



IRAQI  
Academic Scientific Journals



العراقية  
المجلات الأكاديمية العلمية

ISSN: 2663-9033 (Online) | ISSN: 2616-6224 (Print)

**Journal of Language Studies**

Contents available at: <https://jls.tu.edu.iq/index.php/JLS>



## The Effect of Activities-Based Teaching in The English Context on EFL University Students

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Received: 12/ 6/ 2024, Accepted: 3/ 7 /2024, Online Published: 30 /9/2024

### Abstract

This study presents a pragmatic approach focusing on the meaning of speech and knowledge regarding the undergraduate students' understanding and utilization of speech act 'request' within the Department of English Language at the College of Arts. Quantitative approach has been employed to analyze request strategies by using an open-ended questionnaire comprising sixteen diverse scenarios to gather data on various request speech acts. The study investigates the effectiveness of instructional interventions in developing students' proficiency in this speech act.

The findings from the pre-tests revealed that students exhibited comparable performance across all three strategies: direct requests, conventionally indirect requests, and non-conventionally indirect requests have been assessed in terms of both awareness and production levels. Despite the initial similarity in performance among learners, substantial improvements have been observed after the instructional phase. Specifically, individuals within the experimental group demonstrated notable enhancements in their awareness and production of requests, coupled with a decreased reliance on direct request strategies. These findings underscore the potential for pragmatics instruction rich in input to enhance learners' identification and utilization of suitable pragmatic elements within diverse social contexts. Overall, the study highlights the importance of pragmatic

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education in foreign language learning, suggesting its efficacy in fostering learners' pragmatic competence.

**Key Words:** EFL, request strategies, pragmatic competence, speech act.

## تأثير التدريس المبني على الأنشطة في سياق اللغة الإنجليزية على طلاب الجامعة الدارسين اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

م.م. سري عامر عباس

كلية الآداب / جامعة تكريت

### المستخلص

تقدم هذه الدراسة منهجاً عملياً يركز على معنى الكلام والمعرفة فيما يتعلق بفهم طلاب المرحلة الجامعية واستخدامهم لفعل الكلام "الطلب" في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في كلية الآداب. تم استخدام النهج الكمي لتحليل استراتيجيات الطلب باستخدام استبيان يضم ستة عشر سيناريوهات متنوعة لجمع البيانات حول مختلف أعمال خطاب الطلب. تبحث الدراسة في مدى فاعلية المدخلات التعليمية في تطوير كفاءة الطلاب في هذا الفعل الكلامي.

كشفت النتائج أن الطلاب أظهروا أداءً مشابهاً في جميع الاستراتيجيات الثلاث: الطلبات المباشرة، وغير المباشرة التقليدية، وغير المباشرة غير التقليدية سواء من حيث مستوى الوعي أو الإنتاج. وعلى الرغم من هذا التكافؤ الأولي في الأداء بين المتعلمين، فقد لوحظت تحسينات كبيرة بعد المرحلة التعليمية. على وجه التحديد، أظهر المشاركون في المجموعة التجريبية تحسينات ملحوظة في وعيهم وإنتاج الطلبات، إلى جانب انخفاض الاعتماد على استراتيجيات الطلب المباشر. تؤكد هذه النتائج على إمكانية التدريس العملي الغني بالمدخلات لتعزيز تحديد المتعلمين واستخدام السمات العملية المناسبة ضمن سياقات اجتماعية متنوعة. بشكل عام، سلطت الدراسة الضوء على أهمية التعليم العملي في تعلم اللغة الأجنبية، مما يشير إلى فعاليته في تعزيز الكفاءة العملية لدى المتعلمين.

الكلمات الدالة: متعلمي اللغة الأجنبية، أفعال الكلام، استراتيجيات الطلب.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Conversation between individuals is carried out though conveying connotations using exchangeable words or codes. Communication has been defined as a systemic process in which individuals interact with and through signs to generate and interpret meanings (Wood Julia, 2004). Language is highly imperative for communication because it assists individuals to communicate with high precision exchanging information and thoughts between themselves, and also it assists to persuade others and inspire them. It has been

indicated that language is highly significant; anyone using it can impact and control other peoples' minds and feelings (Jones and Peccei, 2004).

