relatively straightforward to address, and its problems are typically resolved in the same manner as other grammar errors.

"Teaching-induced errors" as identified by Kasper (as cited in Al-Hindawi, Mubarak, & Salman, 2014) can contribute to pragmalinguistic failure, particularly in instructional materials and classroom conversations. Examples include improper use of modals and overly explicit or incomplete sentence responses. Lihui and Jianbin (2010:47) note that English learners often lack exposure to native speakers and authentic English environments, relying primarily on English lessons and textbooks for cultural and pragmatic knowledge. Additionally, an overemphasis on grammar can exacerbate pragmalinguistic failure.

### **2.6 Request as Speech Acts**

Requests are speech acts in which the speaker attempts to persuade the listener to do something. One class of speech acts, request, appears to be more prevalent in interlanguage and cross-cultural research than other speech acts. Numerous causes can be attributed to this

phenomenon. First, compared to other speech acts, requests are used more frequently in everyday communication. Requests are considered to be a rich source of unprocessed information about how people perform speech acts in various cultures and contexts because they are produced and received frequently in daily life. Second, because of the different linguistic patterns and strategies used to perform requests across cultures and languages, requests can provide sufficient data for those interested in politeness phenomena across cultures. Researchers can use a variety of request forms and strategies to investigate the individual, situational, and sociocultural factors that cause people to use certain request strategies and formulae more than others (Aldhulaee, 2011:5).

### **2.7 Request Modifications**

Request modifications, according to Reiter (2000) as cited in Aldhulaee (2011:6), refer to additional elements that can be inserted into the main request (associated with the head act; the head act, as defined by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984: 200), represents the central core of a speech act. it's part of the sequence that has the potential to fulfil the act on its own, without requiring additional elements) to enhance or reduce its impact.

#### **2.7.1. Internal Modification**

These elements have the potential to serve as downgraders, aimed at making the request less forceful or as upgraders, intended to increase the assertiveness or coerciveness of a request. Internal downgraders refer to elements located within the request head act. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984:203-204) categorize these internal downgraders into two primary groups. The initial category comprises syntactic mitigating devices, including interrogative, negation, and conditional clauses, which are employed to reduce the force of imposition in the request. For instances

a. *Interrogative*

Could you handle the cleaning?

b. *Negation*

Excuse me. I wonder if you wouldn't mind me borrowing your book.

d. *Embedded 'if clause*

I would be grateful if you could give me some space.

Trosborg (1995) discusses the use of syntactic devices in requests to create a separation between the request and reality. This serves to lessen the potential impact of a refusal on the requester's reputation and facilitates the requestee's ability to decline. The second category involves lexical/phrasal mitigating devices, including markers such as "please," "Pardon me," "sorry," and "excuse me."

a) **Markers:** These are lexical or phrasal elements conveying politeness, like "Could you please help me with this?"

b) **Consultative devices (Openers):** These engage the listener and solicit cooperation, e.g., "is it/would it be possible," "Would you mind," "Would it be all right if," making requests more polite or less direct.

c) **Understates:** Speakers use elements like "a bit" or "a little" to downplay aspects of the statement, as in "Would you mind doing a bit of tidying up before I begin?"

d) **Hedges:** Components like "rather," "sort of," or "quite" allow speakers to refrain from providing specific details when committing to the illocutionary purpose of the utterance.

e) **Downtoners:** Speakers use terms like "possibly" or "perhaps" to adjust the potential effect of their utterance, suggesting the possibility of the listener not complying, as in "Could you, perhaps, give me a ride?"

f) **Address terms:** These words or phrases, like "sir" or "ma'am," convey respect, familiarity, or formality in communication. For example, "Excuse me, sir. Could you please help me with this?"

In addition to internal downgraders, there are internal upgraders, "Upgraders" refer to linguistic elements or modifications that are employed to intensify or increase the impact of a speech act. These elements make a request or statement more forceful or compelling. In contrast to "downgraders," which are used to soften a request, upgraders aim to enhance the persuasive force of the speech act. They can be achieved through internal modifications, such as the use of intensifiers or expletives, as explained in the provided text. For instance:

A. intensifiers overemphasize the reality described in the proposition to make the request more compelling, as in the example "Clean up this mess, it's disgusting."

B. Expletives are lexical intensifiers that explicitly convey negative emotional attitudes, intensifying the statement with a negative emotional tone, as in "You still haven't cleaned up that bloody mess!" (Aldhulaee, 2011:6-7).

### 2.7.2 External Modification

The use of external modification in speech acts involves reinforcing the illocutionary force through supportive moves, such as justifications or explanations. This type of modification, as described by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), is termed "external mitigating devices" and can either soften or emphasize the overall force of a request. These devices, situated outside the "Head act" but within its immediate context, serve various functions within a request utterance.

- a) **Checking on availability:** The speaker inquires about the availability of the necessary condition for compliance before proceeding with the main speech act. For instance, "Could you assist me with a ride home if your schedule permits?"
- b) **Getting a precommitment:** The speaker seeks a commitment or agreement before making the request. An example is, "Would you be willing to help me with something?"
- c) **Grounder:** The speaker provides reasons for the request, justifying the need for it. An example is, "I've missed my bus and you live on the same road. Could you give me a lift?"
- d) **Sweetener:** The speaker expresses exaggerated appreciation to make the request seem less burdensome. For instance, "You're so kind, could you please do me a favor?"
- e) **Disarmer:** The speaker addresses a potential offense in advance to prevent refusal, as in, "I want to make sure I'm not causing any inconvenience, but is there a possibility of a ride home?"
- f) **Cost minimizer:** The speaker considers the potential inconvenience to the hearer in complying with the request, for example, "I just missed the bus, and there isn't another one for an hour. Could you give me a lift if you're going my way?"

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Instrument and Data Collection Method

This study employs a blend of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. To collect data, the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was employed. This task involves presenting participants with various speech scenarios, typically centered on specific speech acts of requests. Participants are then asked to complete these scenarios see (Appendix 1, Appendix 2 and

Appendix 3). The researcher uses simple statistics containing percentages and frequencies of responses.

The DCT consists of (10) items adapted from previous studies on the request speech acts; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, (1984); Olshtain (1985); Cohen and Olshtain (1992); and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986). The questionnaire contains (10) situations that outline various circumstances in which a request should be made. To determine how participants respond in various social contexts, each situation is categorized based on the social status of the interlocutors, the social distance between the interlocutors, and the type of offence. The participants were therefore instructed to imagine themselves in those hypothetical situations and to write their answers as naturally as possible in accordance with how they would actually react in the situations.

### **3.2 Participants of the Study (Subjects) and Sources of Data**

Two groups were involved as subjects in this study. The first group comprised male and female Iraqi students at the University of Basrah in Iraq, specifically from the English Department at the fourth stage, with ages ranging between 21 to 25 years. The second group consisted of male and female native English speakers from various educational backgrounds (intermediate, secondary, bachelor's, master's, and doctorate) and represented different regions in Britain, with ages ranging between 16 to 63 years. The number of Iraqi students who participated in filling out the research questionnaire was 70, while the number of British participants who completed the electronic questionnaire was 20.

