Part - II

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

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Chapter 4

Requests Realization Patterns and Politeness in the English Interlanguage of Arabs

Introduction:

This chapter aims at investigating: request realization patterns, politeness phenomenon and transfer in the production of request speech act by Arab learners of English in the Indian context. It is based on the analysis of the elicited responses to the following four request speech act situations which will be referred to later as S1, S2, S3 and S4:

S1- You are sitting in the department library. It is very hot inside and you want your junior who is nearer to the switch to turn on the fan. How would you ask him/her to do so?

S2- You visit your teacher at home. He offers you some food and forgets to bring water. You feel thirsty and would like a glass of water. How would you request for water?

S3- You go to a foreign country to register for a particular course at the university. You meet a student from that country and you ask him to provide you with some information about the best university there. How would you request for that?

S4- At a restaurant you change your mind after the food you ordered has already been served. You want to ask for changing the order. What would you say?

Requests belong to the directive type of speech acts. The motive behind this act is getting an addressee to do a specific task. A logical starting point in this chapter would be to begin with the definition of requests. Goffman (1971:114) defines a request as a type of ritual which asks “license of a
potentially offended person to engage in what could be considered a violation of his rights... At the same time he (the speaker) exposes himself to denial and rejection”. Bach and Harnish (1982:47) suggest a taxonomy of ‘requestives’ (ask, request, insist) where the utterance of the request requires the hearer to act if the speaker expresses (a) the desire that the hearer acts and (b) the intention that the hearer acts because of the speaker’s desire. For Green (1975:120) it is “the polite method for getting the hearer to do a specific action”. These definitions may be summed up with the broader definition by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989:133); “a pre-event act which expresses the speaker’s expectation toward some perceptive action ..... on the part of the hearer. It is this notion of expectation which seems to be key in requesting. “

Request speech act has been studied widely. Most of the research that has been done in linguistics, anthropology, and sociology on requesting has been done on adult first and second language performance. However, very scanty resources are available on requesting by Arabs in either first or second language performance.

Background to requests:

Several studies have addressed speech acts and pragmatics in adult L2 interlanguage. Most of them examine the cross-cultural differences between the two languages and the potential for misunderstanding. That is, they cite evidence obtained largely from experiments involving written responses to speech act stimuli that, despite an excellent command of the L2 grammar and lexicon, learners may fail to convey pragmatically appropriate expressions, in part because they transfer L1 pragmatic rules in their L2 production. Students must not only know the range of syntactic forms of utterances they can use to express particular speech acts, but also the appropriate situation in which to use them. Rintell (1981) found that Spanish-speaking learners of English used more deferent forms when requesting in their L1 than they did when speaking English. She says that learners appear to evaluate their own L1 request forms as more
deferent than the L2 English ones. She suggests that the learners may be either using a strategy to be less deferential in the target language, or perhaps perceiving that English speakers are less deferential in their requests.

Scarcella (1979) compared adult advanced and beginning ESL learners with regard to their production of requests in three role-play situations to find evidence of an order of L2 acquisition of politeness forms. She found that, while the advanced students could vary the syntactic form of the request according to the social situation, using imperatives and declarative statements, the beginning students invariably used imperatives. She suggests that certain politeness features emerge quite early in L2 acquisition, such as lexical features (e.g., Sorry, Please), while others, such as slang and ellipsis, do not. She indicates that the acquisition of politeness forms appears to precede that of the rules governing the proper use and distribution of these forms.

Recently, scholars have begun to look at variability regarding pragmatics in interlanguage. To find data on actual pragmatic forms used in L2 speech act interlanguage, Blum-Kulka and Levenston (1987) examined the requests produced in written form by native Hebrew and English speakers for particular situations, as well as those used by Hebrew – speaking learners of English and English-speaking learners of Hebrew. A linguistic comparison revealed that the native speakers and the L2 learners differ mainly in two pragmatic dimensions: perspective and internal modification. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986:165) studied pragmatic failure both in native and non-native speech, and with respect to the applied domain compared request realizations of native and non-native speakers in terms of length of utterance. Elda Weizman (1993) explores the use of hints as a request strategy by learners. He discussed the question of regularities to be observed in the use of requestive hints by Hebrew learners at different proficiency levels, and the similarities or differences between them and native speakers. He also examined whether the opacity inherent in Hints is exploited by learners as a strategy of communication, whether the impact of situational variations marks Hint selection by learners as it does with native
speakers, and whether the use of Hint sub-strategies is comparable in the two groups.

