

A Sociopragmatic Study of Requests Used by Iraqi Undergraduate and Postgraduate University Students of English

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ABSTRACT:

Social aspects are essential for comprehending EFL learners' tactics in performing requesting speech acts. Ignorance of these factors could result in a practical inability to understand the requested speech acts. The study examines how Iraqi undergraduate and postgraduate university students of English express their requests similarly or differently regarding power and solidarity at the university level. Data were gathered from 130 Iraqi undergraduate students and 60 postgraduate students of English through a written discourse completion task. The participants were chosen using both random and non-random convenience sampling methods. The data were analyzed statistically using the request speech act taxonomy proposed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). The data indicate that power and solidarity affected the polite requests of both respondent groups. The study's findings recommend that English educators instruct on suitable ways for doing speech acts of request. This would improve the EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge, leading to efficient communication with their interlocutors.

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1. Introduction

Requests are classified as 'directive' speech acts wherein the speaker solicits the hearer to employ the illocutionary force implied in the request to fulfill their needs or desires. Trosborg (1995) viewed them as an attempt to bolster or persuade the listener to accomplish the speaker's goal or to reap the benefits on the speaker's behalf. Conversely, the directive category treated requests as illocutionary acts (Searle, 1969; Sifianou, 1999); classifying them as actions to satisfy the speaker's desires would be insufficient. Speakers may also execute requests to achieve specific objectives for the benefit of their audience. For instance, in everyday life, speakers typically directly request their listeners to do something for their benefit, such as "work hard to be successful." However, evaluating these requests as true or false is difficult, as they are merely acts of asking with no inherent truth value.

Unlike other forms of speech, the term 'pre-event' refers to requests, compared to 'post-event' which relates to complaints and apologies, aiming to align the hearer's behavior with the speaker's performance goal. The influence of these direct requests depends on the speaker's social authority over the listener (Blum-Kulka, 1991; Meyer, 2009). Brown and Levinson (1987) classified requests as face-threatening activities, forecasting them according to their forms and degrees of directness. Therefore, the speaker should consider before making a request the hearer's social power and distance to convey the intended message effectively. Furthermore, the main focus of requesting help from others is to commit them to performing an action associated with the speakers' intentions (Jorda, 2008). However, one should remember that requests differ according to different cultures and languages. This indicates that culture significantly influences the efficacy of an illocutionary act since a community's social and cultural norms dictate the perception of a request as either polite or impolite (Hassall, 2003).

In this regard, Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) *Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project* (CCSARP) inspired the dominant examination of speech acts. This project has since become widely and extensively researched. In various languages and cultures, the study examined requests and apologies. This was to establish a scheme that one can follow to analyze, produce,

and understand requests and apologies. College students from diverse cultural backgrounds, fluent in seven distinct languages or dialects (British and American English, Australian English, Canadian English, French, Danish, and Hebrew), were engaged in a discourse completion task to collect data (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). The current study identified nine strategies and sub-strategies for requests, categorized as direct and indirect. Scholars such as Schmidt (1983), Byon (2004), Felix-Brasdefer (2005), Yu (1999), Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010), Tabatabaei and Samiee (2013), Hendriks (2008), and Yazdanfar and Bonyadi (2015) have conducted extensive cross-cultural research. Despite extensive cross-cultural literature, additional research is required to illustrate the development of pragmatic ability in non-native English speakers independent of other cultural contexts. Surveying literature in this regard, the researcher came across many studies (Woodfield, 2012; Méndez, Tatiana, & García, Andrea (2012); Nor Zainiyah Norita Bt Mokhtar; Deveci & Hmida 2017; Turki, Hutheifa Yousif; Hussein, Juma'a Qadir; Al-Kubaisy, Ahmed Abdulateef (2020); Turki, Hutheifa Yousif, Sabti, Ahmad Abdullatif, Rashid, Sabariah Md, 2020; Rasheed, 2020; Dhari AlOtaibi, Shamlan AlQenaie, and Soonhyuck Park, 2024).