### **3.3 Procedure**

To gather data from Iraqi students, the researcher distributed the survey to fourth-year students at the University of Basrah, particularly within the College of Arts in the English department. The questionnaire itself proved to be an essential instrument in this study, featuring ten situations skillfully crafted in English (see Appendix 1). Moreover, to facilitate the student's understanding and ensure accuracy in their responses, the same situations were thoughtfully translated into Arabic (see Appendix 2). The inclusion of the Arabic version aimed to bridge any linguistic barriers and enable the participants to provide thoughtful and accurate English utterances based on their comprehension.

For the British participants, data collection followed a different approach. The researcher efficiently gathered information by deploying electronic questionnaires sent through popular messaging platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram (see Appendix 3).

### 3.4 Models

In the present study, three models are adopted, the first is the A Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) coding manual for Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, (1984). This model has been chosen because it has been developed out of empirical observations. It has also shown its universality because it has been successfully tested on several languages, the second model is Brown and Levinson (1987), and the third model is Bonikowska (1988). ). The second and third models were chosen because these models provide valuable insights into the complexities of politeness and communication, offering frameworks for understanding why speakers may choose not to perform certain speech acts in various contexts. All models are adopted as the basis for the coding scheme used to analyze the data.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Based on the coding system of Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) used in the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Research Project (CCSARP), data were analyzed. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) in the CCSARP categorize nine request strategies into three levels of directness: direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect. According to theoretical considerations, requesting strategies are expected to exhibit three main levels of directness; that can be anticipated to be manifested universally in any language (ibid:201);

A. the most direct, explicit level, realized through requests that are grammatically designated as such, such as imperatives, or through other verbal techniques that identify the act as a request, such as performatives (Austin 1962) and "hedged performatives" (Fraser 1975);

B. the conventionally indirect level; procedures that carry out the act by referring to contextual preconditions required for its execution, as used commonly in a particular language (Since Searle 1975, these strategies have been referred to as "indirect speech acts"; 'Could you do it' or 'Would you do it' are examples of requests;

C. nonconventional indirect level, i.e. the unbounded set of indirect strategies (hints) that fulfil the request by making a partial reference to an object or element required for the act's execution

for example: ('Why is the window open'), or through the use of contextual clues ('It's hot in here'). Table (1) lists the nine different types of request strategies.

**Table 1: Request strategy types—definition of coding categories according to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984:202).**

Types	definition of coding categories
1 Mood derivable	The grammatical mood of the verb in the utterance marks its illocutionary force as a request.
2 Explicit performatives	The illocutionary force of the utterance is explicitly named by the speakers.
3 Hedged performative	Utterances embedding the naming of the illocutionary force.
4 Locution derivable	The illocutionary point is directly derivable from the semantic meaning of the locution.
5 Scope stating	The utterance expresses the speaker's intentions, desire or feeling vis d vis the fact that the hearer do X.
6 Language specific suggestory formula	The sentence contains a suggestion to X.
7 Reference to preparatory conditions	Utterance contains reference to preparatory conditions (e.g. ability or willingness, the possibility of the act being performed) as conventionalized in any specific language.
8 Strong hints	Utterance contains a partial reference to an object or to elements needed for the implementation of the act (directly pragmatically implying the act).
9 Mild hints	Utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable through the context as requests (indirectly pragmatically implying the act).

In addition to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's strategies for performing speech acts, there is another strategy a speaker may resort to according to Bonikowska (1988), Brown and Levinson (1987), from time to time, some speakers choose not to perform speech acts in real-world situations. As a result, they make "the opting out" decision as described by Bonikowska (1988:169). Brown and Levinson (1987:69) stated that, if a speaker is faced with a situation that requires the performance of a highly threatening facial action (FTA), he is more likely to make this strategic choice. Both models provide valuable insights into the complexities of politeness and communication, offering frameworks for understanding why speakers may choose not to perform certain speech acts in various contexts. When speakers choose not to perform a speech act, it could be due to their desire to avoid threatening the other person's face or their own. According to Bonikowska, speakers choose not to perform speech acts when doing so would violate established norms of politeness or social etiquette. These models consider factors such

as cultural background, social status, and the nature of the relationship between interlocutors in determining request strategies.

### 3.6 Frameworks of Analysis

The researcher conducted data analysis which was collected through questionnaires according to the models used in the form of separate tables for both Iraqi and British participants. Each table is divided into ten columns, with each column representing a specific request strategy according to the utilized models. The researcher then calculates the frequency of each strategy and its percentage for both groups. Subsequently, a comparison is made between the percentages of the strategies for Iraqi and British participants to observe whether they are similar or divergent. If the percentages are similar, it indicates that there is no significant pragmalinguistic failure. However, if they are divergent, it suggests the presence of pragmalinguistic failure. The researcher then investigates the reasons behind this pragmalinguistic failure, which can typically result from several factors, including the influence of the participant's native language and cultural differences.

### 3.7 Analysis of the questionnaire data

In general, upon observing Table (2), it becomes evident that when considering most scenarios (ten situations), the Iraqi students show a primary inclination towards executing the request directly. As a secondary choice, students opt for an indirect approach to fulfilling the request, succeeded by the non-conventional indirect. Ultimately, a minor proportion of students indicate a preference for opting out of the request. Conversely, it's worth pointing out that among British individuals, there is a higher tendency to fulfil the request indirectly. This is followed by the direct level, then the non-conventional indirect strategy, with a very small percentage favouring the choice to opt out of the request.

Table 2: the frequency distribution and percentage of major levels of request used by Iraqi Students and Britain speakers in the Questionnaire

IF=Iraqi frequency; IP=Iraqi percentage.

BF=British frequency; BP=British percentage.

Request Situations	DIRECT LEVEL				CONVENTIONAL INDIRECT LEVEL				NONCONVENTIONAL INDIRECT LEVEL				OPT-OUT			
	IF	BF	IP	BP	IF	BF	IP	BP	IF	BF	IP	BP	IF	BF	IP	BP
	S1	56	7	80%	35%	9	12	12.8%	60%	1	1	1.4%	5%	4	0	5.7%
S2	28	1	35.7%	8%	38	17	34.2%	88%	8	2	7.1%	10%	3	0	2.8%	0
S3	12	5	17.1%	25%	54	12	77.1%	60%	1	2	1.1%	10%	3	1	4.2%	5%
S4	44	3	62.8%	15%	14	16	20%	30%	7	1	10%	5%	8	0	7.1%	0
S5	10	3	14.2%	15%	38	17	54.2%	85%	0	0	0	0	22	0	31.4%	0
S6	46	10	65.7%	80%	23	10	32.8%	30%	0	0	0	0	1	0	1.4%	0
S7	40	6	57.1%	30%	28	14	40%	70%	1	0	1.4%	0	1	0	1.4%	0
S8	63	10	90%	50%	6	0	8.5%	40%	0	2	0	10%	1	0	1.4%	0
S9	42	0	60%	0	15	16	21.4%	30%	1	4	1.4%	20%	12	0	17.1%	0
S10	42	4	60%	20%	26	14	37.1%	70%	0	1	0	5%	2	1	2.8%	5%



After examining the questionnaire data concerning ten different situations (see Appendix 1), the researcher noticed that Iraqi students use a variety of strategies when communicating requests in English. These strategies are applied in different contexts and include strategies like Mood Derivable, Hedged Performatives, Explicit Performatives, Scope Stating, Query Preparatory, Suggestory Formula, Strong Hints, Mild Hints, in addition to the request strategies delineated by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain in 1984, Iraqi students also utilize another category– opting out of making requests. As per the findings of Bonikowska, Brown, and Levinson, on occasion, certain speakers opt not to carry out speech acts within real-life situations as elaborated in Table 3.

