A Socio-pragmatic Study of Request Modification in Iraqi Non-standard Arabic.

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Abstract

This study aims at finding out whether there are any gender-based differences in the use of external modification devices in request by native speakers of Iraqi non-standard Arabic. The data is collected by means of DCTs (discourse completion tasks). The subjects are Iraqi students and all of them are native speakers of Iraqi non-standard Arabic representing both males and females. The result shows that there are differences between Iraqi males and females in the rate of frequencies of the external modification devices. The results are discussed , analyzed and pedagogical implications are highlighted.

ملخص البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى الكشف عن اذا ما كانت هناك اي فروقات بين الجنسين في التخفيف من حدة الطلب بأستخدام وسائل التخفيف الخارجية من قبل الطلبة العراقيين المتحدثين باللهجة العراقية العامية. جمعت البيانات عن طريق أستخدام الأستبيانات والتي أعطيت للطلبة العراقيين المتحدثين باللهجة العراقية العامية. عينة البحث من الذكور وألأناث . على العموم بينت النتائج أن هناك فروقات بين الذكور والأناث في أستخدام وسائل تخفيف الطلب الخارجية. تم مناقشة وتحليل النتائج والقاء الضوء على مضموناتها التربوية.

1. **Introduction**

The present study aims at investigating the way request is modified by Iraqi male and female university students speaking Iraqi non- standard Arabic.

Although much research was conducted in the field of the speech act of request, it is noticed that there is no research that was done to investigate gender based differences in modifying request by Iraqi university students speaking Iraqi non- standard Arabic. This research is an attempt to bridge the gap in this area.

Individuals within the same society might differ in their speech act realization pattern, depending on personal variables such as sex, age or level of education (Blum- Kulka, 1989: 197). Speech act theory has dealt with the question of politeness and the two philosophers, Austin and Searle regard linguistic communication to be not just a means of conveying information, but a tool people use to fulfill many goals. When people speak, they do things or make others do things for them such as apologizing, promising, requesting, thanking and so on. Searle (1979) proposed a system of five different categories of speech act. These are assertive, directive, comissive, expressive and declaration.

The main function of directive is to direct the addressee to perform or not to perform an act, such as ordering or requesting.

2. **Requests**

Requests are face threatening acts which imply intrusion on the addressee's freedom of action. So they threaten the addressee's negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1978:70). They are categorized as impolite behavior or face threatening acts (FTAs) that are important to be mitigated by negative politeness strategies (Leech, 1983:106). In addition there are social variables that affect the kind and degree of politeness. These variables are the social status of participants, distance and weight of the imposition. The variables will determine the type of politeness strategies that are employed in performing speech acts. The speaker, according to Brown and Levinson (1978), will use one of these four strategies in doing the act (1) Bold on record (2) positive politeness (3) negative politeness (4) off record.

The choice of direct and indirect ways of making requests apparently available to speakers in all languages is socially motivated by the need to soften the imposition embedded in the act itself. The process of softening or mitigating is defined by Fraser (1978:22) as the intentional softening or easing of the force of the message- a modulation of the basic message intended by the speaker. One way in which the speaker can mitigate the imposition is by manipulating an indirect strategy. But even after the speaker has used the strategy of indirectness in performing the act, s/he still has many verbal choices available to mitigate the degree of imposition involved (Blum-Kulka,1989). S/he uses 'internal' and 'external' modification devices. So requests are made up of two parts: the core request or the head act as suggested by Blum- Kulka (1989:200) and the various peripheral elements. The 'head act' is 'the part of the sequence which might serve to realize the act independently of other elements. So it can be used alone without any peripheral elements. However it is noticed that in many cases request is preceded and/or followed by expressions which mitigate or emphasize its force (Faerch & Kasper,1989), (Sifianou, 1999). As proposed by Faerch and Kasper(1984), and Edmindson (1981) such manipulation may be categorized as 'internal modification' which neither alters the level of directness, nor changes the propositional content.