The politeness strategies of Arabic in the performance of the directive speech act, contrasting them with those in English, testing the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1978) with Arabic-English bilingual and Arabic monolinguals and exploring the cultural determination of pragmatic norms in language were the major goals of a study conducted by Atawneh (1993).

CCSARP:

The need to study speech act realization patterns, politeness phenomenon and pragmatic transfer was originally motivated by work carried out within a project investigating realization patterns of requests and apologies in a number of different languages. This project is referred to as (CCSARP) which stands for Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (Blum-Kulka &Olshtain, 1984). The languages studied were Hebrew, Danish, British English, American English, German, Canadian, French and Australian English. The same coding scheme was used in the eight languages for the analysis of observed variation in requests and apologies. CCSARP was set up in order to investigate inter- and intra-lingual, situational as well as cross-linguistic variation in the use of these two speech acts.

Request Patterns:

In this section, the various strategy types employed by the Arab learners in their realizations of requests in English will be investigated. Different strategy types are used by the Arab learners in different situations. It is found that the common patterns are: Query Preparatory, Mood Derivable, Want Statements, Hedged Performatives, Direct Request for information, Declarative Conditional Clauses and Hints. In a few examples the subjects opt out. The different patterns used in the four situations are demonstrated in the figures below:
Figure-1: Use of request patterns by learners and native speakers of Arabic and English in the four situations.

The various request patterns used by the respondents who serve in this study are presented below in details:
1. Query Preparatory:

In this strategy, utterance contains reference to preparatory conditions (e.g. ability or willingness, the possibility of the act being performed) as conventionalized in any specific language. This strategy is observed to be used with very high frequency in the four situations in figure-1. The percentages on the table show that the Arab learners of English tend to use the QP strategy nearly as frequent as it is used by the native English speakers. However, it is clearly noticed that Arabs in their L1 production use query preparatory strategy with less frequency. When using L1 in similar acts, they prefer direct strategies (Mood derivable) to the indirect ones. The following examples are from the Arabic-English interlanguage:

1. Please, can you switch on the fan?
2. Could you please switch on the fan?
3. Would you mind switching on the fan?
4. Sorry sir, just can I take a glass of water?
5. Excuse me sir, May I have a glass of water. I feel thirsty.
6. Could you please give me some idea about Indian Universities?
7. Could you please change this order if you don't mind?

The Distribution of Modals:

Arab learners of English tend to use 'can' with high frequency even in situations which require the speaker to be more deferent. In situation-2 “asking the teacher for a glass of water”, ‘can you’ is used in 7.4% and “can I” in 20.8%. On the other hand, the native English group never once use “can you”. The native speakers of English tend to use the speaker perspective strategy instead with “Can I”, however with lower frequency “12.5%” than other modals. This
observation supports the view of Al-Hamzi (1999) who investigated the reason behind the overuse of "can" by Yemeni learners of English.

The other linguistic devices used by Arab learners of English to realize a query preparatory strategy are (could you/I, May you/I, would and will you). They are used with lower frequency than (can). In situation-1, the distribution of occurrence of the modals from high to low is as follows: Can (32.8%), would (19.8%), could (12.7%), May (2.8%) and will (1.4%). The native English speaking group, on the other hand, gives preference to the use of 'could' (43.75%), followed by 'would' (25%) and 'can' is rated the lowest (12.5%); 'may' and 'will' never appear in their data. This comparison indicates that Arab speakers of English randomly select the linguistic devices that realize the speech act of request apparently because they did not receive proper learning of the modals and another reason is that they use English away from the target community, hence the pragmatic failure is likely to occur. This observation applies to both learners of high or low proficiency in English. It appears that learners have a certain limited repertoire of syntactic strategies to express more or less polite directives in the second language. The different types of modals used by the participating groups and their frequency of distribution are shown in the following charts and tables:
Figure-2: Nonnative speakers compared with native speakers in the use of modals in requests in the four request situations
The same observation is found to be repeated in situation-3. Arab learners again show their preference to the use of (can) in 39% of the data followed by (could) 26%, (May) 16%, (would) 13% and (will) 2.9%. The native speakers of English, however, resort to the more polite modal (could) in 37%, followed by the lower one (can) in 24%, then (would) 18.7% and (may) 6.25%. The most significant observation here again is the difference between the native and non-native groups in the preference of the use of (can) and (could). This observation also seems to reconfirm the previous interpretation that Arab users of English in India are not aware of the varying degree of politeness allocated to a given linguistic device.