Table 3: The frequency distribution and percentage of the request strategies used by Iraqi Students in the Questionnaire (70 participants)

\*F= frequency; P= percentage; S=Situation; S1=First Situation; S2=Second Situation

Request Situation	DIRECT LEVEL										CONVENTIONALLY INDIRECT LEVEL				NONCONVENTIONAL INDIRECT LEVEL				OPT-OUT	
	Mood Derivable		Explicit Performative		Hedged Performative		Location Derivable		Scope Stating		Preparatory Condition		Suggestory Formula		Strong Hints		Mild Hints		F	P
	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P				
S1	50	71%	0	0	5	7.1%	1	1%	0	0	7	10%	2	2.8%	1	1.4%	0	0	4	5.7%
S2	18	27%	0	0	6	8.5%	0	0	0	0	37	52.8%	1	1.4%	4	5.7%	1	1%	2	2.8%
S3	2	2.8%	3	4.28%	2	2.8%	0	0	5	7.1%	54	77.1%	0	0	1	1.4%	0	0	3	4.2%
S4	10	14%	2	2.8%	5	7.1%	7	10%	20	28.5%	14	20%	0	0	7	10%	0	0	5	7.1%
S5	5	7.1%	0	0	1	1%	2	2.8%	2	2.8%	36	51.4%	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	31.4%
S6	33	47%	0	0	4	5.7%	0	0	9	12.8%	23	32.8%	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.4%
S7	22	31.4%	1	1.4%	5	7.1%	0	0	12	17.1%	27	38.5%	1	1.4%	1	1.4%	0	0	1	1.4%
S8	50	71.4%	0	0	2	2.8%	1	1.4%	0	0	5	7.1%	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.4%
S9	38	54.2%	0	0	2	2.8%	1	1.4%	1	1.4%	15	21.4%	0	0	0	0	1	1%	12	17.1%
S10	36	51.4%	0	0	4	5.7%	2	2.8%	0	0	24	34.2%	2	2.8%	0	0	0	0	2	2.8%

Standing on each situation separately and analyzing it, in the first situation Iraqi students predominantly employed the direct request formula, accounting for 80%. The most commonly utilized strategy within this formula was mood derivable, constituting 71% of the cases such as ("Please, clean the room."). Following this, the hedged performative strategy was observed at a rate of 7.1% such as ("I would like you to clean the room"). The third strategy was location-derivable, which accounted for 1% such as ("you have to clean your room."). In terms of indirect requests, they constituted 12.8% of the total. These were distributed among two strategies: preparatory conditions at 10% such as ("Can you arrange the room please."), and the suggestion formula at 2.8% such as ("Why don't you clean the room?"). In unconventional indirect request formulation, the usage rate was 1.4%, primarily employing the strong hints strategy such as

("you left the room in a mess") . Notably, the percentage of respondents who opted out to perform the request stood at 5.7%. Using the direct request format, especially the imperative strategy, among the Iraqi students in the first situation, suggests a sense of familiarity and lack of formality in making requests. In the Iraqi culture, direct requests are often seen as a sign of power or authority or an absence of hierarchical distinction between the speaker and the listener. In this first scenario, involving a request between siblings or relatives, it signifies the presence of kinship and familiarity. Despite frequently utilizing direct request forms in all situations, students have integrated internal mitigating devices into these forms. Iraqi students employ various elements, predominantly lexical ones like "please," "sorry," and "sir," to soften their requests. "Please" stands as the most commonly used among students. The Iraqi students perceive that any kind of request should be accompanied by "please." Often, especially when used at the beginning of a sentence, its purpose is to capture attention and to be more polite. This pragmalinguistic function attributed to "please" by Iraqi students stems from the influence of their mother tongue. Many learners consider "please" to be equivalent to "law samaht," which serves dual functions in Arabic: (1) a marker of politeness and (2) a means of grabbing attention or initiating a conversation in Iraq, please equivalent to "min rikhistak, bila zahmajh. It can also indicate the illocutionary force of a statement (Al Zumor: 2012:83). In line with Taha's assertion in (2006:359), using imperative forms for making requests is entirely acceptable in Arabic, provided that the expression's tone includes elements that soften the commanding nature of the imperative. According to the Britain participants (see Table 4) in the first situation, they used the indirect level at a higher rate than other situations, with a percentage of 60% for the indirect request. The most commonly utilized strategy within this formula was preparatory conditions at 45% such as ("Would you mind cleaning the room?"), and the suggestion formula at 2.8% such as ("Why do you leave the room like that and don't clean it up?"). Indirect requests are widely used and highly regarded in British culture. According to Trosborg (1995:234), preparatory requests are the preferred choice for several reasons. Firstly, this category provides a broader range of effective request strategies when compared to other categories, whether they are direct or unconventionally indirect. Moreover, preparatory requests explicitly mention both the person initiating the action and the desired action, often with an elevated level of politeness.

Additionally, preparatory conditions create a sense that compliance is not presumed, which helps protect the speaker's social reputation and gives the listener the option to decline if they wish (ibid:235).

Table 4: The frequency distribution and percentage of the request strategies used by British participants in the Questionnaire (20 participants)

\*F= frequency; P= percentage; S=Situation; S1=First Situation; S2=Second Situation—.

Request Situations	DIRECT LEVEL										CONVENTIONALLY INDIRECT LEVEL				NONCONVENTIONAL LEVEL				OPT-OUT	
	Mood Derivable		Explicit Performative		Hedged Performative		Location Derivable		Scope Stating		Preparatory Condition		Suggestory Formula		Strong Hints		Mild Hints		F	P
	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P				
S1	5	25%	1	5%	0	0	1	5%	0	0	9	45%	3	15%	1	5%	0	0	0	0
S2	0	0	0	0	1	5%	0	0	0	0	17	85%	0	0	2	10%	0	0	0	0
S3	0	0	0	0	4	20%	0	0	1	5%	12	60%	0	0	2	10%	0	0	1	5%
S4	0	0	2	10%	0	0	0	0	1	5%	16	80%	0	0	0	0	1	5%	0	0
S5	0	0	1	5%	1	5%	0	0	1	5%	17	85%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S6	7	35%	1	5%	0	0	0	0	2	10%	10	50%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S7	3	15%	1	5%	1	5%	0	0	1	5%	14	70%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S8	10	50%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	35%	1	5%	1	5%	1	5%	0	0
S9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	75%	1	5%	3	15%	1	5%	0	0
S10	1	5%	2	10%	1	5%	0	0	0	0	14	70%	0	0	1	5%	0	0	1	5%

In the context of the British participants, the utilization of direct requests amounted to 35%, encompassing a distribution across three distinct strategies. Specifically, the first strategy, known as "Mood Derivable," accounted for 25% such as ("Clean in."). The second strategy, "Explicit Performative," constituted 5% such as ("Oi, you better clean up your mess or I'll tell mum."), while the third strategy, referred to as "Location Derivable," also represented 5% of the total direct requests such as ("You have to clean your mess."). The limited employment of imperatives in the context of British English can be justified by examining the perspectives put forth by Lakoff (1973), Searle (1975), and Leech (1983) regarding the concept of politeness within the English language. According to Lakoff (1973), the explicit use of commands, much like imperatives, is considered impolite due to its implication of the notion that the speaker holds a position of superiority over the recipient, accompanied by the authority to ensure compliance.