Based on Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) taxonomy, a longitudinal study was carried out by Woodfield (2012) to examine the "evolution of request modification strategies" among eight foreign non-native English speakers attending a British institution. According to the study, extended interactions with native English speakers may lead to the formation of request modification techniques. A short study abroad experience may not impact the development of students' pragmatic competence. The non-native speakers had insufficient pragmatic skills when interacting with native speakers, particularly when requesting information from individuals of unequal status. A related study by Méndez, Tatiana, and García, Andrea (2012) described the power and solidarity interactions of primary school pupils in a Bogotá, Colombia, English as a foreign language classroom. It was discovered that the classroom contains a variety of forms of power and solidarity. Reproaches can resist, challenge, or practice power, while solidarity safeguards friends. These findings indicate the complexities of the English language in the class. MOKHTAR (2016) investigated the request strategies employed by L2 speakers. The participants were MA students in Education residing in the UK. The findings inform the creation of the model of cooperative intercultural pragmatics for request strategies. This model integrates three theoretical frameworks: Grice's Cooperative Principle and its Maxims, the National Culture Dimensions of Hofstede, and the Request Strategies of Blum-Kulka. At the written language level, Hamida (2017) investigated how Arab university students and native English speakers in an English-medium UAE university understood request speech acts. The study seeks to determine if formal email writing teaching enhances students' pragmatic competence. The data were gathered using a discourse completion task, necessitating participants to email their instructors for comments. The results indicated that participants varied greatly regarding the techniques employed, modifiers utilized, and discourse structures. Additionally, teaching email protocols in an academic setting significantly impacts students' pragmatic competence.

In a different context from the previous studies, Turki et al. (2020) conducted a study at the university level to implement the theory of refusal by Beebe et al. (1990). They examined the most effective strategies employed by second-year English students in comparison to fourth-year students when they declined invitations, proposals, and offers from their interlocutors. According to the results, fourth-year students used direct refusals less frequently than their second-year counterparts because the latter were less conscious of how to utilize polite refusals. This suggests that they lack the necessary pragmatic competence to effectively

employ the appropriate techniques. Turki et al. (2020) examined the impact of gender on university students' request usage in a comparable environment, employing a written Discourse Completion Task questionnaire; they randomly selected 20 males and 20 female undergraduate English students for data collection. The analysis was based on Schuaer's (2009) taxonomy of requests. Researchers have discovered that women employ indirect requests more conventionally than males in the academic setting. Rasheed (2020) examined the types of pragmatic functions of requests made by EFL students in five EFL classrooms at Baghdad University in Iraq. The data were collected using an audio and videotape recording. Participants employed both direct and indirect requests. They employed the imperative and locution methods for direct requests and the query preparation technique for indirect requests. Students practised making more want/need and clarification-type requests to understand the pragmatic function of requests.

Few studies have recently examined how non-native English speakers use requests related to power and solidarity at the university level. This gap is still in its infancy in interlanguage pragmatics in Arabic, specifically Iraqi Arabic (Al-Momani, 2009). Further investigation is necessary because a request is an open-ended and potentially dangerous speech act. Outstanding concerns regarding requests remain unresolved (Al-Gahtani & Alkahtani, 2012). There may still be a lack of information about how power and solidarity impact requests in higher education institutions in Iraq. The current study examines the effect of power and solidarity on request methods in English. The subjects comprise Iraqi undergraduate university students of English (IUUSE) and Iraqi postgraduate university students of English (IPUSE) considering the following research question: What is the correlation between the IUUSE and IPUSE on using requests and the dynamics of social power and solidarity within the university context?

2. Methodology

This quantitative study used random convenience sampling to collect data from 130 IUUSE and nonrandom convenience sampling to collect data from 60 IPUSE. Researchers most commonly use the nonrandom convenience sampling technique, although it is not the most preferred approach for data collection, particularly at the postgraduate research level (Dornyei, 2007). The respondents were given a background questionnaire to document their details, such as age, proficiency level, and academic level. Then, respondents received printed copies of the written discourse completion task (WDCT) questionnaire. Next, the researcher instructed students on how to answer the questionnaires allocating 30 minutes for them to respond to the questionnaire.

Several interlanguage pragmatic researchers used the WDCT questionnaire and established its validity (Al-Momani, 2009; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2013; Felix-Brasdefer & Hasler-Barker, 2015; Kasper, 2008; Takahashi & DuFon, 1989). The present study adapted Al-Momani's (2009) WDCT, judging it appropriate. This questionnaire presents analogous scenarios at two academic tiers: undergraduate and postgraduate. These instances demonstrate variation systematically for the social variables that may affect the examined speech acts. The scenarios provoke interactions among participants in various social relationships.

These relations include -Power (-Pow), -Solidarity (-Sol), =Power (=Pow), -Solidarity (-Sol), +Power (+Pow), +Solidarity (+sol), =power (=Pow) =solidarity (=Sol), -Power (-Pow), +Solidarity (+Sol) as Brown and Gilman (1960) distributed. Symmetrical or asymmetrical social ties were illustrated by the situations. The representations of these situations illustrate

the interactions among students, instructors, physicians, and university bank administrators. All situations depict speech acts of everyday occurrence, which are predictable and familiar to both IUUSE and IPUSE. The quantitative results were obtained from the questionnaire through descriptive and statistical analysis. The data were examined utilizing Blum-Kulka et al's. (1989) coding framework.

