

# Request Strategies in Kuwaiti Arabic and British English: A Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Study

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| Yasmeeen B. AlMujaibel<sup>1</sup> | Yasser A. Gomaa<sup>2</sup> |

<sup>1</sup>Department of English  
Language and Literature,  
University of Bahrain, Zallaq,  
Kingdom of Bahrain

<sup>2</sup>Department of English  
Language and Literature, Assiut  
University, Egypt & University of  
Bahrain, Kingdom of Bahrain

<sup>1</sup>yasmeeenalmujaibel@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>gomaa@aun.edu.eg

## ABSTRACT

The study at hands is a cross-cultural exploration of request strategies in Kuwaiti Arabic and British English dialects. A mixed method approach of a qualitative and quantitative analysis was used (i.e., a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and semi-structured interviews). Data was collected from a total of five hundred participants, two hundred and fifty from each group. Sixty participants were chosen for the semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the collected data was based upon Brown and Levinson's (1987) social variables (e.g., power, distance, and ranking). Also, the data was analyzed following Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP). The results of the study revealed that Kuwaiti Arabic and British English participants used the conventional indirect level in the form of query preparatory in most situations. Furthermore, power as a social variable affected Kuwaiti Arabic and British English participants' flow of a request in conversations. Participants used direct request strategies when the power of the speaker was high. As for the semi-structured interviews, the results indicated that there is a sociocultural norm between the Kuwaiti society and the British society, which affected their use of requests.

## KEYWORDS

sociopragmatics; speech acts; request strategies; Kuwaiti Arabic;

## INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication system which generates arbitrary signals. Yet, when people think about language, they consider language as just grammar and words. However, every language comprises of more than what people think; it consists of functional performances that are also known as speech acts. Speech act of requests is associated with speakers' politeness strategy. Speakers may use polite behavior in order to minimize the speaker's face threat. Depending on numerous social-pragmatic variables, speakers change their request strategies from using direct speech acts to indirect speech acts. Wolfson (1989) indicates that the performance of requests may differ in strategies and structures.

In different cultures, speakers may use different request strategies. In any language, the use of requests may reflect cultural values and social norms, which may affect the appropriateness of speech acts. Speakers belonging to different cultures use different kinds of politeness depending on gender, age, religion, demographic area, and social class. This study sheds light on the request strategies in Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) and British English (BE) in a number of different situations.

The purpose of this study is to conduct a pragmatic investigation so as to explore the differences and similarities between KA's and BE's in making requests in different

situations. Researching about the whole request interaction between KA's and BE's in making requests is the main purpose of this study. The major objective of this research is shedding light on the rules of pragmatics that manage different language use in the two cultures and languages under study. This research explores the linguistic theory of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987) in different new settings. It aims to investigate the cross-cultural differences and similarities in the realization of request strategy. It also aims to examine the linguistic factors that may affect the use of requests by different speakers. Therefore, it is hoped that this study assists in comprehending how KA and BE use requests, and thus to what extent prior findings from other former studies are of value to this study.

The present study intends to contribute to the scholarship of studies concerning speech act of requests in two different languages and dialects. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no recent studies investigated the use of request speech act in Kuwaiti Arabic in contrasts with another language. Moreover, request speech act in the Gulf region as a whole has not received due attention from specialists up till now. Therefore, this study fills the gap in the literature and the findings are expected to give deep comprehension and understanding of the speech act of requests. Furthermore, a contrastive study of requests sheds more light on some issues that have not received enough attention in cross-cultural communication.

The study attempts to answer the following questions: (1) what are the different request strategies used by KA speakers and BE speakers?; (2) what are the similarities and differences between KA speakers and BE speakers in their choice of request strategy?; (3) to what extent do strategies of requests reflect social variables such as power, distance, and ranking difference of KA and BE?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The speech act theory is a reliable socio-pragmatic concept that many researchers have been using ever since it was discovered. This theory was first introduced by the British Philosopher John Austin (1962), which divided the speech act theory into three elements: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. The locutionary act makes sense when saying something in a language, when the speaker follows the pronunciation and grammar rules. The illocutionary act is when a speaker performs an act with producing a statement or request or promise, etc. The perlocutionary act is performed when the speaker effects the hearer when uttering a sentence, however, during the act it can be said or performed.

This theory was further developed by one of Austin's students from Oxford University, John Searle in 1969. Searle (1969) defines speech acts as "the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication in various forms with the intent of communicating specific meanings to accomplish their goals" (p. 16). Speech act theory pays considerable attention towards politeness that is reflected in face-threatening acts (FTA) such as: apologies, complaint, requests, and thanking (Blum-kulka, 1989). When a request is performed, it may be either performed directly or indirectly.