For the British participants in the first situation, imperatives are used to express solidarity and familiarity between the two interacting. As both speakers are brothers that will be enough to start a conversation using imperatives in S1. The British participants used the lexical "please" as an internal modification to the indirect request. The distinction between an utterance that can be construed as a directive and one that should be comprehended as a request can be indicated through the inclusion of the term "please." The introduction of "please" to render the role of the

speaker's statement as a request unmistakable such as (" Please could you clean up"). Similarly, appending "please" to an imperative alters the utterance's interpretation from a directive to a request. "Please" functions to moderate the impact of an utterance and, as pointed out by Stubbs (1983: 72) as cited in White (1993:194-195), its sole purpose is to serve as a marker of politeness or mitigation. In essence, "please" lacks any inherent propositional content; it does not convey specific information. Instead, its primary interactive function is to elicit another individual to perform a certain action. Moreover, in terms of employing a non-conventional indirect approach, its prevalence was noted at 5%. Such as ("Sure, let me help you").

In the second situation, the students used direct requests at a rate of 35.7% distributed between 27% for mood derivable and 8.5% for hedged performative, which is higher than the rate of use in British participants 5% for hedged performative. This is due to the influence of the student's mother tongue, as requests in Arabic are often formulated in the form of a declarative sentence that begins with the command, they are more used than other types of forms. However, to make the request acceptable to the professor, who has a higher status than the student, students used internal softeners such as "please, professor, sir, doctor" or some external softeners in which the student explained the reason for the request such as ("Doctor raise your voice, please", Professor, please raise your voice, because I can't hear you."). The use of a variety of mitigations to make their requests more acceptable and respectful indicates that students understand the importance of politeness in communicating with their professors which reflects the cultural influence based on respecting their superiors despite the use of a direct request. The differences in request formats between Arabic and English can be attributed to the different cultural values of the two languages. Arabic culture is more collectivist and emphasizes the importance of social hierarchy. This is reflected in the use of honorifics and other politeness strategies in Arabic requests. English culture, on the other hand, is more individualistic and emphasizes the importance of equality. Regarding the utilization of the indirect request structure, students constituted 54%, while in contrast, British participants employed the indirect request structure at a rate of 85% such as ("\*Raises my arm first\* Excuse me sir, can you repeat and explain a little bit more slowly this time?"). Among Iraqi students, 1.4% adopted the unconventional indirect request format such as ("Please sir, I can't listen "), as opposed to the 5%

of British individuals who employed a similar strategy such as ("I can't hear you"). Concurrently, a subset of students, approximately 5.7%, chose not to execute requests. This choice was attributed to their hesitance in asking their professor to speak louder, driven by feelings of respect and shyness. These circumstances also exemplify how social culture shapes students' behaviours. The substantial disparity in percentage between Iraqi students' and British participants' preferences can be attributed to a lack of comprehensive familiarity with the diverse linguistic tools necessary for executing specific speech acts. The limited resources through which Iraqi students acquire English contribute to this gap, leading them to rely on what they have been taught in school or on the most accessible strategies.

In the analysis of the third scenario, it was observed that the proportion of the Iraqi students who employed the direct request level stood at 17.1%. This percentage was distributed across several distinct strategies: 2.8% for mood derivable such as ("Give me your phone please, I have an important call."), 4.28% for the Explicit Performative such as ("I'm asking you to give me your phone please"), 2.8% for the hedged performative such as ("I would like to give me your phone please"), and 7.1% for the scope-stating such as ("I want you to give me your phone please, I forget my phone at home"). In contrast, among the British speakers, the utilization of the direct request level amounted to 25%. This distribution was apportioned with 20% for the hedged performative strategy and 5% for the scope stating strategy. Despite the higher percentage among British speakers, it's noteworthy that British speakers preferred to employ the hedged performative and the scope stating strategy such as ("Sorry I have no credit in my phone, only using it for Wi-Fi," "Excuse me, I have an urgent call that I need to make but I have left my phone at home."), wherein the level of imposition is comparatively less, over direct imperative forms. On the other hand, Iraqi students opted for the direct imperative form along with a higher frequency of usage such as ("Borrow me your phone, please?"), "Please, I want your phone for an urgent call"), "Give me your phone."), indicating more forceful imposition.

It was observed that in the same scenario, the Iraqi students used the indirect request level at a percentage of 77.1% by employing the "preparatory condition" strategy such as ("Please, may I use your phone, because I forget my phone"), the British participants, on the other hand, also utilized the indirect request level at a rate of 60%, employing the same "preparatory condition"

strategy used by the Iraqi students such as ("Excuse me, I have an urgent call that I need to make but I have left my phone at home. Could I use yours?"). The percentage of the Iraqi students who used the "nonconventional indirect level" was 7.1% such as (" Please sir, I need to make an urgent call, but I left my phone at home."), while the percentage for the British participants was 10% such as ("Sorry I have no credit in my phone, only using it for Wi-Fi. "). On the other hand, 4.2% of the students opted out of performing the request, and the percentage of the British participants who refrained from performing the request was 5%.

In scenario S4, the percentage of the Iraqi students who used the direct request level was 62% to request additional expenses from their parents. This distribution was divided as follows: 14% for the mood derivable strategy such as ("Please Dad, give me some money "), 2.8% for the Explicit Performative strategy such as ("I'm requesting you to provide me with some money please."), 7.1% for the hedged performative strategy such as ("Daddy, I would like you to give me some money"), 10% for the location derivable strategy such as ("You must give me some money.", and 28.5% for the scope stating such as ("I want money baba"). On the other hand, the percentage of British participants was 15%, with 10% for the mood derivable strategy such as ("Dad, give me some money please"), and 5% for the scope stating strategy such as ("I need money please."). The significant variation between these two percentages is attributed to the influence of cultural and societal norms among Iraqi students. This difference stems from the cultural impact, where in the Iraqi society, the responsibility for financial expenditures on children remains with the father as long as they are students, even if they are older than 18. In the Arab culture, even after graduating from university, the father continues to be responsible until the children find employment. In contrast, in the English society, financial independence typically occurs when children reach the age of 18. This cultural discrepancy highlights how the students were influenced by their Arab culture when requesting additional expenses.