3. Results and Discussion

This section examines the research issue of the study, concentrating on the utilisation of requests about power and solidarity in IUUSE and IPUSE. Despite the assertion that power and solidarity are interdependent, they remain distinct from each other (Fairclough, 1989; Brown & Gilman, 1960), as each can uniquely influence the selection of linguistic forms. To answer the research question, requests were used from IUUSE and IPUSE to make Chi-Square pair comparisons of different social power relations (-Pow vs. =Pow, -Pow vs. +Pow, and +Pow vs. =Pow) and solidarity relations (-Sol. vs. =Sol., -Sol vs. +Sol, and +Sol vs. =Sol), which are both common in academic settings. The subsequent subsections offer a comprehensive overview of the essential mandatory and discretionary techniques, encompassing direct, traditionally indirect, non-conventionally indirect, and internal and external modifiers. These request strategies were employed in various power and solidarity social relationships. The subsequent table illustrates the tactics for power and solidarity interactions outlined by Brown and Gilman (1960).

Table 1: Power and solidarity relations in the university setting

Abbreviations of power and solidarity	Meaning yof relations
-Pow	Respondents are less powerful than addressees
=Pow	Respondents and addressees are of equal social power
+Pow	Respondents are more powerful than addressees
-Sol	Respondents have no solidarity with addressees
=Sol	Respondents and addressees can show solidarity mutually
+Sol	Respondents can show solidarity with addressees

3.1 Employing Direct Requests for Power and Solidarity in a University level

The results of Chi-Square pair comparisons were used to determine whether using direct requests by the IUUSE and IPUSE is dependent or independent of power to examine the degree to which power relations (-Pow vs. =Pow, -Pow vs. +Pow, and +Pow vs. =Pow) in the university setting are related to using direct requests. The results indicated that the participants' university degree affects their utilization of direct requests for power. The utilization of direct requests by the IPUSE and IUUSE in the three pairs of power relations in the university context is compared in Table 2.

Table 2: The frequency of direct inquiries for power between IUUSE and IPUSE in a university setting.

D	-Pow		=Pow		+Pow		-Pow/=Pow	-Pow/+Pow	+Pow/=Pow
Nationality	N	%	N	%	N	%	χ^2	χ^2	χ^2
IUUSE	96	0.14	244	0.36	330	0.49	11.3557	17.5165	24.2195

IPUSE	18	0.10	44	0.25	114	0.64	5.3968	3.0159	12.8571
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Note. * $p < 0.05$

The Chi-Square analysis in the table demonstrated that there were no major variations in employing direct requests among the three pairs of power relations, -Pow/=Pow, -Pow/+Pow, and +Pow/=Pow, for both IUUSE and IPUSE. This indicates no association between power relations and the utilization of direct requests by IUUSE and IPUSE in university settings. Both groups in the university context tended to be direct in their requests across all three power relations, likely due to the need for transparency to be more understood, explicit, and clear (Faerch & Kasper, 1989). This corroborates the belief that politeness may not be necessarily associated with indirectness but rather with directness depending on cultural and linguistic differences (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Wierzbicka, 1991). Additionally, this outcome is consistent with several other developmental research studies (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010; Pan, 2012); it indicates that power relations do not influence direct requests the native and non-native speakers of a target language produce. However, some previous studies (Al-Gahtani & Alkahtani, 2012; Byon, 2004) found otherwise: that perception of power may be culturally dependent, which is not evident in this study. The results of Chi-Square pair comparisons between the IUUSE and IPUSE's use of requests about solidarity are shown in Table 3 below. The results indicated that the university setting did not influence the participants' use of direct request strategies about solidarity.

Table 3: The frequency of direct requests for solidarity between IUUSE and IPUSE in a university setting

D	-Sol		=Sol		+Sol		-Sol/=Sol	-Sol/+Sol	+Sol/=Sol
Nationality	N	%	N	%	N	%	χ^2	χ^2	χ^2
IUUSE	234	34.93	182	27.16	254	37.91	10.8121	16.5989	10.2512
IPUSE	80	45.45	30	17.05	66	37.50	17.2644	13.1564*	6.1441

Note. * $p < 0.05$

According to Table 3, there was a big difference ($\chi^2 = 13.1564$, $p < 0.05$) in how direct requests were used for one pair of solidarity relations. The IPUSE used less solidarity (-Sol) and more solidarity (+Sol). However, neither the two solidarity relations (-Sol/=Sol and +Sol/=Sol) for the IPUSE nor the three pairs of solidarity relations for the IUUSE showed any significant differences. This suggests that, in contrast to the IUUSE, the IPUSE employs direct requests distinctly across different solidarity relations. The result indicated that the IPUSE's use of requests, in contrast to the IUUSE, is dependent on solidarity relations. The IPUSE tended to use more direct requests in the lower solidarity (-Sol) situations (45.45%) than the higher ones (+Sol) (37.50%). Since the IUUSE did not change their use of direct requests across the three solidarity relations, it appears that they may not have considered solidarity in this case. On the other hand, the IPUSE took into account solidarity in their use of direct requests, attributing this to their pragmatic awareness, which enables them to use directness in situations involving interlocutors who share solidarity (Cohen, 1987; Katriel, 1986). These findings are inconsistent with those of Al-Momani (2009) and Ting-Toomey and Chung (2005), which showed that target language learners were inclined to use more direct requests when communicating with familiar and unfamiliar interlocutors. This may be because Iraqi culture