John Searle first proposed speech act of request in 1975. He states that requests are a part of directive speech acts that get the hearer to perform an act. He defines requests as "an attempt to get the hearer to do an act which the speaker wants the hearer to do, and which it is not obvious that the hearer will do in the normal course of events or of the hearer's own accord" (p. 66). According to Brown and Levinson (1978), the difference of speech act of requests from other speech acts, it reveals the notion of face and it can uncover the development of cultural scripts.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The data used in this study were two methods, which aim to establish the validity of the realization of, and expected, or predicted outcomes. As mentioned before, the main objective of this study is to compare the differences and similarities of speech acts of requests between two languages, which require a large number of comparable data. Therefore, the first data collection method will be the DCT. The second data collection method used was semi-structured interviews. The instruments were adapted from Gomaa (2003) with modifications to be more suitable for this study. Semi-structured interviews examines participants' facial expressions; gestures, intonation, and many more that cannot be detected in the written responses. Thirty participants from each group were randomly chosen to conduct semi-structural interviews in order to explore extended knowledge of their use of request strategies. During the semi-structured interview, the researcher did not follow a strict list of questions. Instead, the researcher had open-ended questions, allowing the participants to make decisions and form their requests unconsciously. To account for the accuracy of the questionnaire, it was reviewed and rated by Dr. Zuhair Zaghlool, Professor of Linguistics at Amman Arab University, Jordan; and Dr. Fathiya Al-Rashdi, Professor of Linguistics at Sultan Qaboos University, the Sultanate of Oman.

The subjects of this study were two different groups: KA and BE speakers both either studying or living in Kuwait with different cultural backgrounds. A hundred KA participants were chosen and another hundred BE participants, whose ages ranged from twenty to sixty years old to ensure that the participants have enough experience to participate in this study.

## RESULTS

### *Discourse Completion test (DCT)*

#### *Situation 1: Request for notes.*

**Table 1.** Frequency of Request Strategy Types

Types	Request strategy	KA		BE	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>The direct/explicit level</b>	Mood Derivable	6	2.4	6	2.4
	Performative	-	-	-	-
	Hedged Performative	21	8.4	30	12
	Obligation Statement	-	-	-	-
	Want Statement	-	-	28	11.2
<b>The conventional indirect level</b>	Suggestion Formulae	-	-	-	-
	Query Preparatory	213	85.2	186	74.4
<b>The nonconventional indirect level</b>	Strong hints	-	-	-	-
	Mild hints	-	-	-	-

\*Note: Total No. KA = 250, BE = 250.

\*Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of participants in each group responding to the situation by the total number of participants in that group.

Table (1) presents the frequency and percentage of types of request strategies towards KA participants and BE participants in situation one. In this situation, the participant is not able to attend a lecture at their university. They should ask one of their colleagues to lend her/him notes to copy the missed lesson. The social variable in this situation is low, which comes under the hierarchal politeness system. In this system, the relationship between the

interlocutors is equal, in which no one has power (-power) over the other and there is no social distance (-SD). The results in situation one reveal that KA and BE participants utilized query preparatory most frequently. The following examples reveal the uses of query preparatory by each group. When using query preparatory, the participants try to act as politely as possible even if there is no power or social distance between the speaker and the hearer.

### **Query preparatory**

(BE: S1)

1. Can I borrow your notes, please?
2. Can you lend me your notes, please?

(KA: S1)

1. لو سمحت، ممكن تعطيني دفترك بنقل الي طاقني ؟
  - a. Excuse me, could you give me your notes, I want to copy what I missed.
  - b. *law smaht mumkn t?dini dafterek bnqil ili tæfni?*
2. محمد ما عليك امر عادي اخذ دفترك ؟
  - a. Mohammed, not to be ordering you but can I take your notes?
  - b. *flan ma ?lik amer ?di axith daftirik?*

Table (1) shows that participants used a direct level of request strategies, which is hedged performance. 8.4% of KA participants used hedged performances and BE participants used 12%. This shows that participants used this type of request strategy because it depends on the participant's relationship with the hearer. Some speakers use hedged performance to show positive politeness.

### **Hedged performance**

(BE: S1)

1. May I ask if I can borrow your notes?
2. I would like to ask if I could borrow your notes?

(KA: S1)

1. عادي اطلب منح اخذ منح دفترك ؟
  - a. Can I ask to borrow your notebook?
  - b. *?di atlib mnitf axið mnij daftarij?*
2. بس بغيت اسأل عادي تعطيني دفترك ؟
  - a. I was wondering if I can borrow your notes?
  - b. *bas bagit əs?lik ?di t?tmi daftirik?*

Also, Table (1) shows that only 2.4% of KA participants and BE participants use mood derivable. This might be because there is no social distance and power between the speaker and the hearer.

**Mood derivable**

(BE: S1)

1. Give me your notes.
2. Let me copy your notes

(KA: S1)

1. عطيتني دفتر ج  
a. Give me your notes.  
b. *ʔtini daftirj?*
2. دزلي الي كتبتة اليوم  
a. Send me what you wrote down today.  
b. *dzli ili ktbta ʔlywm*

**Want statement**

(BE: S1)

1. I would like you to give me your notes?
2. I want your notes, I missed yesterday's class.

(KA: S1)

1. ابي دفترك  
a. I want your notebook.  
b. *abi daftirk?*
2. ابيح تعطيني دفتر ج  
a. I want you to give me your notebook  
b. *abiħtatini dafteretj*

**Situation 2: Request to opening the window.**

**Table 2.** Frequency of Request Strategy Types

Types	Request strategy	KA		BE	
		No.	%	No.	%
The direct/explicit level	Mood Derivable	-	-	-	-
	Performative	4	1.6	17	6.8
	Hedged Performative	-	-	9	3.6
	Obligation Statement	-	-	24	9.6
	Want Statement	5	2	15	6
The conventional indirect level	Suggestion Formulae	-	-	-	-
	Query Preparatory	198	79.2	155	62
The nonconventional indirect level	Strong hints	15	6	9	3.6
	Mild hints	28	11.2	9	3.6

\*Note: Total No. KA = 250, BE = 250.