The Iraqi students extensively utilized internal mitigating expressions, " please" to soften the imperative request and address terms within their requests. These terms are an integral part of both politeness and communicative systems. These address terms encompass in-group identifiers, kinship expressions, and diminutives. In this scenario, terms like "dad" and "daddy" were used to soften the directness of the request and to convey a sense of kinship and familial

belonging. On the other hand, the percentage of the Iraqi students who used the indirect request was 20%, and they employed the preparatory condition strategy exclusively such as ("Dad, May you give me some money?"). In contrast, British participants constituted 80% of the total, and they also utilized the preparatory condition strategy such as ("Dad, I have run out of money. Could I have more pocket money?"). The percentage of students who employed the nonconventional indirect request level was 10%, using the strong hint strategy such as ("Dad, I have no money at the moment.". In contrast, the British participants accounted for 5% and used the mild hint strategy such as ("Yes this time but next time I should budget better."). Moreover, a percentage of 7.1% opted out of performing the request. Their rationale was grounded in having an independent source of income, further highlighting the influence of cultural norms. Obtaining a job typically reduces the necessity for students to seek additional financial assistance from their parents. Conversely, the percentage of British participants who did not perform the request was 5%.

When analyzing the fifth scenario, the percentage of the Iraqi students who used the direct level was 14.2%, distributed across various strategies: 7.1% for Mood Drivable such as ("professor, Gave me a ride home"), 1.4% for Hedged performatives such as ("Doctor, I'd like to join you on your way home. The bus is running late."), 2.8% for Explicit Performative such as ("Professor, I kindly request that you allow me to accompany you."), and 2.8% for Scope Stating such as ("Doctor, I want to go with you because my bus has left"). It is notable that students utilized the address term "professor", along with internal mitigating "please" and external politeness markers "grounder" such as (I missed my bus, take me with you, please?). In contrast, the percentage of British participants was 15%, distributed among 5% for the Explicit Performative strategy such as ("Professor, could I ask you for a favour? I have missed the bus and the next one is not for an hour. I think we live near each other. I'm asking you to give me a lift home please.") 5% for the hedged performative strategy such as ("Hey, professor I would like to ask for a ride. I live in the same neighbourhood as you and missed the bus, unfortunately."), and 5% for the scope-stating strategy such as ("Excuse me, the bus is delayed. I need you to give me a lift home."). They employed address terms such as "Sir, professor "along with internal politeness markers such as "please". In the same scenario, the percentage of the students who used the indirect request

level was 54%, employing the Preparatory Condition strategy in addition to using the address term "professor", internal politeness markers like "please", and the external politeness marker "grounder." Such as ("Can you pick me up at my home please, it's evening now and there are no cars here."). On the other hand, a higher proportion of British participants, 85%, employed the indirect request level, complemented by the use of internal politeness markers such as " please, sorry " and address terms such as "Sir, Mr., Miss." as well as external modifiers such as "checking on availability, grounder, and cost minimizer" such as ("So sorry for the intrusion but is it ok if go with you?," " Please can I have a lift as my bus is in 1 hour", Professor, could I ask you for a favour? I have missed the bus and the next one is not for an hour." I think we live near each other. Would it be possible to give me a lift home?").In the same fifth situation, it was observed that a relatively high percentage of the Iraqi students 31.4%, opted out of complying with the professor's request to give them a ride. Their reasons for this decision were diverse, with some expressing discomfort in making such a request, while others indicated feelings of shyness. This phenomenon underscores the profound impact of cultural norms, where the professor holds a position of considerable prestige and authority. In contrast, none of the British participants refrained from fulfilling the request.

In scenario S6, when presented with the task of initiating a phone call, 65% of the Iraqi students opted for the direct request level. This distribution was further categorized into the following strategies: 47% for Mood Derivable such as ("Give me your phone please"), 5.7% for explicit performative such as ("Can I use your phone to make a call please"), and 12.8% for Scope Stating such as ("I want to use your phone to make an urgent call I forget my phone in home"). In contrast, among the British participants, 50% chose the direct request level, with its distribution as follows: 35% for Mood Derivable such as ("Let me borrow your phone for a sec, 5% for Explicit performative such as ("Any chance I can use your phone."), and 10% for Scope Stating such as ("I need to call, please.").

Both the Iraqi students and the British participants effectively incorporated internal and external mitigating devices such as the use of "please" and address terms, alongside the Mood Derivable strategy. Regarding situation six, it was noted that a percentage of 32.8% of the Iraqi students preferred to use an indirect level when performing the request using a preparatory conditional



strategy such as ("I have an urgent call can I borrow your phone, please?") Conversely, among British participants, a percentage is 50% such as ("Mate, can I have your mobile to make an urgent call?"). Only a small 1.4% of the Iraqi students opted out of making the request.

When analyzing situation S7, it was found that the percentage of the Iraqi students who utilized the direct level of request performance amounted to 57.1%. These students employed the following strategies: 31.4% used the Mood derivable such as ("give me your notebook, please"), 1.4% employed Explicit performatives such as ("my friend I can take your notebook please"), 5.7% employed the Hedge Performative such as ("I would like you to give me your notebook because I 'm absent yesterday") and 17.1% employed Scope Stating such as ("I want your notebook, I'm absent yesterday. Conversely, the British participants had a 30% rate of using direct requests. They employed the following strategies: 15% chose Mood Derivable such as ("Hey Matiy - I missed the class yesterday - lend us your notes."), 5% used Explicit performatives such as ("Sure they can borrow the notes, let me help you"), 5% employed Hedged Performative such as ("I would like you to give me your notes please") and 5% employed Scope Stating such as ("I need your worksheet please"). When considering the utilization of indirect requests, the Iraqi students displayed a usage rate of 40%, distributed across two distinct strategies: 38.5% employed the preparatory conditional strategy such as ("Can you give me your notebook, please"), while 1.4% favoured the employment of the suggestion form such as ("What about yesterday's lecture notes? I was absent"). In contrast, the British participants demonstrated a rate of 70%, opting to employ the preparatory conditional strategy such as ("Dear friend, I missed the class yesterday, may I borrow your notes?"). A percentage of 1.4% of the Iraqi students utilized the unconventional indirect level of request using the strong hints strategy such as ("Please, I missed yesterday's lecture. I was absent"). Furthermore, 1.4% a percentage of the same group opted out of performing the request.

Upon analyzing situation S8, it was observed that a very high percentage of the Iraqi students, 90% to be precise, opted for the direct level of request performance. This percentage was distributed among the following strategies: 85% used the "Mode Drivable," such as (turn on the air condition) 2.8% employed the "Hedge Performative," such as (I would like you to turn on the air condition) and 1.4% utilized the "Location Drivable." such as (you should turn on the

condition, it's hot). As for the British participants, their use of the direct level of request stood at 50% all of them used Mood Drivable. However, they incorporated various internal mitigations like "please" and "excuse me" as well as external ones such as "grounder" in conjunction with the address term. Such as ("Please turn the a/c on, it's very hot in here", and "It is very hot. Turn on this air conditioner"). The substantial difference in the usage rates between the students and the British participants can be attributed to cultural and societal influences. In Iraqi culture, younger siblings are typically regarded as having a lower social status than their older counterparts. As a result, older siblings have the privilege of using direct imperative forms when making requests. In addition, the Iraqi students utilized the indirect strategy at a rate of 8.6%. They employed a preparatory condition strategy and utilized internal mitigations like "please" and "excuse me," in addition to external mitigations such as "Grounder," to clarify the reasoning behind their requests such as ("may you turn on the air condition, please it's hot"). Conversely, British demonstrated a rate of 40% for the indirect strategy. This distribution included 35% who employed the preparatory condition strategy such as ("Alex, I am roasting. Could you turn on the air conditioner, please?"), and 5% opted for the suggestory formula strategy such as ("Excuse me, How about the air conditioner? It's hot."). Furthermore, the British participants incorporated internal mitigations like "please" and "excuse me," along with external mitigations like "Grounder," to reinforce their reasoning. The British participants also utilized the nonconventional indirect request level at a rate of 10% such as (It is very hot.), whereas none of the Iraqi students employed this level.