is vertical and collectivist. This indicates that persons in society are not socially equal. According to the norms of Iraqi culture, hierarchical relations control the interlocutors' language in everyday life interactions (Abdul Sattar & Farnia, 2014).

3.2 Employing Conventional Indirect Requests for Power and Solidarity in a University Setting

As an example of using normally indirect questions about power, Table 4 shows the Chi-Square pair comparisons between the IUUSE and IPUSE for -Pow versus =Pow, -Pow versus +Pow, and +Pow versus =Pow. The results demonstrated that participants' use of normally indirect request strategies about power is independent of the university level.

Table 4: The frequency of Conventionally Indirect requests for power between IUUSE and IPUSE in a university setting

CI	-Pow		=Pow		+Pow		-Pow/=Pow	-Pow/+Pow	+Pow/=Pow
Nationality	N	%	N	%	N	%	χ^2	χ^2	χ^2
IUUSE	418	37.86%	526	47.64%	160	14.49%	34.8885	18.2596	13.0819
IPUSE	220	35.26%	310	49.68%	94	15.06%	9.1538	34.8081***	7.9332

Note. * $p < 0.05$

Based on the Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 34.8081$, $p < 0.05$), Table 4 demonstrates a significant difference in how the IPUSE asked for one pair of power relations (-Pow and +Pow). However, the IUUSE did not show any significant differences across the three pairs of power relations, nor did the IPUSE show any significant differences for the two solidarity relations (-Pow/=Pow and +Pow/=Pow). This suggests that the IPUSE used requests based on power, but the IUUSE did not. This result indicates that the IPUSE's application of conventional indirect requests varies depending on the power relations. Specifically, the IPUSE tends to use more conventional indirect requests with higher power (-Pow) (35.26%) than those with lower power (+Pow) (15.06%), such as "I'm wondering if there's any flexibility on the due date for this assignment" or "Would you mind if I could get the class notes from last class from you, so I can be sure to understand the information fully?" Therefore, the use of conventional indirect requests by IPUSE was significantly influenced by social power, but not the IUUSE.

These findings align with prior research (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Hendriks, 2008; Schauer, 2009; Trosborg, 1995), which showed that normally indirect requests are more frequently employed in contexts where speakers had less power than the hearers. However, other studies (Pan, 2012; Sasaki, 1998) suggest that target language learners, such as native speakers, prefer to use conventionally indirect requests from those with less power. The POUSE's attempt to be more polite with interlocutors who hold greater power, along with the inherent nature of the Iraqi vertical culture, could account for this. However, an inadequate understanding of pragmatics could explain the IUUSE's tendency to employ conventional indirect requests across various power relations. This suggests that the IUUSE may be aware of the social factors of their interlocutors but not competent in choosing the linguistic forms appropriate for the social relations. Thus, the IUUSE may resort to their mother tongue and formulate their requests inappropriately, as their knowledge of interlanguage pragmatics could still be lacking. As a result, the IUUSE tended to diverge from the IPUSE when it came to using conventional indirect requests across the three power relations. Additionally, individuals' behaviors, traditions, and speech patterns may vary due to their diverse academic backgrounds

(Ahearn, 2012; Duranti, 2001). The table below illustrates how people typically use indirect requests for solidarity. The findings indicate that participants' employment of traditional indirect request strategies about solidarity is not influenced by their academic level.

Table 5: The frequency of conventionally indirect requests for solidarity between IUUSE and IPUSE in a university setting

CI	-Sol		=Sol		+Sol		-Sol/=Sol	-Sol/+Sol	+Sol/=Sol
Nationality	N	%	N	%	N	%	χ^2	χ^2	χ^2
IUUSE	520	47.10	328	29.71	256	23.18	23.6299	21.9776	19.1441
IPUSE	262	41.98	210	33.65	152	24.35	16.2222	44.2484***	6.701

Note * $p < 0.05$

Table 5 shows a significant difference in the Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 44.2484$ $p < 0.05$) in how IPUSE used traditional indirect requests for one pair of solidarity relations: less power (-Sol) and more power (+Sol). However, the three pairs of solidarity relations by the IUUSE, as well as the two solidarity relations (-Sol/=Sol and +Sol/=Sol) by the IPUSE, did not show any significant differences. This reflects that the IPUSE's use of conventionally indirect requests was associated with solidarity relations, but this was not the case for the IUUSE.