\*Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of participants in each group responding to the situation by the total number of participants in that group.

The social variable in this situation is similar to situation one where the power and social distance between the speaker and hearer are equal. Table (2) shows that mood derivable was used by KA participants (1.6%) and BE participants (6.8%). Also, it shows that the strategy want statement was used by KA participants (2%) and BE participants (4.8%). However, in this situation, BE participants used this strategy more than KA

participants. Furthermore, four direct request strategies were used by BE participants, which were not used by KA participants. BE participants used performative (3.6%), hedged performative (9.6%), obligation statement (6%), and want statement (4.8%).

As for the indirect level of request strategies, table (2) shows that both participants used indirect requests in situation two. KA participants used suggestive formulae (11.2%), Query preparatory (68%), strong hints (6%), mild hints (11.2%). As for BE participants, they used suggestive formulae (14.4%), Query preparatory (47.6%), strong hints (3.6%), mild hints (3.6%). In this situation, it shows that query preparatory strategy has been used the most by KA participants and BE participants.

**Situation 3: Request for medicine.**

**Table 3. Frequency of Request Strategy Types**

Types	Request strategy	KA		BE	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>The direct/explicit level</b>	Mood Derivable	-	-	-	-
	Performative	-	-	-	-
	Hedged Performative	3	1.2	50	20
	Obligation Statement	-	-	-	-
	Want Statement	25	10	74	29.6
<b>The conventional indirect level</b>	Suggestion Formulae	-	-	-	-
	Query Preparatory	222	88.8	126	50.4
<b>The nonconventional indirect level</b>	Strong hints	-	-	-	-
	Mild hints	-	-	-	-

*\*Note:* Total No. KA = 250, BE = 250.

*\*Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of participants in each group responding to the situation by the total number of participants in that group.*

Table (3) shows that direct request strategy was such as hedged performative by KA participants (1.2%) and BE (20%). Furthermore, 10% of KA participants used the want statement strategy and 29.6% of BE participants also used the want statement. It clearly shows that BE participants used these strategies more than KA participants. As for the indirect request strategies, query preparatory strategy was used the most by KA participants (80.4%) and BE participants (40%). The use of query preparatory shows the use of politeness strategies. Furthermore, nonconventional direct level like mild hints was also used by KA participants (4.4%) and BE participants (10.4%).

**Situation 4: Request to stopping smoking.**

In Table (4), this situation social variable is similar to situation three, the power between the speaker and the hearer is equal but the social distance is high as well as the degree of imposition. This social variable affects the participants' choice of request strategies. Table (4) shows that KA participants and BE participants used mood derivable strategy. 1.2 % of KA participants and 9.6% of BE participants employed one of the direct levels of requests. It seems that in this situation, mood derivable was used more by BE participants. As for hedged performative strategy, it was used by 3.2% of BE participants.

**Table 4.** Frequency of Request Strategy Types

Types	Request strategy	KA		BE	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>The direct/explicit level</b>	Mood Derivable	3	1.2	24	9.6
	Performative	-	-	19	7.6
	Hedged Performative	-	-	8	3.2
	Obligation Statement	-	-	50	20
	Want Statement	-	-	3	1.2
<b>The conventional indirect level</b>	Suggestion Formulae	-	-	25	10
	Query Preparatory	188	75.2	125	50
<b>The nonconventional indirect level</b>	Strong hints	44	17.6	30	12
	Mild hints	15	6	16	6.4

\*Note: Total No. KA = 250, BE = 250.

\*Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of participants in each group responding to the situation by the total number of participants in that group.

Table (4) shows that BE participants used a more direct level of request strategies than KA participants. BE participants also used performative (7.6%), obligation statement (20%), and want statement (1.2%). As for the indirect level of request strategies, KA participants and BE participants used all types of request strategies. KA participants used query preparatory (50%), strong hints (17.6%), and mild hints (6%). Also, BE participants used query preparatory (75.2%), strong hints (12%), and mild hints (6.4%).

**Situation 5: Request for postponing the research paper submission.**

**Table 5.** Frequency of Request Strategy Types

Types	Request strategy	KA		BE	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>The direct/explicit level</b>	Mood Derivable	-	-	-	-
	Performative	-	-	32	12.8
	Hedged Performative	-	-	80	32
	Obligation Statement	-	-	-	-
	Want Statement	-	-	-	-
<b>The conventional indirect level</b>	Suggestion Formulae	-	-	-	-
	Query Preparatory	196	78.4	135	54
<b>The nonconventional indirect level</b>	Strong hints	31	12.4	3	1.2
	Mild hints	23	9.2	-	-

\*Note: Total No. KA = 250, BE = 250.

\*Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of participants in each group responding to the situation by the total number of participants in that group.

In this situation, the social variable between the speaker and hearer is low in degree of imposition (-D). As for the power (+P) between the speaker and the hearer, the hearer's power is higher than the speaker's since the speaker is requesting their teacher who is in a higher position than the speaker. Furthermore, there is no social distance between the interlocutors (+SD). Therefore, not all participants used direct strategies. However, BE participants used two direct levels of requests: performative (12.8%) and hedged performative (32%). In this situation, a high number of BE participants used direct requests. In addition, Table (5) shows that participants used an indirect level of request

strategies. KA participants used query preparatory (78.4%), strong hints (12.4%), and mild hints (9.2%) whereas BE participants used query preparatory (42%), and strong hints (1.2%).