Internal modification is fulfilled by means of linguistic expression within the same speech act to mitigate or aggravate its force, whereas external modification is fulfilled by softening or intensifying devices which occur in the immediate linguistic context rather than in the speech act itself (Faerch and Kasper, 1984). Internal modification can be achieved by syntactic means such as the interrogative, past tense, or through other down graders such as intensifiers, and hedges. Examples of internal modification categories are listed below (Blum Kulka,1989:205):

1- Syntactic Down graders. The use of syntactic mitigation can indicate several different attitudes. For example, the speaker might wish to indicate that s/he is pessimistic with regard to the outcome of the request (certain negative usage) or that s/he feels hesitant

about making the request (marked modals, such as 'might' instead of 'can'). Syntactic manipulations also serve as distancing elements (past tense) and as hedging devices (embedded 'if' clause) (Blum Kulka & Elite Olshtain, 1984 : 204).

a. *Negation*

Look, excuse me. I wonder if you *wouldn't mind* dropping me home?

b. *Embedded 'if clause'*

e.g. I would appreciate it *if you left me alone*.

c.Conditional clause.

e.g. *…if it's possible to have an extension…*'

d. Past Tense.

e.g. I *wanted* to ask for a postponement.

e. Aspect.

e.g. '*I was wondering* if it's possible to have an extension for the assignment.'

f. Negation of preparatory condition

e.g. '*I don't suppose there is any chance* of an extension?'

2- Lexical Modifiers:

2.1 Downgraders:

a. *Consultative devices.* Elements by means of which the speaker seeks to involve the hearer and bids for his/her cooperation.

e.g *Do you think* I could borrow your lecture notes from yesterday?

b. *Understaters.* Elements by means of which the speaker minimizes parts of the
proposition, such as the required action or object as in:

e.g Could you tidy up *a bit* before I start?

c. *Hedges.* Elements by means of which the speaker avoids specification in making
a commitment to the illocutionary point of the utterance, in naming the required

action, in describing the manner in which it is to be performed, or in referring

to any other contextual aspect involved in its performance:

e.g   It would really help if *you did something* about the kitchen.

External modification can be achieved through the use of sweeteners,   grounders,   disarmers,   and   other   means (Edmendson,1981), (Edmendson & House, 1981), (House & Kasper 1981).Types of external modification are listed below:

a. *Checking on availability.* The speaker begins his/her main speech act with

an utterance intended to check if the precondition necessary for agreement

holds true.

e.g. *Are you going in the direction of the town*? And if so, is it possible to join

you?

b. *Preparatory* . The speaker prefaces the act by an utterance that

can count as an attempt to get a precommital.

e.g. *Could you do me a favor?* Could you perhaps lend me your notes for a few days?

c. *Grounder.* The speaker justifies the request. (Grounders may precede or follow the Head act)

e.g. Judith, *I missed class yesterday.* Could I borrow your notes?

d. *Sweetener.* By expressing overstated appreciation of the hearer's ability to

comply with the request, the speaker lowers the imposition involved.

e.g. *You have beautiful handwriting,* would it be possible to borrow your

notes for a few days?

e. *Disarmer.* The speaker indicates his/her awareness of his own violation, thereby   attempting to expect possible refusal.

e.g. *I am sorry to bother you,* but I want to delay the exam.

f. *Imposition and Cost minimizer.* The speaker reduces the force of the request.

e.g. Could you lend me that book, *if you're not using it at present*?

g- *Apology* . The speaker apologizes for doing the face threatening act of request.

e.g. *I'm sorry,* can I borrow your handbook?

h- *Gratitude.* The speaker expresses his indebtedness.

 e.g. Could I borrow your book? *I'll be grateful.*

i- *Pre-pre commitment*. Such as greetings .

e.g. *Hello sir*, *how are you today*? I want to ask you if it is possible to have an extension for the assignment.

g- *Politeness marker 'please':*

e.g. Would you mind opening the window, *please*?

k-Appreciation: e.g.   Will you be able to help me in my research? *I appreciate you*r experience and effort.

3.Previous studies

Many studies on language and gender have been dedicated to recognizing, and trying to explain differences in the speech styles of male and female. One of the main differences has been found in the area of linguistic politeness. Holmes (1995) characterizes women's speech as more polite than men's. Such a characterization comes from her own and others' work (e.g. Zimmerman and West, 1975; Fishman, 1980; Tannen,1990) on language and gender over the past three decades, according to which females were more likely than males to express positive politeness and to use mitigating strategies to avoid or minimize threatening their interlocutors' face. For example, females tended to interrupt less in conversation and "to be more attentive listeners, concerned to ensure others get a chance to contribute" than males (Holmes, 1995: 67, Sifianou, 1999:99). They also interpreted and used certain speech acts differently to males. For instance, not only females used more apologies than men but their apologies serveed more often than males' as remedies for space and talk offences – areas of interaction where women were particularly vulnerable and where they might have developed a greater sensitivity (Holmes 1995: 185).