Asides the language that impact the communication and the illocutionary acts performed by an individual, there is a need to consider the manner one communicate and interrelate with other individuals. According to Searle (1969) all linguistic communication involves linguistic acts involve more than just sentences, words, or symbols; they also encompass the execution of these elements in the performance of speech acts. Here, strategies emerge that are necessary to follow as important tools for communication which varies according to cultures. There is a prevalent basic idea that emerged with the emergence of the earliest syllabuses on linguistic functions and concepts, referred to by Hymes (1972) which is that the success of learners in the foreign language is not limited to knowledge of grammatical rules and vocabulary, they also require the cultivation of a sense of appropriateness criteria (13-14)

Numerous studies indicate that "second language speakers might fail to communicate effectively commit pragmatic failure, even when they have an excellent grammatical and lexical command of the target language" (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984:196). "Lack of pragmatic knowledge may cause language learners to appear, uncooperative, at the least, or more seriously, rude or insulting" (Bardovi Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan, and Reynolds., 1996: 324). The emergence of this discovery marked a pivotal shift in linguistics and language learning pedagogy during the early 1970s, proving to be one of the most influential and effective language theories to date. This departure from traditional language theories has led to the development of various models and theories directly applicable (Canale and Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1983 and Bachman, 1990) or compatible with the fundamental principles of communicative competence. Despite the widespread acknowledgment of this theory, the integration of pragmatics as a component of communicative competence in language curricula appears to be minimal, if not entirely absent. This reluctance is partly due to the mistaken assumption among language educators that through "positive transfer and universal principles of politeness and communication learners will (pick up) norms of pragmatics in the process of language learning for free". (Kasper, 2001:6)

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem and its Significance**

Language is directly related to community and cultures where mastering a new language requires engaging in the target language community and hearing the language from the mouth of native speakers to allow learners to learn the actual pronunciation of the language. This is one of the problems faced by learners of English as a foreign language, and it is a real problem in communicating in English because they are not exposed to the target community and culture, which leads to difficulty in acquiring the nuances of the language and producing or understanding of speech act. Conversation between learners and teachers in the classroom usually does many aspects of request speech acts. Concerning the speech act, the researcher finds some of the problems presented by previous studies in different contexts which are presented below.

Daskalovska, Ivanovska, Kusevska, and Ulanska (2016) conducted a study aimed to comparison of the use of the requests, apologies, and complaints in the interlanguage of English strategies realization in Macedonian and in learners' interlanguage (English and German). And the role of the Internet as a platform in learning English as a foreign

language. the students were chosen with an intermediate level of proficiency. The testing instruments the researchers used were role-played and discourse completion tasks (DCT). The analysis of the study was based on Brown and Levinson (1978), and Blum Kulka (1987) theories. Megaiab, Wijana, and Munandar (2019) conducted a study that aimed to examine the politeness strategies of request used by Libyan students and their lecturers in the classroom and the factors influencing the use of these strategies. Responses from subjects were analyzed using the cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns (CCSARP) categories (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989). Some researchers looked at the request strategies used in TV Series and programs to see if there was any difference in the use of strategies, external modifications, and types of request sentences. Some of them relied on the analysis of speech acts of requests on the theory of Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) and others on the Trosborg (1995) theory. English as a Specific Purpose discussed by Prihatin, and Aflahatun (2020). request strategies used by industrial engineering students who learned English in the second semester were examined using case-based teaching of foreign languages. The (DCT) is the tool used in the analysis. The responses of the participating students were considered according to the strategies of request ratings by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain.