**Situation 6: Request for repeating an explanation.**

**Table 6.** Frequency of Request Strategy Types

Types	Request strategy	KA		BE	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>The direct/explicit level</b>	Mood Derivable	-	-	-	-
	Performative	-	-	-	-
	Hedged Performative	-	-	-	-
	Obligation Statement	-	-	-	-
	Want Statement	-	-	-	-
<b>The conventional indirect level</b>	Suggestion Formulae	-	-	-	-
	Query Preparatory	190	76	210	84
<b>The nonconventional indirect level</b>	Strong hints	60	24	40	16
	Mild hints	60	24	40	16

\*Note: Total No. KA = 250, BE = 250.

\*Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of participants in each group responding to the situation by the total number of participants in that group.

In this situation, the social variable between the speaker and hearer is the same as in situation five. The power (+P) of the hearer (teacher) is higher than the speaker (student). There is the social distance between the interlocutors (+SD) and the degree of imposition is also low. KA participants used Query preparatory (76%), mild hints (24%). Also, BE participants used query preparatory (84%), and mild hints (16%). In this situation, the highest use of request strategies by both groups was query preparatory. This clearly shows that the higher the power (+), the higher use of indirect request strategies.

**Situation 7: Request for ordering food.**

**Table 7.** Frequency of Request Strategy Types

Types	Request strategy	KA		BE	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>The direct/explicit level</b>	Mood Derivable	-	-	20	8
	Performative	-	-	-	-
	Hedged Performative	-	-	-	-
	Obligation Statement	-	-	-	-
	Want Statement	-	-	25	10
<b>The conventional indirect level</b>	Suggestion Formulae	-	-	-	-
	Query Preparatory	184	73.6	179	71.6
<b>The nonconventional indirect level</b>	Strong hints	-	-	-	-
	Mild hints	66	26.8	30	12

\*Note: Total No. KA = 250, BE = 250.

\*Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of participants in each group responding to the situation by the total number of participants in that group.

The social variable in this situation, the speaker's power, is higher than the hearer's. Furthermore, there is a social distance between the interlocutors, and the degree of imposition is low. KA participants used query Preparatory (73.6%), and mild hints (26.8%). BE participants used mood derivable, want statements (10%), and query preparatory (71.6%), and mild hints (12%). The results clearly show that only BE participants used a direct level of request strategies. Although the speaker's power is higher than the hearer, 18% of BE participants used direct request strategies, mood derivable (8%), and want statement (10%).

Table (7) also indicates the participants' use of indirect level of requests. KA participants used query preparatory (73.6%) and mild hints (26.8%). Also, BE participants used query preparatory (71.6%) and mild hints (12%). Most participants used an indirect level of request although the power of the speaker is higher.

**Situation 8: Request for filling up a car with gas.**

**Table 8.** Frequency of Request Strategy Types

Types	Request strategy	KA		BE	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>The direct/explicit level</b>	Mood Derivable	60	24	25	10
	Performative	-	-	-	-
	Hedged Performative	-	-	15	6
	Obligation Statement	-	-	-	-
	Want Statement	34	13.6	10	4
<b>The conventional indirect level</b>	Suggestion Formulae	-	-	-	-
	Query Preparatory	156	62.4	200	80
<b>The nonconventional indirect level</b>	Strong hints	-	-	-	-
	Mild hints	-	-	-	-

\*Note: Total No. KA = 250, BE = 250.

\*Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of participants in each group responding to the situation by the total number of participants in that group.

In this situation, table (8) shows that participants used a direct level of requests. KA participants used mood derivable (24%), and want statement (13.6%). Also, BE participants used mood derivable (10%), hedged performative (6%), and want statement (4%). However, although the social power of the hearer is higher than the speaker, KA participants and BE participants used an indirect level of request strategies. 62.4% of KA participants and 80% of participants used the query preparatory strategy.

**Situation 9: Request for staying at home.**

In this situation, the speaker has power over the hearer with no social distance and a low degree of imposition. In this situation, direct levels of requests were used by KA participants and BE participants. KA participants and BE participants used several direct requests like mood derivable, obligation statement, and want statements. Table (9) also shows the participants' use of indirect request strategies. Only 12% of BE participants used query preparatory. The reason why participants did not use indirect request strategies redundantly might be the social power of the speaker (mother or father) is higher than the hearer (child).

**Table 9.** Frequency of Request Strategy Types

Types	Request strategy	KA		BE	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>The direct/explicit level</b>	Mood Derivable	111	44.4	90	36
	Performative	-	-	30	12
	Hedged Performative	-	-	-	-
	Obligation Statement	62	24.8	45	18
	Want Statement	77	30.8	55	22
<b>The conventional indirect level</b>	Suggestion Formulae	-	-	-	-
	Query Preparatory	-	-	30	12
<b>The nonconventional indirect level</b>	Strong hints	-	-	-	-
	Mild hints	-	-	-	-

\*Note: Total No. KA = 250, BE = 250.

\*Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of participants in each group responding to the situation by the total number of participants in that group.

**Situation 10: Request for preparing food.**

**Table 10.** Frequency of Request Strategy Types

Types	Request strategy	KA		BE	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>The direct/explicit level</b>	Mood Derivable	60	24	83	33.2
	Performative	-	-	15	6
	Hedged Performative	-	-	-	-
	Obligation Statement	40	16	20	8
	Want Statement	42	16.8	82	32.8
<b>The conventional indirect level</b>	Suggestion Formulae	9	3.6%		
	Query Preparatory	99	39.6	50	20
<b>The nonconventional indirect level</b>	Strong hints	-	-	-	-
	Mild hints	-	-	-	-

\*Note: Total No. KA = 250, BE = 250.