The correlation between the results in both $S_1$ and $S_3$ is attributed to the type of situation. In both, the informants address students (who belong to the same category) and the favor is minor.

Discussing $S_2$ and $S_4$ results is more interesting. In $S_2$ the non-native group uses Query Preparatory strategy in 69.7% and the native group uses the same pattern in 75%. No significant difference is noticed here. However, when we come to comparing the frequency of distribution of modals, we notice the difference. The Arab learners of English use (can) in 28% of the data, whereas in the native English data, (can) is used in only 12.5% in the speaker-oriented requests. Second observation is that (would) is used by the native group in 31.25%, while the Arabs use it in only 6% of their responses. The over-use of (can) as well as the under-use of (would) again supports the observation made earlier of the pragmalinguistic failure by Arabs to select the appropriate pragmalinguistic devices.

2. Mood Derivable:

In this category, the grammatical mood of the verb in the utterance marks its illocutionary force as a request. Imperatives are the grammatical forms of the utterances of this type. In many cases in English, the imperative signals that the utterance is an order and unmodified form is only supposed to be used by a
speaker who has power over the hearer; otherwise, it can be considered very impolite. In this sense, this strategy is the least preferred means of making a request in English. However in the present study, non-native speakers of English (Arabs here) seem to use this strategy frequently with or without modifying softeners considering it as a proper and efficient way of expressing polite requests. As it is observed in the data (Figure 1) imperatives with softeners are more frequently used by learners when addressing their juniors as well as their equals provided that the situation is not difficult, i.e. when the action desired to be performed by the addressee is a light favor.

- Excuse me. Switch on the fan.
- If you don't mind, please turn on the fan.

Interestingly, the same strategy is also used by Arab learners of English even when they address elder people who enjoy some power over the addressee.

- Please fetch me a glass of water. (to a teacher at his house)

they also use ellipsis for realizing this particular speech act with people of higher position.

- Excuse me sir, Glass of water, please.
- Excuse me. Glass of water please.

In situation 4 (at the restaurant), mood derivables appear with low frequency (3.4%). The examples below show that imperatives are mostly accompanied by softeners to maintain politeness.

- Please change my order.
- Please order for me another dish.
3. **Want/desire/need Statements:**

This category covers statements of speaker's needs, demands, wishes, and desires. Shohana Blum-Kulka and Elite Olshtain (1984) refer to this type as 'Scope stating'. The utterance expresses the speaker's intentions, desire or feeling vis-à-vis the fact that the hearer does X. In Arabic, this strategy is very common in everyday face to face interaction. It is also used by English speakers. In the English inter-language data, this strategy is used in three situations: at the teacher's house, at the restaurant, and to a stranger student in a foreign country.

- Excuse me. I would like to have some information about.....
- Excuse me. I want to know what the best university is.
- May you help me? I want some information about....
- May you help me? I need some help to get.....
- Please my teacher. I want a glass of water.
- Sir I need a cup of water please.
- I want to change my order.
- I would like to change this dish.
- I want to change the order if it is possible.
- I want another dish. Can you do so?

All examples of S2 and S3 are modified forms of want statements. Different types of softeners are used to show deference: *excuse me, modals, please, sir* etc. In the first two examples from S4 no mitigators or softeners are used. Therefore, it can be observed that Arab learners of English have their own
pragmalinguistic devices for sociopragmatic manifestations. The choice of expressions is heavily dependent on the scale of social distance: the higher the scale of social distance, the more deferent the use of a want-statement strategy. In situation-1, this strategy is not used by the E2 learners, perhaps, because the request is addressed to an equal or an inferior addressee and the act that is desired to be performed is not highly costly to the interlocutor. Another shade of interpretation could be that turning the fan on is a very small favor which can be performed within seconds. However, the other actions in S2, S3 and S4 take some time to be worked out and hence the need for using (want-statement strategy) which is appropriate for the action desired.

4. **Hedged Performatives:**

In this category we find utterances embedding the naming of the illocutionary force. In English, hedged performatives are used to soften the bare requests with performative verbs used in order to show politeness. The Arab learners of English use the same strategy in their English inter-language, however, in more specifically selected situations. This strategy figures only in S3 (asking a student-not known- to provide some information about the best university in his/her country).

- I really would like to ask you some help.
- I want to ask you some information.
- I want to ask about……..
- I would like to ask you a question.