Also previous studies put emphasis on the degree of directness for the successful performance of speech act in cross-cultural

communication.For example requests and complaints in German and English (House & Kasper, 1981), and requests in Russian and English (Thomas, 1983). In German and Russian languages the speakers employed more direct construction and appearing to be less polite. House and Kasper (19981:177) study showed that intensifying devices were rarely used with requests in English.

Among the studies that dealt with request modification is that conducted by Abudal Sattar and Farnia (2014). The study concentrated on the similarities and differences in requests' modification by Malysian and Iraqi postgraduate students studying at University Sain Malysia, Malysia. It was an attempt to investigate the performance of non- native speakers of English. The study revealed that there were more similarities than differences between the subjects under study concerning the use of mitigation devices.

Also Adhulaee's (2011) study examined Iraqi speaker's requesting act. It concentrated on exploring the differences and similarities between Australian English native speakers and Iraqi Arabic native speakers in the way they use modifications in requests. The result showed that external modifiers were prevalent in both groups' requests. The most frequent external device was grounder and openers.

Among the studies that analyzed the linguistic form of requests in different Arabic dialects as compared to form of requests in English is that is conducted by Al- Marrani and Sazalies (2010). The study examined polite request strategies as used by male speakers of Yamani Arabic in the same gender and cross gender. The analysis examined the request pattern of Yamani Arabic speakers related to six situations. The study revealed that there was a general trend in Yamani Arabic for higher level of directness in male-male interactions. The use of direct strategies by speakers of Yamani Arabic were justified by the closeness and the solidarity between the participants. Also it showed that there was a general trend in Yamani Arabic for higher level of indirectness in male-female interactions. This result was attributed to cultural and religious values.

4.Aim of the study

The current study will try to answer the following question:

  Are there any gender- based differences with regard to the use of external modification in request by Iraqi males and females?

5. Subjects

The data were collected from a sample of Iraqi undergraduate students from the department of English, Al-Araqia University. They were Third-year students and their ages ranged between (20-24) years old. The sample included 21 males and 21 females. All were native speakers of Iraqi non-standard Arabic.

6. Instrument and Methodology

In order to achieve the above aim, the data were collected via the discourse completion task (DCT) which is developed by Blum-Kulka (1982). The questionnaire consisted of seven written situations to which participants were supposed to react and respond making request (Appendix I). The questionnaire was written in Arabic and the respondents had to write their answers in Iraqi non-standard Arabic. The respondents were asked to imagine as though they were in real situations where they could verbally participate in real dialogue.

The situations varied according to a number of social variables: the social distance between the speakers, the relative social power and the ranking of imposition.

Situations Description

S1 (Book) [+P, -D] Student – Professor. Student asks professor to lend him/her a book.

 S2 (Test) [+P, -D] Student – Professor. Student asks professor to postpone the test   to another day.

S3 (Door) [+P, +D] Student – Professor. Student asks professor whom s/he does not know to open a door which the student cannot open because his/her hands are full.

S4 (Music) [=P,+D] Student – Student. Student asks another student in nearby room whom s/he does not know to turn his/ her music down.

S5 (Notes) [=P, -D] Student – Student. Student asks to borrow a friend's notes from a class that s/he has missed.

S6 (Photo) [+P,+D] Student – Man. Student asks a man or a woman whom s/he does not know a photo of the student and his /her friend.

S7 (Food) [+P,-D] Student - friend's mother. Student asks a friend's mother for more food during dinner at the friend's house.

6.1 The Administration of the Questionnaire:

The questionnaire i.e. (DCT) was administered in the department of English, College of Arts at the end of the academic year 2015.

The subjects consisted of 21 males and 21 females all of them were third and second- year students at the department of English, College of arts, Al-Iraqia University. The subjects were given the questionnaire which was written in Arabic with instruction and 7 situations. They were given enough time to read the instruction of questionnaires and the they were asked to fill out and answer the (DCT) by writing a suitable request in Iraqi non-standard Arabic.