The results also indicate that the IPUSE is inclined to use additional conventional indirect requests in lower solidarity situations (-Sol) (41.98%) than in the higher (+Sol) (24.35%) (for example, "Would you mind if I could get the class notes from last class from you that way, I can be sure to understand the information fully?" or "Will the day after the assignment is due be, okay?"). This suggests that while using conventionally indirect requests by IPUSE depended on solidarity in situations of lower solidarity and higher solidarity, the IUUSE's application was independent across the three solidarity relations. Based on this, the IUUSE tended to differ from the IPUSE in using conventionally indirect requests across the three solidarity relations. The IUUSE, unlike the IPUSE, did not show any change in using conventionally indirect requests across any pair of solidarity relationships, which could be due to their limited pragmatic knowledge. The present findings correspond with other prior research (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Hassall, 2003; Schauer, 2009), suggesting that the academic level influences the selection of conventionally indirect requests in unfamiliar situations.

3.3 Employing Non-Conventional Indirect Requests for Power and Solidarity

Table 6 presents the non-conventional indirect requests used by the IUUSE and IPUSE across the three power relations. The results indicated that the participants' use of non-conventional indirect request strategies regarding power is not influenced by their academic level.

Table 6: The frequency of non-conventionally indirect requests for power between IUUSE and IPUSE about in a university setting

NCI	-Pow		=Pow		+Pow		-Pow/=Pow	-Pow/+Pow	+Pow/=Pow
Nationality	N	%	N	%	N	%	χ^2	χ^2	χ^2

IUUSE	32	69.57%	10	21.74%	4	8.70%	0.5866	0.619	32.018***
IPUSE	26	65.00%	6	15.00%	8	20.00%	0.4762	8.592	0.5128

Note. * $p < 0.05$

The Chi-square test provided in Table 6 demonstrated that the IUUSE employed non-traditionally indirect requests in one pair of power relations (+Pow and =Pow) in a way that was significantly different ($\chi^2 = 32.018$, $p < 0.05$). However, the IPUSE's three pairs of solidarity relations showed no significant differences, nor did the IUUSE's two solidarity relations (-Pow/=Pow and -Pow/+Pow). This indicates that there was no association between using non-conventional indirect requests and power relations by the IPUSE. Specifically, there is a tendency for the IUUSE to indicate a higher use of non-conventional indirect requests in situations of equal power (=Pow) (21.74%) than those of higher power (+Pow) (8.70%) (e.g., "My computer has broken down" or "Hello Sir, I've been told that I should meet you"). The nearby relationship among interlocutors allows them to be vague in their requests without coming across as rude. Similarly, the table above indicates that using non-conventional indirect requests from the IPUSE was independent of power relations. This indicates a variation in using non-conventional indirect requests by IUUSE but not for the IPUSE, which did not indicate any change in using non-conventional indirect requests across the three power relations.

The findings align with those of numerous other research (Pan, 2012; Trosborg, 1995), which identified a correlation between power and the utilization of non-standard indirect requests by non-native English speakers. This, however, contradicts prior research (Hill, 1997; Schauer, 2009), which indicated that native speakers were more inclined to employ non-conventional indirect requests in contexts where their authority was inferior to that of the interlocutor. A plausible explanation was sought for the current results by considering the IPUSE's desire for clarity in their requests. This way, they can avoid the confusion that non-standard indirect requests can cause in an academic setting that is full of professional discourse (Pan, 2012). Conversely, the IUUSE may consider the possibility of ambiguity when interacting with their equal and lower-power interlocutors. These findings suggest that the IPUSE tended to be more polite in their requests, avoiding vagueness with their interlocutors. The impact of solidarity was also analyzed for both groups' utilization of non-conventional indirect requests as a contextual variable. The findings indicated that participants' employment of unconventional indirect request tactics for solidarity is contingent upon their academic level.

Table 7: The frequency of non-conventionally indirect requests for solidarity between IUUSE and IPUSE in the University setting

NCI	-Sol		=Sol		+Sol		-Sol/=Sol		-Sol/+Sol		+Sol/=Sol	
Nationality	N	%	N	%	N	%	χ^2		χ^2		χ^2	
IUUSE	26	56.52	10	21.74	10	21.74	0.8469		1.2264		12.3607***	
IPUSE	18	45.00	0	0.00	22	55.00	1.3451		3.7834		0.9965	

Note. * $p < 0.05$

The Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 12.3607$, $p < 0.05$) results in Table 7 show that the IUUSE did something that wasn't normal: they used indirect requests in two different solidarity relations

(+Sol and =Sol). However, the IUUSE's use of non-standard direct requests didn't show any big differences between the two pairs of solidarity relations (-Sol/=Sol and -Sol/+Sol). The same was true for the IPUSE's use of the non-standard direct requests between the three pairs of solidarity relations (-Sol/=Sol, -Sol/+Sol, and +Sol/=Sol). This suggests that the IUUSE's use of non-conventionally indirect requests depends on solidarity relations, but this was not the case for the IPUSE.