In the above four examples "the expression of speaker desire to perform some act is interpretable as a request for permission from the hearer to perform the act. Appropriate hearer response to (the four examples might be sure, go ahead, why not? Be my guest, please do, all of which indicate that the hearer inferred a request for permission", (Bruce Fraser, 1975: 202-203). Such kind of
hedged performatives which play the role of permission-seeking requests are used when both interlocutors don't have close relations. In this case the hearer is not familiar to the speaker.

5. **Existential Questions:**

Using this strategy, the speaker enquires about something he desires to get. These questions are usually accompanied with modifications softening the bareness of existential questions which if they occur alone would not be considered appropriate.

- Do you have any information about....... ?
- Do you know which the best university to join?
- In your opinion, which university should I join?
- What is the best university for this specialization, please?

The direct questions for information are either preceded by “Excuse me” or followed by “Please”. Both modifiers are used to reduce the imposing nature of request.

- I feel thirsty. Is there any water, please?

6. **Declarative Conditional Clause:**

Utterances classified under this category consist of declarative sentences containing conditional clauses. The result is one of the forms of polite requests in English. Consider the following examples:

- Mr. X, I will be grateful if you can provide me with .......
- I wonder if you could help me.
- I wonder if you could tell me about the best Indian university.
This strategy was used by 4.4% of the L2 learners in S3. The low frequency of occurrence of this strategy is a clear indication that it has not been commanded by the learners. The reason behind this may be that the subjects were not exposed to this strategy as much as they were to other categories in the course of L2 acquisition. Native speakers use this strategy in all the four situations with the highest frequency (31.25%) in S2 which requires the highest degree of deference.

7. Hints:

In Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), hints can be either strong or mild. Strong hints are utterances which contain reference to object or to elements needed for the implementation of the act (directly pragmatically implying the acts). Mild hints are utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable through the context as requests (indirectly pragmatically implying the act). Gao Hong (1999) observes that if the hearer has power over the speaker, the latter is usually not confident in making the request. This observation is supported by considering the following illustrative examples from the data of L2 Arab learners of English in S2.

- *I am thirsty sir.*
- *It's hot and I feel thirsty.*
- *The food is good but I think with water it will be very tasty.*
- *It's really a very tasty food, but will be more interesting with a glass of water.*

The speaker is at his/her teacher's house. The teacher has power over the student. In order not to be direct in requesting, the student resorts to giving hints. The above examples seem to be strong hints. The speaker clearly refers to the object needed for the implementation of the act. The word “thirsty” in 1 & 2 and the clauses “I think it will be very tasty with water” and “it will be more
interesting with a glass of water" are strong hints which have to be interpreted by the listener as requests for water.

8. Opting Out:

In some instances in real-life speech situations, speakers decide not to perform speech acts. So they make what Kawska (1988) refers to as “the opting out” choice. This strategic choice is more likely to be made if S is faced with a situation calling for the performance of a highly face threatening act (FTA), Brown and Levinson, (1978). For example, L2 speakers in this study prefer to opt out in three situations, the first situation is (S2), where a student is at his teacher’s house and needs water.

- I will not ask him at all.
- I wouldn’t say anything.

Opting out here results from the difference in social status between S (speaker) & H (hearer). In S-3 the choice of opting out occurs when the L2 learners were asked to request a female student in a foreign country for certain information. The choice of opting out in this case is because of difference in sex. In the Arabs culture; dealing with females is not as open as in the western culture. The two responses below illustrate the argument:

- Actually I don’t like to speak with girls.
- I won’t dare to talk to a female student.

Opting out strategy also appears in S-4. In this situation the respondent (speaker) is supposed to request for changing an order after food has already been served. This action is highly face-threatening to some people, hence they opt out:

- I won’t ask for that.
I would feel shy to change the order.

On the basis of the above presentation of request patterns, it is noticed that the most frequently used strategies are (Query Preparatory., Mood Derivable, and Want Statements) across the three groups. The gap in percentage between the L2 responses and the responses of the British English speakers is very significant in only few cases. For example (Q.P.) strategy is used in 73% of the L2 responses to S-4 and native speakers use it in 50%. The overuse of Q.P. device in S-3&S-4 by L2 can be attributed to insufficient knowledge of various linguistic devices required for the realization of a certain speech act. The very scanty use of (declarative conditional clause strategy) for the realization of requests by the Arab learners of English reinforces this observation. The resources from which the learners acquire English are very limited and hence, they depend upon what they learnt in school or on the easiest strategies available. Another significant difference is observed in strategy-2 (Mood Derivable). In this case 25% of the learners use this strategy for realizing the request speech act in S-1, while only 6.25% of the native speakers use this strategy in the same situation. More elaboration on the interpretation of this observation will be discussed at a later point below.