Numerous studies have addressed request speech acts across cultures. "Interlanguage Pragmatics studies focus exclusively on comparing non-native speakers' production and comprehension of speech acts" (Schauer 2009). Achieving speech acts across cultures investigated by Alzeebaree, and Yavuz, (2017). The aim of the study was to uncover the methods of request and apology strategies by Kurdish EFL undergraduate students, as well as their linguistic and pragmatic competence in utilizing these strategies. Data were analyzed according to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989); Olshtain and Cohen (1983). In the same vein, cross-cultural studies of speech acts in different contexts have been investigated by various researchers. The Speech acts theory study to explore the request strategies used by EFL learners and native EFL speakers has been compared. Blum-Kulka theory is taken as a theoretical framework to compare the request speech act patterns. discourse completion tasks (DCT) were used for data analysis (Yazdanfar, and Bonyadi, (2016); Mohamed,(2019); Shahzadi, Bhatti, and Khan, (2021)). Megaiab, Wijana, and Munandar (2019) conducted a study that aimed to examine the strategies of politeness of request used by Libyan learners and their teachers in the classroom and the factors influencing the use of these strategies. Responses from subjects were analyzed employing a comparative analysis of speech act expression patterns across cultures (CCSARP) categories (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). English as a Specific Purpose discussed by Prihatin, and Aflahatun (2020). request strategies used by industrial engineering students who learned English in the second semester were examined using case-based teaching of foreign languages. The (DCT) is the tool used in the analysis. The responses of the participating students were considered according to the strategies of request ratings by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain.

By addressing all the previous studies, the researcher noticed that There is a deficiency in research concerning speech acts involving requests. First, there is no study discussing the request speech used by Iraqi learners studying English as a foreign language. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of cross-cultures and languages on different pragmatic strategies for English language requests. Second, few studies have examined the use of activity-based language teaching in the classroom. Since EFL students whose first

language is Arabic, they lack pragmatic competence when trying to speak English. According to Cohen (1996), "language students can have all of the syntactic context and lexical items and still not be able to communicate their message because they lack the necessary pragmatic to communicate their intent." Therefore, as Arab graduate students need modern teaching methods to improve pragmatic competence in English, activity-based language teaching is a tool that will be used in conjunction with discourse completion tasks (DCT).

### **1.2. Aim of the study**

The aim of this study is to investigate the speech acts used by Iraqi undergraduate learners who studying English as a foreign language. And to examines the factors that that impact the utilization of request strategies which are social distance, power and dominance, gender, and status. Moreover, to explore changes that occur in using request strategies by Iraqi EFL learners

### **1.3. Hypotheses of the study**

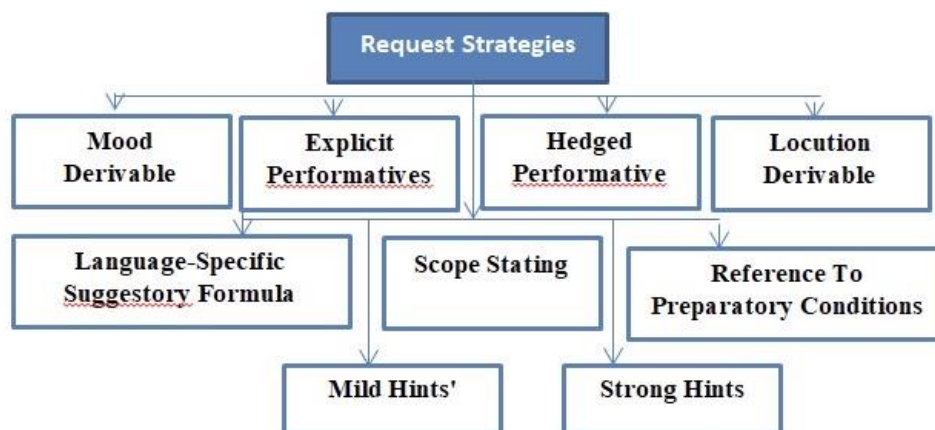
The study analyzes speech acts and changes that occur in requests strategies are used by Iraqi undergraduate EFL student under the light of the theory of pragmatics. Speech act theory is first developed by Austin (1962) and further by Searle (1975). The fundamental tenets of linguistic communication are that the speakers do action through using the language. That is, they perform actions. Subsequently, the aim of the speech act is to deliver meaning through communication.