Specifically, the IUUSE's use of non-conventionally indirect requests is associated with solidarity, where the interlocutors exhibit equal solidarity (=Sol) and the speakers demonstrate greater solidarity than the addressees (+Sol). Examples of such requests include "Hello, I'm afraid I can't help you with your study this Monday. I'm very busy" and "My laptop has just stopped." In this case, the IUUSE tended to avoid using non-conventional indirect requests to demonstrate solidarity with close friends and teachers in informal situations (e.g., "Hi, I had a nasty cold last week. I missed your class"), possibly because they believed such requests were appropriate for such situations. In this context, such applications align with the assertion that Iraqi culture, unlike Western culture, constitutes a social and coherent system that prioritizes strong connections among members of Iraqi society (Abu-Haidar, 1989).

3.4 Employing Requests' Internal Modifiers for Power and Solidarity in University Setting

Power is one social factor that may influence the way internal requests are addressed. The relationship between the employment of internal modifiers and power relations was evaluated (-Pow vs. =Pow, -Pow vs. +Pow, and +Pow vs. =Pow) utilizing chi-square pair comparisons. The results suggested that the university ranking of participants did not alter their internal modifiers of power.

Table 8: The frequency of request internal modifiers for power between IUUSE and IPUSE on power in a university setting.

Internal modifiers	-Pow		=Pow		+Pow		-Pow/=P	-Pow/+Pow	+Pow/=Pow
Nationality	N	%	N	%	N	%	χ^2	χ^2	χ^2
IUUSE	1398	45.27	1264	40.93	426	13.80	205.272	102.54**	87.5
IPUSE	542	38.33	676	47.81	196	13.86	171.37	71.98	97.5893

Note. *p < 0.05

From Table 8, one can see that the IUUSE used internal modifiers of request in a significantly different way in two power relations (-Pow and +Pow). The p-value was < 0.05. However, using two pairs of solidarity relations (-Pow/=Pow and +Pow/=Pow) indicated no substantial difference between the IUUSE and all three solidarity relations among the IPUSE. This shows the IUUSE's tendency to use more internal modifiers in requests from those of higher power (-Pow) (45.27%) than those of lower power (+Pow) (13.80%). The results suggest that the internal modifiers' use depends on power for the IUUSE but not on the IPUSE. This indicates the IUUSE differs from the IPUSE in using internal modifiers across different power relations. To summarise, power appears to affect the IUUSE's utilization of internal modifiers, whereas it does not impact the IPUSE's. This could be due to the IUUSE's attempt to reduce the imposition of direct requests and to be more polite, especially when making requests from

individuals with high social power, such as "Pass the ball to me, please," or "I need a copy of the notes, please."

Most previous studies (Göy, Zeyrek, & Otcu, 2012; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Woodfield, 2008) align with this finding, suggesting that the IPUSE should employ more internal modifiers to counteract requests from interlocutors with higher social power rather than those with equal social power. The IPUSE's consistent use of internal modifiers when requesting from interlocutors of different power relations may be due to their tendency not to overuse them and appear 'waffling'. Table 9 illustrates the use of internal modifiers across the different solidarity relations. The results revealed that participants' internal modifiers about solidarity depend on the academic level.

Table 9: The internal modifiers' frequency for solidarity between IUUSE and IPUSE in a university setting

Internal modifiers	-Sol		=Sol		+Sol		-Sol/=Sol		-Sol/+Sol		+Sol/=Sol	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	χ^2		χ^2		χ^2	
IUUSE	1672	54.15%	734	23.77%	682	22.09%	189.808		214.53		122.183	
PUSE	684	48.37%	432	30.55%	298	21.07%	157.467		119.086		108.514	

Note. *p < 0.05

The Chi-Square test indicated no significant differences among the three pairs of solidarity relations (-Sol/=Sol, -Sol/+Sol, and +Sol/=Sol for both the IUUSE and IPUSE) were used when people made requests (Table 9). This shows that the varied solidarity relations did not influence using internal modifiers by the IUUSE and IPUSE, as neither group showed any change in their use across these solidarity relations. Interlocutors from different academic levels may hold different views about solidarity and situations (Blum-Kulka and House, 1989; Spencer-Oatey, 1997; Fukushima, 2000). In this regard, variations in the linguistic preferences of participants may have resulted from differences in their views of social reality.