\*Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of participants in each group responding to the situation by the total number of participants in that group.

In this situation, the social variable is the same as in situation nine. In this situation, the results of the table show that most of the participants used direct request strategies. KA participants used mood derivable, performatives, obligation statements, and want statements. However, BE participants used direct level more than KA participants. BE participants used mood derivable, performative, hedged performative, obligation statements, and want statements.

As for the indirect request strategies, Table (10) shows that KA participants used more requests indirectly than BE participants. KA participants used suggestive formulae (29.6%) and query preparatory (35.2%). As for BE participants, they used only query preparatory (12%). These results reveal that social power between the interlocutors affects the participants' use of requests.

**Situation 11: Request for borrowing a camera.**

**Table 11.** Frequency of Request Strategy Types

Types	Request strategy	KA		BE	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>The direct/explicit level</b>	Mood Derivable	-	-	-	-
	Performative	-	-	-	-
	Hedged Performative	-	-	98	39.2
	Obligation Statement	-	-	-	-
	Want Statement	-	-	-	-
<b>The conventional indirect level</b>	Suggestion Formulae	2	0.8	-	-
	Query Preparatory	248	99.2	152	60.8
<b>The nonconventional indirect level</b>	Strong hints	-	-	-	-
	Mild hints	-	-	-	-

*\*Note:* Total No. KA = 250, BE = 250.

*\*Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of participants in each group responding to the situation by the total number of participants in that group.*

In this situation, the hearer's social power is higher than the speaker and there is no social distance with a low degree of imposition between the interlocutors. The most request strategy used in this situation was the query preparatory by both groups. KA participants used suggestion formulae (0.8%) and query preparatory (99.2%) while BE participants used hedged performatives (39.2%) and query preparatory (60.8%). This situation shows that KA participants avoided using direct request strategies to avoid face-threatening acts between the speaker and the hearer.

**Situation 12: Request for turning down the volume of TV.**

**Table 12.** Frequency of Request Strategy Types

Types	Request strategy	KA		BE	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>The direct/explicit level</b>	Mood Derivable	-	-	15	6
	Performative	-	-	-	-
	Hedged Performative	-	-	31	12.4
	Obligation Statement	-	-	-	-
	Want Statement	-	-	10	4
<b>The conventional indirect level</b>	Suggestion Formulae	-	-	-	-
	Query Preparatory	203	81.2	156	62.4
<b>The nonconventional indirect level</b>	Strong hints	31	12.4	30	12
	Mild hints	16	6.4	8	3.2

*\*Note:* Total No. KA = 250, BE = 250.

*\*Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of participants in each group responding to the situation by the total number of participants in that group.*

In this situation, the social power (father) was higher than the participant. Table (12) shows that only BE participants used direct level of requests like mood derivable (6%), hedged performative (12.4%), and want statement (4%). It also shows that most participants used an indirect level of requests. KA participants used Query preparatory (40%), strong hints (12.4%), and mild hints (6.4%), while BE participants employed Query preparatory (50.4%), strong hints (12%), and mild hints (3.2%).

### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

In this part, a qualitative analysis with extensive understanding of participants' use of requests is employed, which might be missed in the quantitative analysis. The semi-structured interview questions are "basically open-ended questions to let participants dialogue freely and also to provide their insights into their decision-making rationales" (Schauer, 2009, p. 77). In her study, Schauer (2009) proposed the technique of semi-structured interviews in order to "obtain a better understanding of participants' perceptions of linguistic/pragmatic features" (p. 78). Therefore, the interviews in this study consisted of seven questions to BE participants and KA participants. The researcher interviewed 30 participants of each group.

### **Socio-cultural values in the use of request strategies**

After analyzing the interviews of KA participants and BE participants, the researcher came to the conclusion that both group participants realized the socio-cultural values like power, distance, and ranking when making requests. Generally speaking, the researcher noticed that KA and BE participants in the interviews preferred using direct request strategies when the power of the speaker is higher than the hearer. For instance, when the researcher asked the participants "Are there any forms of request that you like to use in certain situations?" Most of the participants preferred using indirect request strategies to avoid the face-threatening act.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results above show the KA participants' and BE participants' use of request strategies in different situations. The twelve situations were based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) social factors: social distance (SD), social power (P), and the degree of imposition (R). Each situation focused on different social factors to reveal the effect on the participants' responses. Also, using Brown and Levinson's social factors affects KA participants, and BE participants request strategies according to their language, culture, ... etc.

After analyzing the results, in most situations, most of the participants used query preparatory, which is conventional indirect level. Both KA participants and BE participants used certain request strategies, which also included politeness values. The results of the DCT reveal that the speakers were cautious in their request strategies due to social factors between the speaker and the hearer.