In the ninth situation, 60% of the Iraqi students opted for a direct level in asking their mothers to do their laundry. A more detailed analysis of their strategies indicated that 58.2% of them employed the "Mood Drivable" strategy such as ("Mum, wish this for me, please."), 2.8% used the "hedged performative" strategy such as ("Mama, you can wash my clothes with you I'm studying."), 1.4% chose the "location Derivable" strategy such as ("Mam, you should wash my clothes, please. I'm very tired"), and another 1.4% utilized the "scope stating" strategy such as ("I want you to wash my clothes"). It is worth noting that despite the prevalence of direct requests, these students also integrated internal mitigations, such as the use of "please" and "address terms," in addition to external mitigations like "Sweetener" and "Grounder." such as ("my lovely

mum, wash my clothes, I'm busy"; " wish my clothes, please."). On the other hand, the British participants did not use the direct request approach when asking for help. This difference can be explained by the impact of cultural norms that shape family relationships in Iraq. In this context, mothers are seen as very close family members and often take on roles that are similar to those of sisters or friends within the family unit. As a result, students in Iraq do not feel uneasy when they need to make straightforward requests to their mothers for assistance with tasks like laundry. Regarding using the indirect level, the percentage of the Iraqi students was 21.4%. They used the preparatory condition, in addition to employing internal softeners like "please" and external softeners such as "grounder," "sweetener," and "cost minimizer," such as ( "Please, Mom, can you wash my clothes?", "My dear mother, you are very caring. Can you please wash my clothes, as I have a lot of studying to do.," "Would you wash my clothes, Mom? I have a few."), along with the use of the address term "mom". As for the British participants percentage was 80%, distributed between the preparatory condition strategy at 75% such as ("Mum, my clothes are dirty. Could you wash them for me."), and the suggestive formula at 5% such as ("Mom, what do you think about washing my clothes?"). They used internal softeners like "please" and "excuse me," as well as external softeners like "grounder" such as ("Mum, my clothes are dirty. Could you wash them for me?"), and "sweetener" such as ("I love you Mum - could you please wash my clothes today?"). 17.1% of the Iraqi students opted out of performing the request and cited the reason that they relied on themselves for doing their laundry.

When examining the S10 scenario, it was observed that 60% of the Iraqi students employed the direct level to execute requests. This distribution included 51.4% who utilized the Mood Derivable strategy such as ("turn off the songs I want to sleep"), 5.7% who employed the Hedged Performative strategy (please, I would like you to turn off the music the children are sleeping"), and 2.8% who opted for the Location Drivable strategy such as ("what is this noise, you have to lower the volume or just turn it off."). Conversely, among the British participants, only 20% utilized the direct level for requests. This usage was further divided among different strategies, with 5% employing the Mood Derivable strategy such as ("Turn it off please."), 10% utilizing the Explicit Performative strategy such as ("Any chance you can turn down the music as I would like to sleep"), and 5% opting for the Hedged Performative strategy such as ("It's late, I

would like you to turn the music off." ).In the same tenth scenario, 37.1% of the Iraqi students opted for the indirect level when making requests. This distribution was divided between two strategies: 34.1% utilized the Preparatory Condition strategy such as ("Could you turn off the music? We need to sleep"), while 2.8% employed the Suggested Formula such as ("Why don't turn the music off? That is really loud."). Of the British participants' percentage who utilized the indirect level 70% relied on the Preparatory Condition strategy such as ("Hello sir, could you please turn off the music or use headphones? I need to sleep and I will be really grateful.").The significant difference in the percentage distribution between Iraqi students and British participants highlights a clear lack of pragmatic competence among the Iraqi students. This finding indicates that a considerable number of the Iraqi students often resorted to directly translating their Arabic language patterns into English when making requests. This observation emphasizes the substantial impact of one's native language on their ability to communicate effectively in a second language context.It was observed that the Iraqi students did not employ the non-conventional indirect level for making requests. In contrast, 5% of the British participants utilized the Strong Hints strategy within the non-conventional indirect level such as ("Sorry about the loud music, don't know what I was thinking honestly."). Furthermore, it is noted that 2.8% of the Iraqi students opted out of making requests. The hesitance of the Iraqi students to make such requests as they wrote stemmed from their feelings of embarrassment or discomfort when asking their neighbours to lower the volume of their radios or televisions. This hesitation underscores the significant influence of societal and cultural norms on how neighbours interact and their willingness to tolerate potential disturbances. These behaviours are aligned with the religious and cultural perspectives that are prevalent in Iraqi society. Regarding the British participants, 5% opted out of making any requests. Table (5) sums up the frequency and percentages of the responses in the ten situations for the Iraqi students and the British participants.

Table 5: the total frequency distribution and percentage of the major request levels used by Iraqi Students (700 responses per 10 situations by 70 participants) and British participants (200 responses per 10 situations by 20 participants) in all the situations of the Questionnaire. IF-Iraqi frequency; IP-Iraqi percentage; BF-British frequency; BP-British percentage

All Requests Situations	DIRECT LEVEL				CONVENTIONAL Y INDIRECT LEVEL				NONCONVENTIONAL INDIRECT LEVEL				OPT-OUT			
	IF	IP	BF	BP	IF	IP	BF	BP	IF	IP	BF	BP	IF	IP	BF	BP
	380	54%	49	24.5%	281	35.8%	136	68%	16	2.2%	13	6.5%	53	7.5%	2	1%

As well as the total percentages can be observed in the Tables (6 and 7) and Figures (1 and 2) below:

Table 7: the total percentage of the categories of requests used by the British participants (268 responses per 10 situations by 20 participants) in the Questionnaire.

All Requests Situations	INDIRECT LEVEL	CONVENTIONALLY INDIRECT LEVEL	NONCONVENTIONALLY INDIRECT LEVEL	OPT-OUT
	24.9%	48%	6.9%	1%

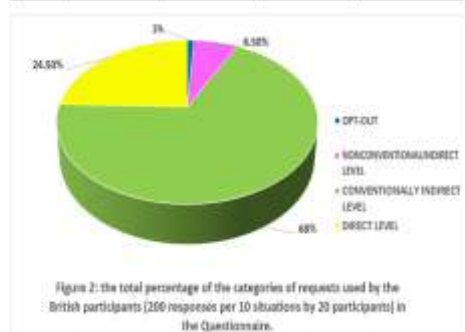
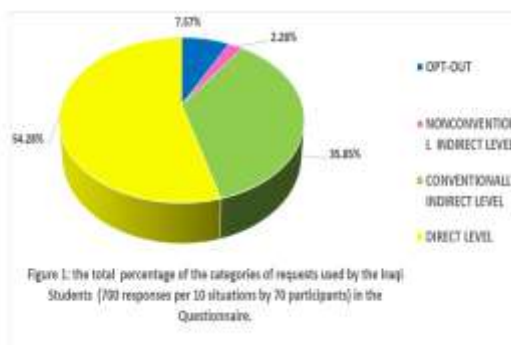


Table 6: the total percentage of the categories of requests used by the Iraqi Students (700 responses per 10 situations by 70 participants) in the Questionnaire.