3.5 Employing of Requests' External Modifiers for Power and Solidarity in University Setting

In terms of Chi-Square test, no significant differences were indicated between employing the three sets of solidarity relations (-Sol/=Sol, -Sol/+Sol, and +Sol/=Sol for both the IUUSE and IPUSE) when making requests (Table 9). This shows that the varied solidarity relations did not influence the deployment of internal modifiers by the IUUSE and IPUSE, as neither group showed any change in their use across these solidarity relations. Interlocutors from different academic levels may hold different views about solidarity and situations (Blum-Kulka and House, 1989; Spencer-Oatey, 1997; Fukushima, 2000). In this regard, variations in the linguistic preferences of participants may have resulted from differences in their views of social reality.

Table 10: The request external modifiers' frequency for power between IUUSE and IPUSE in a university setting

External modifiers	-Pow		=Pow		+Pow		-Pow/=Pow	-Pow/+Pow	+Pow/=Pow
Group	N	%	N	%	N	%	χ^2	χ^2	χ^2
IUUSE	1582	45.10%	1402	39.97%	524	14.94%	296.917**	115.949**	152.335***
IPUSE	720	42.40%	730	42.99%	248	14.61%	230.666***	89.619**	116.587***

Note. *p < 0.05

The results demonstrated a shift in the IUUSE and IPUSE when utilizing external modifiers across the three power relations. There was more use of external modifiers when requesting from a higher power (-Pow) (45.1%) compared to when requesting from an equal power (=Pow) (39.97%) and when requesting from a lower power (+Pow) (14.94%). In this regard, Song (2012) indicated that school and university teachers are highly respected in Eastern societies. In contrast, the results for the IPUSE did not indicate such a shift in using external modifiers across the three power relations. Using external modifiers was highest in situations with equal power (=Pow) at 42.99%, followed by 42.40% when the addressees had a higher power relation over the speakers (-Pow), and lowest at 14.91% when the speakers had a higher power relation than the addressees (+Pow). The results suggest that the IUUSE and IPUSE's use of external modifiers depends on power. These findings align with several previous studies (Hill, 1997; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Woodfield, 2012), which suggest that participants use more external modifiers to support requests from interlocutors with higher and equal social power. In requests about solidarity, the findings indicate that participants' academic level does not affect their external modifiers' utilization. Table 11 presents the outcomes of the Chi-Square pair comparison study.

Table 11: The request external modifiers' frequency for solidarity between IUUSE and IPUSE

External modifiers	-Sol		=Sol		+Sol		-Sol/=Sol	-Sol/+Sol	+Sol/=Sol
Nationality	N	%	N	%	N	%	χ^2	χ^2	χ^2
IUUSE	1692	48.23%	862	24.57%	954	27.19%	241.399**	277.924***	187.268***
IPUSE	770	45.35%	466	27.44%	462	27.21%	167.833*	139.095***	135.358***

Note. *p < 0.05

The Chi-square showed that IUUSE and IPUSE employed external modifiers for requests in three sets of power relations that were not the same: -Sol/=Sol ($\chi^2 = 241.399$, $p < 0.05$), -Sol/+Sol ($\chi^2 = 277.924$, $p < 0.05$), and +Sol/=Sol ($\chi^2 = 187.268$, $p < 0.05$); IPUSE used -Sol/=Sol ($\chi^2 = 167.833$, $p < 0.05$), -Sol/+Sol ($\chi^2 = 139.095$, $p < 0.05$), and +Sol/=Sol ($\chi^2 = 135.358$, $p < 0.05$). This highlights that using external modifiers by the IUUSE and IPUSE is associated with solidarity. Both groups modified their utilization of external modifiers among the three levels of solidarity according to their frequency of use. For example, the IUUSE used more external modifiers when making requests when the level of solidarity was lower (-Sol) (48.23%) than when it was higher (+Sol) (27.19%) or equal (=Sol) (24.57%). On the other hand, the IPUSE used more external modifiers when making requests in lower solidarity situations (-Sol) (45.35%) than equal (=Sol) (27.44%) and higher (+Sol) (27.21%). These findings align with Schauer's (2009) findings, which suggest a frequent use of external modifiers in situations of equal status. The current findings could be attributed to the IUUSE's tendency to compensate for their direct requests using more external modifiers.

4. Conclusion

This study compares and contrasts the IUUSE and IPUSE's requests for power and solidarity. This study aims to uncover how both groups employ and modify their requests based on the social variables under investigation. Several aspects of using Request Speech Acts in English have been examined from a pragmatic and sociopragmatic standpoint. From a pragmatic and sociopragmatic standpoint, the study focuses on the methods of request head acts, including direct, conventionally direct, and non-conventionally indirect forms, as well as the external and internal requests' modifiers. The pragmatic aspects of power and solidarity were also investigated in a university setting. Overall, these aspects are seen as parts of a broader issue that clarifies the social norms guiding the selection of language forms suitable for English social norms.