The examples of each situation show that each group used request strategies differently. However, it is clear that most participants used the conventional indirect level of query preparatory. Hence, these results contribute to the studies conducted by Qari (2017), Yassin and Razak (2018), Megaiab et al., (2019), Hammani (2019), Yazdanfar and Bonyadi (2016), Hesam and Naeini (2017), Herget and Pérez (2019) and Nugroho and Rekha (2020). In situations one and two, there were no social distance differences between the speaker and the hearer, with equal social power. However, KA participants and BE participants' requests showed politeness too. Politeness markers such as "Excuse me," and "sorry" were utilized by both KA and BE to express politeness. In this situation, although most participants used query preparatory request strategy, BE participants tended to use different direct levels of requests like hedged performative (12%), want statement (11.2%), and mood derivable (2.4%)

Based on the analysis, the social factor of social distance did not affect KA participants in using requests. On the other hand, BE participants were aware of the social distance and tended to use the direct level of requests such as mood derivable, performative, hedged performative, obligation statement, and want statement. Only 10% of KA participants in

situation one and 3.6% of KA participants in situation two use direct levels of requests.

In situations three and four, KA participants and BE participants mostly used query preparatory request strategy. Although most participants used indirect request strategies, BE participants tended to use a direct level of requests, whereas only 12% of KA participants used a direct level of requests. The reason for this might be that KA participants avoid the face-threatening act due to the social distance between the speaker and hearer. Also, BE participants in situation four did not take into account the social factors when the hearer is undertaking an action which is illegal.

The result of situations three and four show that KA participants did not use a direct level of requests while BE participants employed direct levels of requests such as performative and hedged performative. The reason behind their use of these kinds of request strategies is the avoidance of face-threatening acts and the social variable of power of the hearer is higher than the speaker. The use of indirect levels is meant to avoid the face-threatening act between the hearer and the speaker. In situation five and six, the social variable of the hearer was higher than the speaker. All KA participants in situation five and six used indirect request strategies like query Preparatory, strong hints and mild hints. A high number of BE participants used indirect request strategies as well. However, in situation five, BE participants used direct request strategies like performatives and hedged performatives. In situation six both KA and BE only used indirect request strategies.

In situations seven and eight, the social variable of the speaker's power is higher than the hearer. There is a social distance between the interlocutors and the degree of imposition is low. KA and BE participants used query preparatory most frequently. KA participants tended to use a direct level of request strategies in situation seven while in situation eight, they did not use a direct level of requests. BE participants used both direct and indirect levels of requests. This may be due to the social variable of the power of the hearer, social distance, and degree of imposition.

Moreover, in situations nine and ten, the power of the speaker is higher than the hearer and there is no social distance with a low degree of imposition. In situation nine, the most frequent request strategy was the mood derivable strategy. In situation ten, the most frequent request strategy was query preparatory strategy for KA participants and mood derivable strategy for BE participants. These situations showed that KA and BE participants used direct and indirect levels of request.

The findings of situations eleven and twelve revealed that KA and BE participants employed query preparatory most frequently as a request strategy. KA participants only used indirect request strategies, it might be because of cultural differences since this type of request is not common in KA culture. This situation shows that the hearer has a higher power over the speaker. There is no social distance between the interlocutors with a low degree of imposition as a social variable. It shows that a large number of participants used indirect request strategies to reduce the face-threatening act between the speaker and the hearer. The participants in this situation tried to make their requests polite as much as possible.

## **CONCLUSION**

The focus of this study was to investigate the differences and similarities in the realization of requests between KA and BE. This study proposes some useful pedagogical results that show the use of requests in different contexts and languages. There was a slight difference between KA and BE participants as BE participants used more direct request strategies than KA participants. Directness used by BE participants in some situations might be due to cultural differences. Therefore, in the BE culture, it is not considered impolite to use

direct request but rather a way of showing closeness. Furthermore, KA and BE participants only used direct request strategies when the social power (P+) of the participant was high. However, KA participants used conventionally indirect strategies (query preparatory) more than direct strategies. For example, ‘Can you?’, ‘Could you?’ and in KA */mumkin?/*. This study finding supports Blum-kulka’s conclusion on conventionally indirect strategies as a universal phenomenon. Overall, it was revealed that both groups prefer to use conventionally indirect strategies in the form of query preparatory. Trosborg (1995) states that many ‘politeness linguistic studies’ believe that query preparatory strategy is considered the universal method of making requests because query preparatory is appropriate for different situations, statuses, distances, and relations. When using query preparatory, it makes the speech act a request rather than an obligation to the hearer.

Moving to the social variables; power, social distance and degree of imposition manipulated by the participants in their choices of request strategies. This study showed that KA and BE participants utilized the three levels of directness when using requests in KA and BE. The use of the three request strategies emphasizes that the use of social variables is a universal pragmatic phenomenon. The DCT results show that KA participants take into account and are much more sensitive than BE participants in social distance, degree of imposition, and relative power. KA participants comprehended mostly indirect strategies in socially varied request situations, which is in harmony with Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory. The researcher comprehended from these results that KA participants are more aware of the FTA. Additionally, results revealed that power affected KA and BE participants’ flow of a request in conversations. In situations where the speaker’s power was high, KA and BE participants utilized direct requests. This contradicts the generalization that KA participants choose to use direct requests only if the hearer has no power over the speaker (S9).

As for the semi-structured interviews, the cause of their awareness of the social variables is the culture the participants are raised in. The study revealed that there is a sociocultural norm between Kuwaiti society and British society. Kuwaiti’s Islamic culture adhered to the use of request strategies showing politeness and respect as participants strongly followed these norms in their society, e.g. (S12). Furthermore, it was also revealed that KA and BE participants’ articulation of direct requests was usually directed towards the interlocutor’s friends and younger hearers. This clearly shows that the social variables such as social distance, degree of imposition, and relative power, have an impact on KA participants more than BE participants when making requests. Another reason behind their different use of requests is that KA participants try to avoid FTA more than BE participants when making requests in different situations.