7. Data Analysis:

The collected data were analyzed. Data analysis was based on CCSARP (Cross cultural speech act realization project). It is a coding scheme used to study the realization of speech act in a number of languages, first it is used by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). Blum-Kulka analyzed the request into three parts: (a) address terms; (b) head act ; (c) Adjuncts to the speech act. Consider the following example:

A	B	C

(1) Danny / could you lend me £100 for a week / I've run into problems with the rent for my apartment.

The sequence in (1) would be broken down into three parts:

a. 'Danny' Address term

b. 'Could you . . . etc' Head act

c. 'I've run into problems...' Adjunct to Head act.

The head act is the core of the speech act. Adjuncts to the Head act are the external modifications that don't affect the degree of the directness of request, but they modify its illocutionary force. Example of external modifications are grounders, disarmers, sweeteners, checking the availability, and gratitude.

8. Results:

To identify the type and the frequency of external modifications used by Iraqi EFL learners and native speakers, the data were analyzed, and the frequency of occurrence and percentage of each type of strategy were calculated as shown in Table 1a. and 1b.

As to the research question whether there are any gender-based differences with regard to the use of external modification in request by Iraqi males and females, the analysis shows that there are gender- based differences concerning the employment of external modification devices in request. The female subjects of the study tend to use a higher rate of external modification devices than males do in utilizing disarmers, sweeteners, apologies, greetings, and politeness markers.

Also males tend to use grounder and gratitude more than the females do. On the other hand the analysis shows that both Iraqi males and females have close rate of frequencies in utilizing preparatory and disarmer modification devices in their requests. The following figure summarizes the results:

Figure 1.The distribution of the participants' requests across external modification devices:
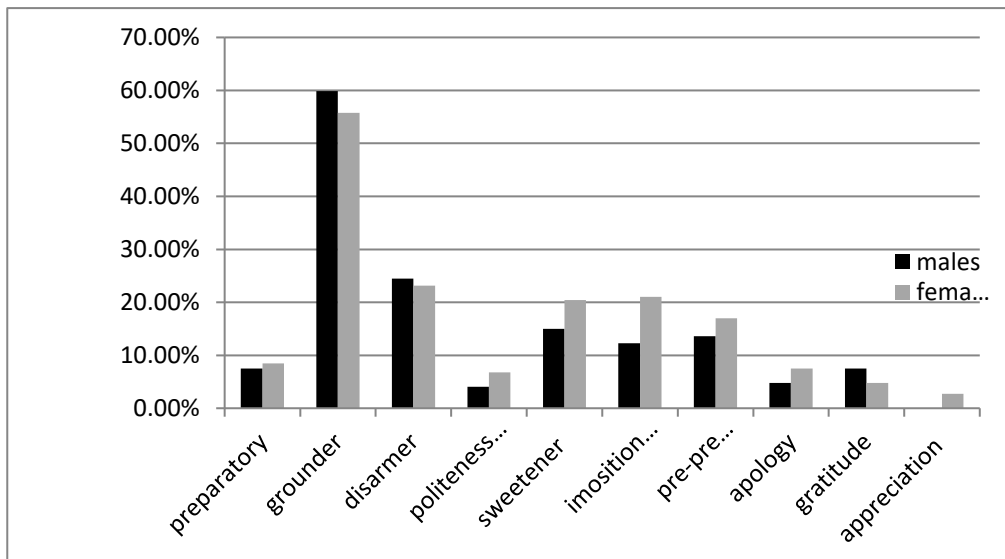
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Table 1.b. Frequency and percentage of external modifications devices in Iraqi males and females' requests

	Gratitude		Appreciation	
	Males F (%)	Females F (%)	Males F(%)	Females F(%)
S1	3 (2.04)	3 (2.04)	0	3 (2.04)
S2	1 (0.68)	1 (0.68)	0	0
S3	3 (2.04)	1 (0.68)	0	1 (0.68)
S4	1 (0.68)	0	0	0
S5	1 (0.68)	1 (0.68)	0	0
S6	2 (1.36)	1 (0.68)	0	0
S7	0	0	0	0
Total	11 (7.48)	7 (7.76)	0	4 (2.72)

9.Discussion:

Grounders are the most frequent type of external modification devices that are utilized by both groups of males and females (see figure 1). Grounders mean that the speaker gives reasons as to why he wants what he wants, it is one of the positive politeness strategies suggested by Brown and Levinson (1978). Grounders are used about 88 times (59.86%) by males and 82 times (55.78) by females in all situations except situation 6. In situation 6 (photo) the request doesn't require to be justified, two friends want to take a photo so they need another one to help them. This type of modification is used more frequently by males than females. The higher rate of occurrence is in situations 1 and 2 (professor-student) because the variables of power and imposition are high. In situation 1(book) grounder modification device is used 22 times (14.96%) by males and 16 times (10.88) by females. In S 2 (test) grounder modification device is used 21times (14.28) by males and 24 times (16.32) by femlaes (see table 1a.). In situations 1(book) and 2(test) both groups utilize various external modifications such as grounders, preparatory, and terms of address accompanied by Islamic rituals such as

"الله يخليك أستاذ" " Allah yakhalik austath" "God may save you". Also address terms "accompanied by sweeteners are used by males rather than by females such as "أستاذي العزيز" "Austathi alazeez" "My dear professor " and "أستاذي الفاضل" "Austathi alfathel" "My respectable professor". Examples of grounders used by the subjects are shown below:

S1 M : ممكن تنطيني الكتاب *أستاذ عندي بحث وأريد أكمله*. السلام عليكم أستاذ.
المناسب؟ أذا أمكن؟

Al salam aleikum austath. *Austath andi baheth wa areed akmla*.

Mumkin tinteeni al-Kitaab almunasib? Athaa amkan?

(Peace upon you Professor. *Professor I have a research and I want to complete it.* Can you give me the suitable book?)

S1 F :   *عندي بحث ومحتاجة كتاب وبس أنت عندك.* مرحبا دكتور. ممكن طلب ؟
ممكن أستعير الكتاب

وأرجعه بعد يومين وأكون ممنونة؟

Marhaba Doctor. Mumkin talab? *Andi baheth wa mhtaja kitaab wa bas   anta andak*. Mumkin astaeer Al kitaab wa arajaa baad yoomen, wa akoon mamnona.

(Hello Doctor. Can I request? *I have a research and I need a book. Only you have this book*. Can I borrow the book and I'll return it in after two days and I'll be grateful.)

S2 M: أستاذي العزيز عندي طلب. بيها مجال يتأجل ألأمتحان أي يوم أنت تحب؟

صار عندي ظرف

وما كدرت أدرس .

Austathi alaziz andi talab. Beha majal ytajal al-amtihan ai yoom

anta tiheb,? *Saar andi tharuf wa ma gadarat adrus.*

(My Dear professor I have a request. Is there any chance for postponing the test any time you want? *It was an emergent case and I couldn't study*.)

S2 F: أستاذ لو سمحت ممكن تأجل الأمتحان ؟ كنت مريضة وما كدرت أدرس.

Austath law samaht mumkin tajal al- Amtihan? *Kinat Mareetha wa ma   Gadarat Adrus* .

(Excuse me professor, can you postpone the test? *I was sick and I couldn't   study.)*

Before uttering the request, the speaker expresses his/her desire to check whether or not to say his/her request. Thus, s/he wants to prepare the addressee and to gain some kind of commitment that the addressee is willing to be co-operative. Such pre-exchanges usually take the form of questions such as "Will you do me a favour?" This preparatory   device is used   13 times (8.48%) by females, and 11 times (7.48%) by males. It is mainly used by females and males when there is greater social distance and the imposition is assumed to be higher as in S1 (book). Examples of preparatory device used by the subjects are shown below:

S1 M: صباح الخير أستاذ. *ممكن طلب؟* محتاج كتاب عندي بحث , ممكن أستعيرة

منك وأكون شاكر؟

Sabah al khir austath. *Mumkin talab*? Mihtaj kitab , andi baheth, mumkin astaeera minak wa akoon shaker?

(Good Morning Professor. *Can I ask you something*? I need a book, I have a research. Can I borrow it from you and I'll be grateful?)

S1 F: من فضلك أستاذ *ممكن تساعدني*؟ دا أدور على كتاب ومرجع لبحثي وأكون ممنونة.