The paper also refers to the determinants affecting the utilization of request strategies. for that, the researcher shad light the main assumption of this study which are explore type of speech acts and he determinants affecting the utilization of request strategies by EFL in English class. However, the changes that occur in their requests after teaching process.

### **1.4. Theoretical framework**

This paper will provide insight into the type of speech acts that are used by Iraqi undergraduate EFL learners at Arts faculty/ Tikrit University to qualify them linguistically for admission to the university, Searle's (1976) theory will be used to identify speech acts types used, which are classified into three types locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary depends on the audience's reaction to this speech. Illocutionary act will be deeply discussed in this work since it is used in forming the request strategies. This theory will use to answer the first hypotheses of the study.

Discourse completion tasks (DCT) will use to collect data from Iraqi EFL university students' based on Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). This theory will use to address the study's second and third hypotheses. The main aspects that will be observed are the use of request strategies whether direct or indirect and the determinants that affecting the utilization of request strategies like social distance, power, and dominance, gender, status, and rank. Moreover, the influences of activities-based teaching in the English context on EFL university students' production of request strategies. Blum-Kulka theory that classified request strategies into nine: mood derivable, explicit performatives, hedged performative, locution derivable, scope stating, language-specific suggestory formula, reference to preparatory conditions, strong hints, mild hints'. More details of these theories will explain in literature review.



**Figure 1: Strategies of Request by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989)**

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section presents the previous studies and the distinct value of the current paper.

### **2.1 Communicative competence**

Hymes (1966) introduced communicative competence and stated that linguistic knowledge is not limited to the ability to speak, but also requires having social and cultural knowledge and the ability to use that knowledge to communicate. Thus, he rejects Chomsky's theory (1965: 4), which lacked adequate focus on the influence of social and environmental factors on the formation of communicative competence and was limited to the distinction between competence and performance. Where he pointed out that competence is the innate knowledge of grammar rules, while performance, Conversely, it pertains to the practical application of a foundational syntactic framework. Chomsky's theory has faced criticism from Campbell and Wales (1970:243-60), who argue that both Chomsky and numerous psychologists influenced by his work have overlooked the significance of environmental factors in shaping communicative competence.

Hymes (1971: 13) proposes to develop linguistics theory to include language that is fed by social and cultural experiences, action issues, and needs. (Ibid: 15). Thus, he asserts that "if a speaker were to produce grammatical sentences without regard to the situations in which they were being used, he would certainly be considered deranged". Therefore, competence must be viewed in terms of social-cultural factors, variables as attitudes and motivation. He added, knowledge of many words, terms, and grammatical rules in a certain language is not sufficient to ensure successful communication. Language learners must have the scientific competence to communicate by knowing how to use terms and using their knowledge of grammar according to the context and the people they communicate with. Dittmar (1976: 238) supports Hymes' view and states that "speech behavior and social behavior are in a state of constant interaction".

The goal of the language is to communicate people with each others; communicative competence is a gole to achaiive in second language teaching. According to Thomas, (1983), there are two types of communicative competence: grammatical competence, which encompasses abstract or decontextualized knowledge of intonation, phonology, syntax, semantics, and so forth, and pragmatic competence, which involves the capacity

to utilize language proficiently to accomplish specific objectives and to comprehend language within its context.

Based on the foregoing, ESL learners fail to adopt positive second language transfer in various aspects of pragmatism. Learners' departure from ESL norms manifests itself in various ways, such as "inadequate use" of politeness markers or misinterpretations of social variables Kasper and Rose, (2001). In other words, speakers who are proficient in a foreign language in terms of grammar and vocabulary and who can be considered "fluent" may not be able to produce a language that is culturally or socially appropriate, as they believe that pragmatic rules are similar in all languages. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the idea to learners that pragmatic rules are not necessarily the same in all languages, taking into account the teaching environment because it has an impact on the effectiveness of education. Thus, pragmatic competence is just as important as linguistic, discourse, and strategic competence, and language learners must develop their pragmatic competence with it.

Pragmatics can be divided into two components, pragmalinguistics, which concerns the appropriateness of a sentence's form in terms of vocabulary and grammar, and sociopragmatics, defined as "the sociological interface of pragmatics"; which concerns the appropriateness of meaning in a social context. Leech via Turakhonova, (1983).