The results of this study revealed that there was not a noticeable difference between KA and BE participants in their use of request strategies. It seems that each group recognizes politeness differently, this might be due to the culture differences between the two languages.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Kuwaiti Arabic Discourse Completion Test Version

نرجو منك المشاركة في هذي المواقف التمثيلية المختلفة. سوف يتم وصف الموقف وبعد ذلك راح نقولي شلون بترد. بالمواقف المختلفة راح تقدر تعلق وسمكن تتكلم عن الموقف إذا تبي. خذ راحتك في التعبير. لازم تحط فيبلاك ان هذا مو استحان وما في اجابه صح وغلط.

نبي منح تشاركين في هذي المواقف التمثيلية المختلفة. راح يتم وصف الموقف وبعدين راح نقولنلي شلون بتردين. بالمواقف المختلفة راح تقدرين تعلقين وسمكن تتكلمين عن الموقف اذا تبين. اخذي راحتك في التعبير. لازم تحطين فيبلاج ان هذا مو استحان وساقى اجابه صح وغلط.

##### الموقف الأول:

ما قدرت تحضر محاضرة من المحاضرات في الكلية، وتبي تطلب من رفيقك دفتر محاضراته عشان تنقل الي طابق من المحاضر ه شلو بتقول له؟  
ما قدرتي تحضرين محاضرة من المحاضرات في الكلية، وتبين تطلبين من رفيقك دفتر محاضراتها عشان تنقلين الي طابق من المحاضر ه، شلو بتقولين لها؟

##### الموقف الثاني:

كنت قاعد في بيت رفيقك وكانت الدريشه مفلوله والجو كان وايد حار، فتبي تطلب منه انه يفتح الدريشه. شلو بتقوله؟  
كنتي قاعده في بيت رفيقك وكانت الدريشه مفلوله والجو كان وايد حار، فتبين تطلبين منها انه يفتح الدريشه. شلو بتقولين لها؟

##### الموقف الثالث:

رحت تشتري دوا من الصيدلية وتعطي الصيدلاني الوصفه وتطلب منه يعطيك الوصفه. شلو بتقول له؟  
رحتي تشتري دوا من الصيدليه وتعطين الصيدلاني الوصفه وتطلبين منه يعطيج الوصفه. شلو بتقولين له؟

##### الموقف الرابع:

كنت واقف بالطابور في الجمعية عشان تدفع الي تبي يشتري. وكان في واحد من الي واقفين معاك يدخن زقاير والمكان كان قمته وما في منفذ حق الهواء. شلو بتقوله؟  
كنتي واقفه بالطابور في الجمعية عشان تدفعين الي تبين تشتريه. وكان في واحد من الي واقفين معاك يدخن زقاير والمكان كان قمته وما في منفذ حق الهواء. شلو بتقولين لها؟

##### الموقف الخامس:

انت طالب وتحتاج من المدرس انه يعطيك وقت زيادة على مدة تسليم البحث لانك ماخلصته. شلو بتقوله؟  
انتي طالبة وتحتاجين من المدرسه انه يعطيج وقت زيادة على مدة تسليم البحث لانج ماخلصتي. شلو بتقولين لها؟

##### الموقف السادس:

انت طالب قاعد في المحاضره وما فهمت شرح المدرس وكنت تبي يعيد الي شرحه مره ثانيه. شلو بتقوله؟  
انتي طالبة قاعده في المحاضره وما فهمتي شرح المدرسه وكنتي تبين تعيد الي شرحه مره ثانيه. شلو بتقولين لها؟

##### الموقف السابع:

رحت تاكل في مطعم وكنت تبي تطلب من الويتر ايبيلك الاكل. شلو بتقول له؟  
رحتي تاكلمين في مطعم وكنتي تبين تطلبين من الويتر ايبيلج الاكل. شلو بتقولين لها؟

##### الموقف الثامن:

رحت محطة الباتزين عشان تعبي بالزين وتطلب من العامل يعني سيارتك بالزين. شلو بتقوله؟  
رحتي محطة الباتزين عشان تعبين بالزين وتطلبين من العامل يعني سيارتج بالزين. شلو بتقولين لها؟

##### الموقف التاسع:

كنت رايح والله ومرتك الزواره وماتبي تاخذ اعمالك معاك، وتطلب منهم يقعدون بالبيت ويكونون هاديين ومايتهاوشون مع بعض. شلو بتقولهم؟  
كنتي رايحه وانتي وزيج الزواره وماتبين تاخذين اعمالج معاج، وتطلبين منهم يقعدون بالبيت ويكونون هاديين ومايتهاوشون مع بعض. شلو بتقولين لهم؟

##### الموقف العاشر:

في يوم مرتلك كانت مريضه وتبي تطلب من بنتك تسوي الغدا اليوم. شلو بتقوله؟  
في يوم كنتي مريضه وتبين تطلبين من بنتج تسوي الغدا. شلو بتقولين لها؟

##### الموقف الحادي عشر:

بتسافر مع ريبك وتبي تاخذ معاك كامره، وعك عنده كاميرا بيديه فتر وحله وتطلب منه الكامره. شلو بتقول له؟  
بتسافرين مع رفيقاج وتبين تاخذين معاج كامره، وعشج عندها كاميرا بيديه فتر وحين لها وتطلبين منها الكاميرا. شلو بتقولين لها؟