Min fathlak austath *Mumkin tisaedni*? Da Adwar ala kittab wa marjaa li bahthi wa akoon mamnona.

(Excuse me Professor. *Can you help me*? I'm looking for a reference for my research, and I will be grateful.)

Another preparatory device is formulaic greeting such as "مرحبا" "Marahaba" "Hello", and "شلونك" "Shloonak" "How are you?". They are used before expressing the actual request. This Pre-pre precommitment device of request modification is used more frequently by females 25 times (17%) than by males who use this device about 20 times (13.60%). Greetings appear in the same frequency of occurrence in S1 (book) and S2 (exam) before both groups' requests. But it is used more frequently before females' requests than before males' requests in S5 (notebook) where the interlocutors are equals, and in S6 (photo) with stranger, where the relationship is more distant. This shows that Iraqi females are more interested in a harmonious, social conversation than male do; and they try to avoid being rude by trying to be friendly. Also they try to be nice and smart from the beginning and minimize the distance between interlocutors.

Both groups use disarmers, which are phrases that express the speaker's realization that the request might be an imposition on the addressee. They are optional and can occur in initial or final position. A speaker uses disarmer and criticizes himself/herself to put pressure on the addressee to be cooperative and to inform the addressee that s/he doesn't want to bother him.

The frequency of use of disarmers seems to be the same by both groups. It appears about 36 times (24.48%) in males' request compared to 34 times (23.12%) in females' requests. This type of modification is used mainly by both groups in S3 (door) and S6 (photo). It is used in S3 (door), because the variables of power and degree of impositions are high. Also it is used in S6 (photo) because

the variables of distance and imposition are also high. Examples of disarmers which are extensively used by Iraqi males and females "ولو تصير زحمة" "Wa law tseer zahma" "It is disturbance", "بلا زحمة" "Billa zahma" "Without disturbance", and

"ولو آخذ من وقتك " "Wa law aakhith min waqtak" "I am taking your time". They are used by both groups either before or after the request.

Expressions of gratitude are used more frequently by males than females, the latter sometimes tend to use appreciation instead of gratitude in the same situation. For example some Iraqi females express their appreciation for their professor's experience and knowledge in S1 (book) instead of using gratitude. Expressions of gratitude are used about 11 times (7.48%) by males and 7 (4.76%) by females. Examples of expressions of gratitude used by both groups are "أكون ممنون" "Akoon mamnoon" "I'll be grateful" by Iraqi males and "أكون ممنونة" "Akoon mamnoona" "I'll be gratefull" by Iraqi females, " أكون شاكر" "Akoon shakir" " I'll be Grateful" by Iraqi males and "أكون شاكرة" "Akoon shakira" "I'll be grateful" by Iraq females , and "أشكركم هواية" "Ashkurkum Huaia" "Thanks a lot" by both groups.

Sweetener modification device is used by females more frequently than males. Females use it 30 times (20.40%)) compared to 22 times (14.96%) by males. All the sweeteners appear in S7(food) which express familiarity and intimacy. This finding comes in line with the previous studies (Holmes 1988, Wofson 1983, Herbert,1998) which suggest that females both give and receive more compliments than males. According to Brown and Levinson(1987), compliments and sweeteners function as positive politeness strategy and they attend to the positive face need of the addressee. Examples of the sweeteners that are used by both groups: "عاشت أيدج" "Aashit aeedich" "God save your hand", "طبخج كلش طيب" "Tabkhich kulish teiab" "Your cooking is very delicious". More examples are shown below:

S7 M: كلش طيب عاشت أيدج. ممكن طبق آخر؟
         Kulish teiab aashit aeedich. Mumkin tabik aakhir?

(*Very delicious, God save your hand*. Is it possible to have more?)

S7 F: خالة ممكن ماعون ثاني؟ *حيل طيب طبخج.*

Khala mumkin maoon thani?   *Heel teiab tabkhik.*

(Aunt can you give me another dish? *Your cooking is very delicious*.)

Most of the subjects request more food because hospitality is one of the

dominant characteristic of Iraqi society, so they expect that their requests will be fulfilled. Only one female and one male refuse to ask for more food. The subjects' requests are accompanied by terms of address that show intimacy such as

"خالتي العزيزة" "Khalty al-azeeza" " My dear aunt". Sweeteners and compliments which are used more frequently by females than by males reveal that females felt more comfortable in such situations.