All Requests Situations	DIRECT LEVEL	CONVENTIONALLY INDIRECT LEVEL	NONCONVENTIONALLY INDIRECT LEVEL	OPT-OUT
	54.28%	35.85%	2.28%	7.57%



#### 4.1 Discussion

After analyzing the data, the study revealed the following significant results:

1. Distinct Request Strategies: It was evident that there were notable variations in the request strategies employed by different participant groups.
2. Clear Cross-Cultural Differences: The most noteworthy outcome was the distinct contrast in the utilization of request strategies between the Iraqi students and the British participants, underscoring clear cross-cultural disparities in communication practices.

The results of this study indicate that:

The findings of the study indicate that Iraqi students exhibit a preference for direct request strategies see Table (8), a tendency attributed to influences from their native language and Iraqi culture. Direct requests, including imperatives and explicit performatives, were frequently employed, with internal and external softeners used to mitigate the imperative tone. This preference for direct methods in making requests contrasts with English norms, where direct requests are often considered impolite. The cultural differences in request strategies between Arabic and English may be explained by Brown and Levinson's politeness model (1987), as cited in (Tag-Eldin, 2016:75), suggesting that collectivist cultures, such as Iraq's, favor positive

politeness strategies emphasizing cooperation and solidarity. In Iraqi society, direct requests align with positive politeness, reflecting informality, intimacy, and strong in-group connections, essential for community acceptance. In contrast, English society, characterized by individualism, values autonomy, and prefers indirect expressions to avoid infringing on the listener's freedom of action.

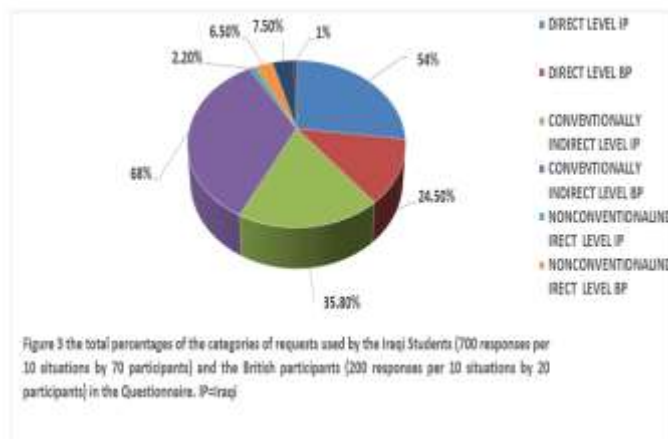
Table 8: the percentage of major levels of request used by the Iraqi Students and the British participants in the Questionnaire.\*IP=Iraqi percentage; BP=British percentage.

Request Situations	DIRECT LEVEL		CONVENTIONALLY INDIRECT LEVEL		NONCONVENTIONAL INDIRECT LEVEL		OPT-OUT	
	IP	BP	IP	BP	IP	BP	IP	BP
S1	80%	35%	12.8%	60%	1.4%	5%	5.7%	0%
S2	35.7%	5%	54.2%	85%	7.1%	10%	2.8%	0%
S3	17.1%	25%	77.1%	60%	1.1%	10%	4.2%	5%
S4	62.8%	15%	20%	80%	10%	5%	7.1%	0%
S5	14.2%	15%	54.2%	85%	0%	0%	31.4%	0%
S6	65.7%	50%	32.8%	50%	0%	0%	1.4%	0%
S7	57.1%	30%	40%	70%	1.4%	0%	1.4%	0%
S8	90%	50%	8.5%	40%	0%	10%	1.4%	0%
S9	60%	0%	21.4%	80%	1.4%	20%	17.1%	0%
S10	60%	20%	37.1%	70%	0%	5%	2.8%	5%

To summarize, the percentages of the responses in the questionnaire for both the Iraqi students and the British participants are presented in Table (9), as well as visualized in Figure (3)

Table 9: the total percentage of major request levels used by the Iraqi Students (700 responses per 10 situations by 70 participants) and the British participants (200 responses per 10 situations by 20 participants) in the Questionnaire. IP=Iraqi percentage; BP=British percentage.

All Requests Situations	DIRECT LEVEL		CONVENTIONALLY INDIRECT LEVEL		NONCONVENTIONAL INDIRECT LEVEL		OPT-OUT	
	IP	BP	IP	BP	IP	BP	IP	BP
	54%	14%	35.8%	69%	12%	6.5%	7.5%	1%



#### 4.2 Revisiting Research Questions

The present study involves an inquiry through a set of questions that specifically focusing on aspects concerning with the pragmalinguistic failure of request for fourth-year students at the University of Basra, College of Arts, English Department. This section also emphasizes the research questions and their relevant responses.

The first research question focuses on evaluating the proficiency of Iraqi students in their ability to handle and comprehend speech acts associated with polite requests. The statistical findings indicate

that Iraqi students' performance in the questionnaire, when compared to British participants, was 54.5% for direct level, 35.8% for indirect conventional level, 2.2% for non-conventional indirect level, and 7.5% for opting out of the request. These results suggest a limited proficiency level among Iraqi students in expressing requests in the English language.

The second research question pertains to the extent of the impact of pragmatic competence absence on the occurrence of pragmalinguistic failure among Iraqi students. Based on the response percentages obtained from the questionnaire for Iraqi students, which were not persuasive, especially given that these students are enrolled in the English Language Department, one would expect their proficiency in making requests in English to be more accurate. This suggests that the pragmatic competence among students is insufficient for using English in real-life situations. If students possessed a sufficient reservoir of pragmatic competence, their performance in making requests would have been closer to the percentages achieved by British participants. Consequently, it is imperative for students to enhance their pragmatic competence to prevent pragmalinguistic failure that may lead to misunderstandings when making requests.

The focus of the third research question revolves around the extent of the impact of students' native language and their cultural background on their performance in making polite requests. Based on the response percentages obtained from the questionnaire and for Iraqi students, it was observed that Iraqi students demonstrated the highest percentage of performance in direct requests compared to British participants. Additionally, there was a tendency among Iraqi students to employ the present tense more frequently than British participants. This tendency could be attributed to the influence of their native language or the impact of Iraqi culture. This preference can be attributed either to the influence of their native language, or to the impact of Iraqi culture.

In the context of indirect requests, Iraqi students displayed a higher preference for the present tense compared to British participants, who often opted for the past tense, deemed more polite within their cultural norms. The students' tendency towards the present tense can be linked to the fact that request formulation in the Arabic language occurs in the present tense. This underscores the significant influence of the students' native language on their inclination to formulate requests using the present tense.