##### الموقف الثاني عشر:

ايوك يطالع تليفزيون، وكان صوت التلفزيون وايد عالي ومو قادر تدرس، فتطلب من ايوك يقصر على التلفزيون شويه عشان تقدر تدرس. شلو بتقوله؟  
ايوج يطالع تليفزيون، وكان صوت التلفزيون وايد عالي ومو قادره تدرسين، فتطلبين من ايوج يقصر على التلفزيون شويه عشان تقدرين تدرسين. شلو بتقولين لها؟

## **Appendix B**

### **British English Discourse Completion Test Version**

Imagine yourself in each of the following 12 situations. Fill in the blanks, responding as naturally as you would be in these situations. Please read each situation to the end before writing your answer.

**Situation 1:** You are not able to attend a lecture at your university. So, you ask one of your colleagues to lend you his notes to copy the missed lessons.

**Situation 2:** You are visiting one of your friends at home, the window of the room in which you are sitting is closed, and it is very hot in there. So, you ask your friend to open the window.

**Situation 3:** You are in a pharmacy to buy medicine; you give the pharmacist the prescription and ask him to give you the medicine.

**Situation 4:** You are standing in a line to pay for the goods you are buying at a big supermarket. One of the customers is smoking, and the place is suffocating. So, you ask him to stop smoking.

**Situation 5:** You are supposed to present a research paper after one week. You are not able to do that. You go to your teacher and ask him to postpone the due date of your presentation.

**Situation 6:** During one of the lectures, you cannot follow your teacher. So, you ask him to repeat what s/he has said

**Situation 7:** You are in a restaurant. You ask the waiter to bring your order

**Situation 8:** You are at a gas station. You ask the attendant to fill your car

**Situation 9:** You and your wife are going to make a family visit. You prefer not to take your two children with you. So, you ask them to stay home and keep quiet and not to quarrel.

**Situation 10:** Your wife is sick. So, you ask your daughter to prepare the food.

**Situation 11:** You are about to go on a trip. You have no camera. You know that your uncle has a camera. So, you ask him to lend you his camera.

**Situation 12:** Your father is watching TV. There is too much noise. You are unable to study your lessons, so you ask your father to turn down the volume.

## Appendix C

### Kuwaiti Arabic Interview's Questions

١. في أي المواقف يكون من الصعب تقديم الطلبات ولماذا؟
٢. هل هناك أي أشكال للطلب ترغب في استخدامها في مواقف معينة؟ إذا نعم، ما هم؟
٣. ما هي استراتيجيات الطلب التي تميل إلى استخدامها إذا كان الطلب يشعرك بالحرج أو لديه القدرة على جعل المستمع يشعر بمستوى معين من تهديد الوجه؟
٤. هل هناك أي طرق طلب استخدمتها وتعكس القواعد الاجتماعية والثقافية المحلية الخاصة بك؟
٥. ما أنواع استراتيجيات الطلب التي تعتقد أنها تعبر عن مزيد من الأدب؟
٦. ما أنواع أنماط الكلام في الطلبات التي تعتقد أنها قد تخفف من تأثير تهديد الوجه على المستمع؟
٧. ما نوع المواقف التي قد تكون إشكالية؟ لماذا؟

## Appendix D

### British English Interview's Questions

1. In what situations is it more difficult to make requests and why?
2. Are there any forms of request that you like to use in certain situations? If yes, what are they?
3. Which request strategy do you tend to use if the request makes you feel embarrassed or is likely to make the hearer feel a certain level of face threat?
4. Are there any ways of request you have used which reflect your native socio-cultural rules?
5. Which types of request strategies do you think express more politeness?
6. Which types of speech patterns in requests do you think would probably lessen the impact of face threat to the hearer?
7. What kind of situations might be problematic? Why?

### Consonants and Vowels symbols used in the transcription

	ENGLISH	ARAB
CONSONANTS	Glottal Stops Voiceless	ʔ      هـ
	Velar Stops Voiceless	g      ق/ج
	Velar Stops Voiced	K      ك
	Dental Stops Voiceless	t      ط/ض
	Dental Stops Voiced	t      ت
	Glottal Fricative Voiceless	h      هـ
	Pharyngeal Fricative Voiceless	ħ      ح
	Uvular Fricative Voiceless	x      خ
	Alveo-Palatal Fricative Voiceless	ʃ      ش
	Alveolar Fricative Voiceless	sʰ      ص
	Alveolar Fricative Voiced	s      س
	Inter-Dental Fricative Voiceless	zʰ      ظ
	Inter-Dental Fricative Voiced	θ      ث
	Labio-Dental Fricative Voiceless	f      ف
	Uvular Voiced	ɣ      غ
	Alveolar Voiced	z      ز
	Inter-Dental Voiced	ð      ذ
	Alveo-Palatal Affricative Voiceless Voiced	j      ج
	Bilabial Nasal	m      م
	Dental Nasal	n      ن
	Dental Lateral	l      ل
	Dental Trill	r      ر
	Bilabial Glides	w      و
	Palatal Glides	y      ي
VOWELS	Front Short Mid	ɪ
	Long Mid	i
	Central Short low	a
	Long Low	ā
	Back Short Mid	u