The results regarding social power's effect on the choice of request techniques within a university context correlate with the academic level of the participants. Across all three pairs of power relations, the IUUSE primarily altered using external modifiers and normally indirect requests. Conversely, the IPUSE altered using internal and external modifiers, alongside normally indirect requests. This suggests that power plays a crucial and effective role in shaping the strategies employed when making requests from others in various academic settings. This indicates that both groups attempt to persuade their interlocutors to achieve their aims. Interlocutors from different academic levels may hold different views about the social variables and situations in this case (Blum-Kulka and House, 1989; Spencer-Oatey, 1997; Fukushima, 2000), and this may reflect in the speakers' choice of linguistic repertoire.

Conversely, the application of direct request techniques by the IUUSE and IPUSE did not signify power within the three pairings of power dynamics. Consequently, it may be inferred that power did not seem to exert a significant impact on the alteration of direct requests across the three pairs of power relations, likely due to both groups' efforts to maintain clarity and avoid ambiguity in their requests to appear more polite. The argument suggests that interlocutors use direct requests to demonstrate clarity and polite commitment, with the correlation between directness and politeness in contingent upon cultural context. (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

Similar to power strategies, the findings addressing solidarity seemed influential in shifting most request strategies across the three pairs of solidarity relations in an academic setting. This could be seen in the way direct requests, normal indirect requests, external modifiers of requests across the three pairs of solidarity relations by the IPUSE, and non-normal indirect requests along with external modifiers by the IUUSE changed. In conclusion, it is not surprising that the IPUSE demonstrated more pragmatic competence than the IUUSE in shifting requests across the three pairs of solidarity relations, as expected of students at a high academic level. This likely stems from the academic setting's characteristic of convergence, which fosters solidarity among interlocutors to maintain positive relationships.

Conversely, both groups showed that their use of internal modifiers for requests in the university setting was unaffected by solidarity. This indicates that the IUUSE use internal request modifiers in a manner akin to native English speakers, particularly when discussing solidarity. Therefore, one can infer that IUUSE understood the appropriate use of these internal modifiers, avoiding excessive verbosity that could make their requests sound monotonous. In this case, Chen (2006) clarified that verbosity may mislead the addressee to understand the intention of the speaker.

The current study's findings may enhance the knowledge of request dynamics and the suitable linguistic forms for soliciting responses from interlocutors across various social relationships in university settings. However, the study's findings could guide the teaching of requests and their appropriate strategies, potentially enhancing the pragmatic knowledge of EFL learners and facilitating successful communication with their interlocutors. Employing suitable request tactics in English can effectively underscore the influence of power, solidarity, and social elements in a polite manner.

دراسة اجتماعية تداولية للطلّبات المستخدمة من طلبة دراسات أولية ودراسات عليا عراقيين في اللغة الانجليزية

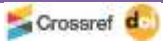
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ملخص البحث:

تركز هذه الدراسة على الوعي باستراتيجيات افعال الكلام في الطلب المستخدمة بين طلاب الجامعات العراقية فيما يتعلق بالعوامل الاجتماعية ومحاورهم. تسهم الدراسة في الأدبيات الموجودة حول البراغماتية بين اللغات من خلال التحقيق في استخدام الطلّبات في السياقات الأكاديمية من طلاب الدراسات الأولية في اللغة الانجليزية في الجامعات العراقية مقارنة بطلاب الدراسات العليا في اللغة الانجليزية. تبحث الدراسة في كيفية تعبير طلاب الجامعات العراقية في المرحلة الجامعية والدراسات العليا للغة الإنجليزية عن طلباتهم بشكل مشابه أو مختلف فيما يتعلق بالسلطة والتضامن في السياق الأكاديمي. تم اعتماد مهمة إكمال الخطاب الكتابي (WDCT) لجمع البيانات من 130 طالبا جامعيًا عراقيًا و 60 طالب دراسات عليا في اللغة الإنجليزية تم تحديد عن طريق أخذ عينات ملائمة عشوائية وغير عشوائية، على التوالي. تم استخدام تصنيف (Blum - Kulka et al (1989) لأفعال الكلام في الطلب لتحليل البيانات الكمية إحصائياً. أظهرت النتائج أن الطلّبات المهذبة المستخدمة من كلا المجموعتين من الطلّبات المهذبة قد تأثرت بالسلطة والتضامن. ستفيد نتائج هذه الدراسة مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية في تدريس الطلّبات والاستراتيجيات المناسبة، والتي بدورها ستعزز المعرفة التداولية لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية وفعالية تواصلهم مع محاورهم.