Semantics and pragmatists have studied different interpretations and applications of language, for example, Fraser discusses pragmatic competence as "pragmatic competence is the ability to communicate your intended message with all its nuances in any socio-cultural context and to interpret the message of your interlocutor as it was intended." (Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Shi, 2014) indicated that communication needs pragmatic competence and its lack of it causes communication interruption, which will have consequences in some cases. Pragmatic competence defined by Koike "the speaker's knowledge and use of rules of appropriateness and politeness which indicate the way the speaker will understand and formulate speech acts (SAs)" (1989, p. 279). Communicative actions represent one of the most pressing areas in pragmatics and sociolinguistics, and cannot be separated from conversational dynamics.

From a pragmatic point of view, actions undertaken through language fall within the scope of speech acts, which refer to actions that speakers perform during communication. This theory is chosen by the speakers to accomplish the understanding that they wish. Searle (1975) stated that all language communication involves speech acts strategies. Yule (1996) interprets a speech act as an action performed by the speaker through speech. For instance, a boss doing something by speaking like "You are fired!" his words represent a clear act for terminating the employee. This emphasizes the power of verbal actions to change someone's attitude or condition (Mey, 1994). Verbs are not limited to being explicit, they can be implicit, such as says something means something else. Speech acts also pointed out by Austin (1962) as actions performed by utterances such as giving orders, making promises, complaining, and requesting. When performing these actions, listeners react to them with verbal or nonverbal behavior. Kasper presented successful speech acts as "top-down processing" which L2 learners must know to perform the speech act, In addition to knowing the cultural, extra-linguistic constraints that are appropriate to the context in which native speakers can be distinguished from others, they must also understand how to achieve the act of speaking at the linguistic level and sociocultural norms. Kasper (1984).

Foreign language learners require sufficient knowledge of the social and cultural rules of the second language and mastery of cultural grammatical and vocabulary because competence in formal properties alone is not sufficient to master the foreign language and may cause a pragmatic transfer involves applying social and cultural rules from an individual's first language to his/her second language and thus lead to intercultural misinterpretation and misunderstanding. Al-Falasi (2007) believes that the misuse of the acquired language and the problems face by learners in intercultural communication is due to foreign language teachers focusing on linguistic knowledge and instead of pragmatic knowledge in their classrooms. Eslami-Rasekh (2004) warns that this action will lead to a pragmatic failure of non-native speakers' communication with native speakers and points out that the only way to overcome this failure is to gain pragmatic competence in using the language in context.

## **2.2 Requestes speech acts**

Austin, as cited by Cutting (2002), emphasized that speech acts include actions carried out through verbal expression. He also indicated that the act of speech has three different levels that the speaker can perform separately or simultaneously, It includes the locutionary act, the illocutionary act, and the perlocutionary act. A locutionary act involves pronouncing a sentence and determining its meaning and reference. The illocutionary relates to the function of a statement, including naming, offering, promising, requesting, etc. Subsequently, the perlocutionary act involves eliciting specific effects on the audience through the utterance of the sentence (Levinson, 1983).

Speech acts are often classified under more precise names, including apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise, and request. Request is an act from the speaker to the hearer asking him to do something. The request shows one person's need for another's help to do something, it can be directly or indirectly, such as asking for advice, direction, permission, help, etc. For that reason, speakers need to use appropriate strategies to make their requests successfully delivered to the hearers. Trosborg (2011: 187) defines a request as an illocutionary act in which the speaker (requester) asks the listener (requestee) to do an action for him. Requests are generally considered more polite than order. It can be non-verbal, such as a request for goods, any type of service, or information.

The request is one of the most common actions in daily life compared to other actions such as promising or apologizing (Trosborg, 2011). It is a speech act common to all languages with some difference in pragmatic and sociolinguistic parameters. Several studies have addressed requests in other languages, including Spanish (Ruzickova, 2007), Japanese (Kahraman & Akkus, 2007; Kubota, 1996), and Korean (Rue, Zhang; Shin, 2007) with a focus on request in English (Kaneko, 2004; Parent, 2002). Since the request is frequently used in daily life and interpersonal relationships, it must be performed successfully to convey positive feelings, but if it is implemented incorrectly, it may lead to undesirable results.