Imposition and cost minimizer modification device is one of the politeness strategy in which the speaker avoids coercing the addressee, and this may be done by explicitly giving him the option not to do the act (Brown & Levinson 1978:177). Iraqi males and females' groups extensively used such expressions to minimize the imposition, for example : "أذا ماكو زحمة" " Atha makoo zahma" " If there is no disturbance", "أذا بيها مجال" " Attha beeha majaal" " If there is any chance , "أذا أمكن" " Atha amkan" " If it is possible". Sometimes subjects tend to minimize the cost when they claim that the cost was small and used such expressions: "باجر أرجعه" " Baacher arajaa" "I'll turn it back tomorrow",

"ممكن دقيقة" "Mumkin dakika" " One minute please". Iraqi females use imposition and cost minimizer device more than Iraqi males do. There are 31 instances (21%) by females compared to 18 instances (12.24 %) by males. This show that Iraqi females are more sensitive in such situations and they don't want to be rude. More Examples of imposition and cost minimizer are shown below:

S1 M: صباح الخير أستاذ. ممكن أستعير هذا الكتاب منك؟كم يوم وأرجعه.

Sabah alkhir austath. Mumkin astaeer hatha alkitab minak. *Kam yoom wa   arajaa.*

(Good Morning professor. Can I borrow this book from you? *I'll turned it back in few days.*)

S1 F: أستاذ بلا زحمة محتاجة منك شغلة بسيطة

Austath *billa zahma*, mihtaja minak *shagla baseeta*.

(Professor, *without disturbance*, I need *a small thing* from you.)

By apologizing for doing the FTA, the speaker can indicate his reluctance to interrupt or do the FTA of request. Although there are a few instances of expressions of apology in both groups' requests, females use this device more frequently than males do. Females use it 11 times (7.48%), and males use it 7 times (4.76). This comes in line with Holmes'(1995:185) findings. Females used it mainly in S3 (door) where the variables of power and imposition are high. The expression of apology which is used by Iraqi males and females is "العفو""Al-Afu" "Excuse me", below are more examples:

S3 M: العفو استاذ, أذا ممكن تفتحلي الباب؟

Al-Afu austath, atha mumkin tiftahli al- bab?

(*Excuse me*, if it is possible open the door?)

S6 F: العفو, ممكن تاخذلنا صورة؟

Al-Afu, mumkin takhthilna soora?

(*Excuse me*. Is it possible you take us a photo?)

In Iraqi non-standard Arabic words "عفية" "Afia" and "رجاءا" "Rajaan" are the rough equivalent for the politeness marker "please". In fact the word "عفية""Afia" sometimes has greater force and effect than the English word "please"; it is used in the sense of "I beg you" in S2 (test) . " عفية" "Afia" and "رجاءا" "Rajaan" are found on the whole slightly more in females' data than in males' data. In females' data they are employed 10 times (6.80%), while males use it 6 times (4.08). Data analysis reveals that these two expressions were used by both groups in S2 (test) and S4 (music), i.e. when there is social distance and when both interlocutors are equals. Examples of the politeness markers used by Iraqi males and females are listed below:

S1 M: أستاذ ممكن الأمتحان يتأجل؟   صار عندي ظرف وما كدرت أقرا.
رجاءا أستا ذ

Austath mumkin al-amtihan ytajal? Sar andi tharuf ma kadarat akraa. *Rajaan* austath.

(Professor is it possible to postpone the exam? I had some trouble. I couldn't study. *Please* Professor.)

S4 F: عفية أذا ماكو زحمة, أذا تكدر تنصي الموسيقى؟

Afia, atha makoo zahmaa, atha tekdar tnasi almoseeka.

(*Please,* if there is no disturbance, if you can turn down the music.)

10. <u>Conclusion</u>

Taking all the seven situations together, both Iraqi males and females have close rate of frequencies in utilizing preparatory and disarmer modification devices in their requests. This indicates that cultural behavior may be a stronger factor than gender in this special aspect of request modification.