Despite the availability of indirect request forms in Arabic, Iraqi students demonstrated a preference for the direct form, which is more commonly employed. This choice can be linked to



the collectivist nature of Iraqi culture, characterized by the cultivation of strong in-group bonds extending beyond immediate families to tribal links. Within this collectivist framework, direct requests align with positive politeness strategies, emphasizing traits such as informality, intimacy, solidarity, and the reinforcement of strong in-group connections. In Iraqi society, collaboration with others holds primary importance for community acceptance, and individuals frequently turn to extended family or tribal members for assistance in various activities. Making direct requests for favours within the group is perceived as a natural obligation in this cultural context. In summary, the outcomes of the study have effectively responded to the questions posed by the researcher and provided support for the hypotheses proposed in this study.

### 5. Conclusion

Cross-cultural communication involves interaction between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, necessitating proficiency in both language and the pragmatic nuances of the target language. Understanding the factors contributing to breakdowns in cross-cultural communication is crucial for preventing pragmatic failures among non-native speakers. This study examines various causes of cross-cultural pragmatic failures and offers insights to enhance the pragmatic competence of second language learners. The goal is to increase awareness among learners about the cultural disparities between their native language and the target language, fostering effective communication with non-native speakers. Overall, the study underscores the challenges faced by Iraqi students in terms of request strategy directness, understanding social factors influencing requests, and proficiency in employing culturally appropriate strategies, indicating a deficiency in pragmatic competence.

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#### APPENDIX (1)

Questionnaire about Request\ Iraqi Participants

Dear participant, this questionnaire is about cross-cultural pragmalinguistic failures that result from the use of speech acts (Polite Request). You are kindly requested to complete this 15-minute questionnaire. Your responses are used for purely academic research purposes and remain confidential.

Age:      Gender: Male: ,Female :      University Level: Fourth stage

## REQUEST SITUATIONS

Dear participant, you will be asked to read ten brief situations in which a request is required. Please, respond as much as you can as if you were in a real-life situation.

1. Your brother with whom you share the room left it in a mess. You ask him to arrange it. You -----
2. The professor is explaining the material quickly and his voice is low. You ask him to raise his voice and explain more slowly. You -----
3. In the market, you needed to call but discovered you forgot your phone. You ask someone you don't know to allow you to make a call from his phone. You: -----
4. Your daily pocket money is over. You request your father for additional money. You: -----
5. An evening class has just ended. Your bus has just left and the next one will not be along for another hour. Your professor lives in the same neighbourhood and has come by car. You'd like to get a ride with her\his, so you approach her/his after the class. You: -----
6. You have to make an urgent phone call. You ask your friend for using his\her phone. You: -----
7. At the university: You missed a class the day before and would like to borrow a colleague's notes. You: -----
8. It's hot in the room and you want your younger brother to turn on the air conditioner. You: -----
9. You have dirty clothes and you want your mom to wash them for you. You: -----
10. In the middle of the night your neighbour is listening to loud music and you can't sleep. You call him to ask him to turn off the music. You: -----

## APPENDIX (2):

استبيان حول الطلب \المشاركين العراقيين

عزيزي المشترك\عزيزتي المشتركة ، هذا الاستبيان حول الإخفاقات اللغوية العملية عبر الثقافات التي تنتج عن استخدام أفعال الكلام (الطلب). يرجى ملء هذا الاستبيان خلال ١٥ دقيقة. يتم استخدام إجاباتك لأغراض البحث الأكاديمي والبحث وتظل سرية.

العمر: الجنس: ذكر أنثى المستوى الجامعي: المرحلة الرابعة

مواقف الطلب

عزيزي المشترك\عزيزتي المشتركة، بعد قرائتك\ك لكل موقف من المواقف العشر المدرجة ادناه والتي تتطلب طلبًا. ارجو التفضل بالاجابة باللهجة العراقية الدارجة متخيلا نفسك\ك في الموقف نفسه.

١. ترك\ت أخوك\اختك\الغرفة التي تشتركان فيها في حالة من الفوضى. تطلب\ين منه\منها ترتيب الغرفة. أنت\ت -----
٢. يشرح الأستاذ المادة بسرعة وبصوت منخفض جدا. تطلب\ين منه رفع صوته والشرح ببطء أكثر. أنت\ت -----
٣. في السوق ، كنت\ت بحاجة إلى الاتصال ولكنك\ك اكتشفت\ت أنك\ك نسيت\ت هاتفك\ك. تطلب\ين من شخص غريب أن يسمح لك\ك بإجراء مكالمة من هاتفه. أنت\ت: -----
٤. مصروف الجيب اليومي الخاص بك\ك نفذ وتريد\ين ان تطلب\ي من والدك\ك مصروف إضافي. أنت\ت: -----
٥. انتهى دوامك\ك في المساء و غادرت الحافلة لتوها ولن تاتي الحافلة الأتية الا بعد ساعة. أستاذك\ك يعيش في نفس الحي وقد جاء بالسيارته. ترغب ان يوصلك\ك بطريقه. أنت\ت: -----

٦. عليك إجراء مكالمة هاتفية عاجلة. تطلبين من صديقك استخدام هاتفه. أنت:
٧. كنت غائبة عن الدوام وفي اليوم الثاني اردت استعارة دفتر ملاحظات أحد الزملاء. أنت:
٨. الجو حار في الغرفة وتريدان من أخيك الأصغر تشغيل مكيف الهواء. أنت:
٩. لديك ملابس متسخة وتريدان من الدتك أن تغسلها لك. أنت:
١٠. في منتصف الليل ، يستمع جارك إلى موسيقى صاخبة ولا يمكنك النوم. اتصلت به لتطلبين منه إيقاف تشغيل الموسيقى. أنت: ---

## APPENDIX (3)

## Electronic questionnaire British Participants

Dear participant, this questionnaire is about cross-cultural pragmalinguistic failures that result from the use of speech acts (request). You are kindly requested to complete this 15-minute questionnaire. Your responses are used for purely academic research purposes and remain confidential.

Age:      Gender: Male: , Female: , Educational Background :      Permanent Residence Address

## REQUEST SITUATIONS

Dear participant, you will be asked to read ten brief situations in which a request is required. Please, respond as much as you can as if you were in a real-life situation.

1. Your brother with whom you share the room left it in a mess. You ask him to arrange it. You -----
2. The professor is explaining the material quickly and his voice is low. You ask him to raise his voice and explain more slowly. You -----
3. In the market, you needed to call but discovered you forgot your phone. You ask someone you don't know to allow you to make a call from his phone. You: -----
4. Your daily pocket money is over. You request your father for additional money. You: ----
5. An evening class has just ended. Your bus has just left and the next one will not be along for another hour. Your professor lives in the same neighbourhood and has come by car. You'd like to get a ride with her\his, so you approach her/his after the class. You: -----
6. You have to make an urgent phone call. You ask your friend for using his\her phone. You: -----
7. At the university: You missed a class the day before and would like to borrow a colleague's notes. You: -----
8. It's hot in the room and you want your younger brother to turn on the air conditioner. You: -----
9. You have dirty clothes and you want your mother to wash them for you. You: -----
10. In the middle of the night your neighbour is listening to loud music and you can't sleep. You call him to ask him to turn off the music. You: -----

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc8TuzHrGwPBGbc4\\_ZZLnDpiGjtMYlgRBCD02I7JB-hTAMZwg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc8TuzHrGwPBGbc4_ZZLnDpiGjtMYlgRBCD02I7JB-hTAMZwg/viewform?usp=sf_link)