Pragmatic and sociolinguistic parameters and behaviors differ from one language to another according to different cultures. Lack of awareness of the differences in these behaviors causes misunderstandings that result in the breakdown of cross-cultural communication. Recuests speech acts in general are greatly vulnerable to be a misunderstanding. Native speakers believe that pragmatic errors are More grave than errors in phonetics or syntax. (Thomas, 1983; Wolfson, 1989). To avoid this belief,



Foreign language learners need to acquire pragmatic and socio-pragmatic knowledge to make appropriate requests, they have to be more aware of target language speech acts. Moreover, having grammatical and vocabulary knowledge helps prevent various communication issues. Numerous studies have addressed request speech acts across cultures. “Interlanguage Pragmatics studies focus exclusively on comparing non-native speakers' production and comprehension of speech acts” (Schauer 2009). Moreover, many studies have discussed requests from learners of the same language and different cultural backgrounds. Consequently, this study examines requests strategies for Arab learners that use the English language as a foreign language. It aims to explore the impact of cross cultures and languages on different pragmatic strategies for English language requests.

There are different request strategies used by native speakers through which similarities and differences across languages can be pinpointed. The request is divided into different types of strategies, some scholars differ in defining them. Zhang (1995) divides request strategies into two types, direct and indirect. Blum-Kulka et al. (1984) classified request strategies into nine types: mood derivable, explicit performatives, hedged performatives, locution derivable, scope stating, language-specific suggestory formula, reference to preparatory conditions, strong hints, and mild hints. Trosburg (1995) on the other hand, suggests that there are eight strategies for making requests, including hints, questioning the hearer's ability or willingness, suggestory formulae, statements of the speaker's wishes and desires, statements of the speaker's needs and request, statements of obligations and necessities, performatives, and imperatives.

Transferring requests strategies from Arabic mother tongue to English second languages causes changes in speech communities especially in request realization (Phindane 2017). These changes are one of the problems that non-native learners may face, such as Arab students studying a foreign language.

Therefore, in today's globalized world with English as an international language, the current study aims to shed light on the pragmatic rules used in different cultures by Arab English learners in Iraqi universities. Furthermore, by researching the use of request strategies for Arab English learners and comparing them with the main request strategies, the changes that occur during the use of request strategies in the English language. The results that will be obtained from the current study can assist English teachers to find ways in which speech-act and pragmatic teaching methods within Arab English classrooms might be improved in general.

### **2.3 Request strategies**

Blum-Kulka et al defined request as a strategy refers to the deliberate and essential selection of the degree of directness employed in making a request (1989: 277). Directness in this context signifies the clarity of the speaker's illocutionary intention within the locution. Scholars identified nine distinct types of request head acts, arranged in a continuum from the most to the least direct strategy (with mood derivable being the most direct and mild hint being the least direct). These strategies can be categorized into three primary groups: Direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect strategies.

#### **2.3.1.1 Direct Request**

The text discusses strategies in making requests, defined as utterances aligning with the speaker's intention (Holtgraves, 1986). For direct strategies there are five sub-strategies include elliptical phrases/imperative (mood derivable), explicit performative, hedged performative, obligation statements, and want statements. The imperative form, such as "close the window," is the most direct, conveying authority. Performatives, using verbs like ask or request, are another direct strategy, with explicit performatives being authoritative and hedged performatives allowing for mitigation. Obligation statements assert the hearer's obligation, involving personal authority and modal verbs indicating various obligations. The weakest direct strategy is want statements, expressing the speaker's needs or wishes. While impolite, want statements can be modified with politeness markers like "please."