With regard to the other types of modification devices, the analysis shows that there are differences between Iraqi females and males in the rate of frequencies of the external modification devices. Females tend to use a higher rate of external modification devices than males do in utilizing disarmers, sweeteners, apologies, greetings, and politeness markers. This is in line with the previous studies (Holmes, 1995; Cameron 2000, Mills, 2003) that suggest that females are more likely mitigating devices than males. This can be interpreted in line with the previous psychological research which shows that males are generally more direct than females. Females had been seen to be more concerned with making connections and seeking involvement and they are more likely to minimize threatening their interlocutor's face (Holmes, 1995:7). Also females try to be more tentative and less abrupt.

Iraqi males prefer to use expressions of gratitude more frequently than Iraqi females. In the same situation females tend to use appreciation and sweetener as mitigating devices instead of gratitude. This also supports the claim that females like to use compliments more than males do. Also males tend to give reasons for their requests more than the females do . Thus males tend to use modification devices which support their request to achieve the required result, so they are more direct than females.

I hope that these findings from the empirical study will contribute significantly to current knowledge and understanding of request modification as an important aspect of pragmatic competence in future research and pedagogy about the pragmatic development in the interlanguage that focuses on request modification. Any overuse or underuse of requests' modification devices by Iraqi students learners of English can be either attributed to first language interferences L1, or to linguistic or pragmatic proficiency. So these results will be helpful if they are compared to Iraqi students' production of requests modification devices in English to decide whether there are any possible L1 interferences. Also the result of this study will help to understand the linguistic behavior of Iraqi males and females in this particular area of request modification.

Appendix I

Questionnaire

Instructions:

 You will be asked to read brief situations; you will have to act as you would in an actual situation. Do not think too much and try to be as spontaneous as possible. Thank you for your cooperation.

Note: The answer would be in Iraqi non-standard Arabic.

Age: Gender : Male   Female

الموقف الأول: أنت طالب في الجامعة و بحاجة إلى كتاب (مرجع) لإتمام بحث مطلوب منك تسليمه في وقت محدد. هناك شخص واحد تعرف أن لديه المرجع و هو احد مدرسيك, شاهدت هذا المدرس في طريقه إلى مكتبه, ماذا تقول له؟

Situation 1: You are a university student. You need to get the book from the library to finish your assignment on time. There is only one person you know who has the book you need, one of your lecturers. On the way to his/her office you meet him/her in the hallway. What do you say?

الموقف الثاني: أنت طالب في الجامعة وتريد ان تطلب من مدرس المادة تأجيل الأمتحان ليوم آخر.....ماذا تقول له؟

Situation 2: You are a university student and you want to ask your professor to postpone the test to another day. What do you say?

ألموقف الثالث: أنت طالب جامعة وتريد ان تفتح الباب ولكن لاتستطيع لأنك تحمل اغراضا, تريد أن تطلب

من ألاستاذ الذي لاتعرفه ان يفتح لك الباب... ماذا تقول له؟

Situation 3: You are a university student your hands are full for you are carrying stuff. You can't open the door, so you want to ask a professor you don't know to open the door. What do you say?

الموقف الرابع: أنت تجلس في غرفة وفجأة تسمع صوت موسيقى عال يأتي من الغرفة المجاورة, تريد أن تطلب من طالب جامعة يجلس في الغرفة المجاورة ان يوطئ صوت الموسيقى , ماذا تقول له؟

Situation 4: Ask another student in nearby room whom you do not know to turn his/ her music down. What do you say?

الموقف الخامس :أنت طالب جامعة ولم تحضر المحاضرة السابقة تريد أن تطلب من صديقك أن يعيرك مادة المحاضرة التي لم يحضرها, ماذا تقول له:

Situation5: You are a university student, and you want to borrow a friend's notes from a class that you have missed. What do you say?

ألموقف السادس:-تقوم أنت وصديقك بنزهة في هذه الأثناء تريد أن تطلب من أمرأة أو رجل لاتعرفه أن يأخذ لك ولصديقك صورة , ماذا تقول له؟

Situation 6: You and your friend are having a picnic, you want to ask a man or a woman whom you don't know to take a photo of you your friend. What do you say?

ألموقف السابع: يدعوك صديقك على الغداء في منزله , تريد أن تطلب من أم صديقك المزيد من طبق أعددته الأم, مالذي تقول له؟

Situation7: Your friend invites you for dinner at his/her house . You want to ask your friend's mother for more food. What do you say?

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