### **2.3.1.2 Conventional Indirect Strategies**

The text explores conventional indirect strategies, where requester indirectly conveys their intention. These strategies involve a separation between the requester's meaning and propositional content, implying multiple meanings Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). Suggestory formulae and query preparatory fall as types under conventional indirect strategies; requester in suggestory formulae frames the request as a suggestion, allowing the hearer to perform the action. The query preparatory strategy involves utterances linked to preparatory conditions such as ability, willingness, or possibility.

### **2.3.1.3 Hints (Non-Conventional Indirect Strategies)**

The text discusses non-conventional indirect strategies, specifically focusing on hints. These strategies acts of involve request that can take various linguistic forms or be communicated through hints as cited in Blum-Kulka et al. (1987: 280) . Two key benefits of using hints are identified: first, the requester can avoid direct responsibility or intention for making a request, leaving the interpretation open for the hearer. Second, hints allow the requester to preserve the negative face to a greater degree than negative politeness strategies, as hints are considered more polite and 'off-record.'

Hints are categorized into two types: strong hints and mild hints. Strong hints, used by a requester with authority over the requestee, directly reference elements of the intended action. On the other hand, mild hints lack specific references but can be inferred as requests from the context. The text suggests that hints necessitate that the hearer infer meaning based on the context.

### **2.3.1.4 Request Perspectives**

The text delves into the varied perspectives within the context of making requests, specifically examining the orientation of the request head act. These perspectives include the speaker-oriented approach, where the focus lies on the speaker as the requester "*Can I read your research?*". In contrast, the hearer-oriented perspective emphasizes the role of the hearer in the request, as seen in examples like "*Could you give me some water?*" Brown and Levinson (1987) posit that employing a hearer-oriented perspective may make the act of requesting more embarrassing for the hearer. Additionally, the text discusses an inclusive perspective, incorporating both speaker and hearer "*Can we close the door?*", and an impersonal perspective, where neither the speaker nor the hearer is explicitly involved "*The window needs to be closed*". Notably, the authors argue that speaker-oriented requests are perceived as more polite than hearer-oriented ones, as the

former avoids implying control or causing embarrassment to the hearer, influencing the dynamics of politeness and power in the act of requesting.

## **2. METHODS OF THE STUDY**

### **2.1 Participants**

This study involved 40 students from the translation department of the Arts faculty at Tikrit University, who have been divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. All participants are Arabic speaking students learning English as a foreign language, aged between 18 and 21 years. Each group comprised 20 participants. Their English proficiency level has been determined to be pre-intermediate through an initial assessment test. The participants are randomly assigned either to the control or experimental group of the study.

### **2.2 Instruments**

Quantitative approach has been employed to analyze request strategies comprehensively. Initially, an open-ended questionnaire comprising sixteen diverse scenarios has been utilized to gather data on various request speech acts, providing a robust foundation for understanding the participants' baseline abilities and tendencies. Subsequently, a series of teaching sessions have been conducted, wherein the experimental group received targeted instruction on request strategies using established speech act methods. These sessions aimed to enhance their pragmatic skills and understanding of effective request strategies. To evaluate the impact of this instructional intervention, a post-test was administered, mirroring the pre-test paragraphs. This methodological consistency ensured that any observed changes could be attributed to the instructional intervention, thereby providing clear insights into the effectiveness of the teaching strategies employed. The collected data has been then subjected to rigorous statistical analysis to determine the significance of the observed differences between the pre-test and post-test results.

### **2.3 Data Analysis**

After gathering all the data, the researcher proceeded to compare the pre-test and post-test results from same groups. The primary statistical analyses employed were independent and paired samples t-tests, aimed at discerning differences between the groups. The t-test method is typically utilized to compare mean scores on continuous variables across two distinct groups, based on data collected from subjects under different conditions or tests. Additionally, the statistical software package SPSS was utilized to conduct further analyses, including Levene's test and t-tests.

## **3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

**Table 1: Personal information**

Gender	Male	Female
	55%	45%
Average age	Below 20	Over 20

		10%	90%		
Rating speaking English	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	
	5%	20%	30%	45%	
Rating writing English	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	
	5%	15%	40%	40%	
Have you had any schooling in English before?	Yes	No			
	10%	90%			
Have you lived in a country whose first language is English?	Yes	No			
	10%	90%			

**Questionnaire situations:**

**Table 2: Direct and indirect request strategies used by the control group (pre-test)**

	Items 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total
Mood derivable	14	5	11	6	12	3	9	12	6	8	9	9	11	8	8	15	146
Explicit performatives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Hedged performatives	6	13	9	3	7	18	9	7	7	16	12	15	11	8	9	14	173
Locution derivable	1	3	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	8	4	-	-	-	-	-	24
Want statement	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	7	-	-	-	-	13
Suggestory formula	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
Query preparatory	7	11	7	9	6	11	16	8	10	4	9	6	12	8	9	7	140
Strong hint	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	9

**Table 3: Direct and indirect request strategies used by the control group (post-test)**

	Items 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total
Mood derivable	18	9	12	6	12	3	9	12	6	8	10	9	11	8	8	15	156
Explicit performatives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Hedged performatives	6	13	9	3	7	18	9	7	7	16	12	15	11	8	9	14	173
Locution derivable	1	3	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	8	4	-	-	-	-	-	24
Want statement	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	9	-	-	-	-	19
Suggestory formula	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	5
Query preparatory	7	12	7	9	9	11	16	8	11	4	9	8	12	10	9	7	149
Mild hint	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

The test encompassed participants of both genders, as indicated in table 1, with males comprising 55% and females 45% of the total. Their age between 18 and 21 years. Proficiency levels in spoken English varied from poor to very good, with the highest percentage (45%) attaining a classification of "very good," followed by "good" at 30%, "fair" at 20%, and the lowest percentage being "poor" at 5%. Similarly, disparities were observed in their English writing proficiency, with 40% rated as "very good" or "good," 15% as "fair," and 5% as "poor." A significant portion of the student cohort lacked prior exposure to an English-speaking educational environment or residence, rendering English a foreign language for them.

In the table 2, analysis of the distribution of strategies employed for on-request speech acts, both pre-test and post-test, revealed interesting findings. Initially, students predominantly utilized direct strategies. Among these, the "hedged performatives" strategy emerged as the most prevalent, accounting for 173 of usage. Following closely were the "mood derivable" and "query preparatory" strategies, each at 146 and 140 respectively. conversely, other strategies such as "locution derivable" (24%), "want statement" (13%), "strong hint" (9%), and "explicit performatives" were less frequently employed.

However, post-teaching, noticeable shifts in strategy implementation were observed. There was an evident increase in the application of demand strategies during the post-test phase, consequently elevating the overall percentage of strategy utilization. This shift had implications for the students' proficiency levels concerning social, pragmatic, and

politeness standards. Such changes underscore the impact of instructional interventions on students' strategic choices and their ability to navigate speech acts effectively in various contexts.

#### **4.CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

The current study aims to investigate the effect of teaching request strategies among learners of English at Arts faculty / Tikrit University. Requests are chosen as the focal speech act due to its great importance in social interactions and its variations across languages. Both the experimental and control groups showed relatively similar levels of performance in the pre-test, yet the results of the post-test indicated that the experimental group is superior to the control group in the levels of awareness and production.

This positive finding addresses fundamental research hypothesis regarding the effectiveness of practical instruction in enhancing EFL learners' pragmatic competence. The results suggest that foreign language pragmatics can not only be achieved through learning, but also benefits from input-rich instruction, which helps learners recognize and use appropriate pragmatic features within contextual and social constraints. This conclusion is consistent with previous research (Billmyer, 1990; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Takahashi, 2001; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Rose & Kasper, 2001, 2002; Tateyama, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Martinez-Flor & Alcón-Soler, 2004; Alcón-Soler, 2005; Rose, 2005; Eslami-Rasekh & Rasekh, 2008) to the positive impact of practical education on learners' practical skills. These findings underscore the importance of integrating pragmatically-focused materials, particularly in EFL environments where opportunities to practice language functions in diverse contexts may be limited. This study supports Rose's (1997) idea by highlighting the crucial role of pragmatic awareness and its appropriate application in fostering learners' pragmatic competence.

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