Request Perspective:

Many request realizations include reference to the requestor ('I' the speaker), the requestee ('you' the hearer) and the action to be performed. The speaker might choose different ways to refer to any of these elements, manipulating by his or her choice the perspective he/she wishes the request to take. For example, the difference between 'could you switch on the fan?' and "could I get a glass of water?" is one of perspective – 'could you' emphasizes the role of the hearer in the speech event, while "could I" stresses that of the speaker. In requests, it is usually the hearer who is 'under threat'. Any avoidance in naming the addressee as the principal performer of the act serves to soften the impact of the imposition. Shohana Blum-Kulka and Elite Olshtain (1984) call this
dimension of the analysis *request perspective* and distinguish between: (a) hearer oriented, (b) speaker oriented, (c) speaker and hearer oriented and (d) impersonal.

The analysis of English native speakers' and learners' requests in four situations shows that the two groups differ from each other in their choice of perspective. This analysis is presented in figure (3) below:

*H.P=hearer-perspective & S.P=speaker perspective

**Figure-3: Use of hearer- and speaker-perspective by native subjects and learners**

In asking a junior student to turn on the fan (situation-1), both groups use mostly hearer oriented requests, but the proportion of this type is smaller by 21% from that of the native speakers. The interpretation for this difference is that Arab learners of English tend to use Mood Derivable strategy where no pronoun occurs in the surface structure to indicate the perspective, though it is clear from the imperative form of the request that perspective is hearer oriented.

In requesting a teacher to serve his student some water while the later is
visiting the former at his house (S-2), there are very few hearer-oriented requests in the learner's data and not even a single response in the native speaker's data which is hearer oriented. Both groups prefer the speaker-oriented requests and to avoid reference to the teacher as the performer of the requested act is to minimize imposition.

In asking for information on best universities in a foreign country, both groups use mostly hearer oriented requests. However, learners use speaker-oriented requests in 20% of the responses and the native speakers in only 6% of the data. This means that Arab learners of English seem to feel less free to directly impose on people not known to them, though both are socially equal. In S-4 (requesting for order change), learners use more hearer-oriented requests (38%) than native speakers do (6%). On the other hand native speakers use more speaker-oriented requests (37%) than learners (28%). This analysis indicates that Arabs seem to feel more free to directly impose on waiters and restaurant staff. Impersonal requests appear with very low frequency of distribution only in S-4.

- **Please, is there any possibility of changing this dish?**

Figure-3 shows that native as well as non-native speakers of English opt for hearer-oriented requests when the addressee is of equal or lower status to the speaker as in S-1, S-3 and S-4. On the other hand when the addressee is higher in status than the speaker, speaker-oriented requests are preferred as, in S-2. However it is noticed that Arabs in their English use hearer-oriented requests in 21% of the responses and speaker-oriented requests in 45% (native speakers in 87%). The difference in proportion between native speakers and non-native speakers is an indication of pragmatic failure resulting from importing the overuse of impersonal perspective (want statements) in the Arabic data to the interlanguage. In addition to the 21% responses in which the perspective is hearer-oriented, some verbs that lexically express hearer's perspective are also used in 7% of the responses of the Arab learners of English. These verbs appear
in mitigated imperative requests. The use of the imperative mode, though mitigated is itself an indication of hearer-oriented perspective. Consider the following examples:

- Please give me a glass of water and I am very sorry if I disturb you.
- Please fetch me a glass of water.

Thus, Arabs feel more free to use hearer-oriented requests to produce even highly face threatening acts.

Internal Modifications:

Internal modifications are elements of the head act which play the role of either mitigators or aggravators of a speech act. They can be hedges or politeness markers. In this section, the various elements used by Arab learners to soften their requests will be discussed. These elements or devices are mostly lexical ones (such as please, sorry, sir), some clauses also used as softeners which are typical of the learners interlanguage, like pardon me, if you don't mind and excuse me which are commonly used by both groups with some difference in distribution and frequency. Different types of internal modifications used by the groups in the four request situations are analyzed in the following sections:

1. Please:

"Please" is a formulaic adjunct used as a marker of courtesy in all varieties of English (Mehrotra, 1995:101). According to Wichmann (2002): "the close association of "please" with requests has led some to define it as an illocutionary marker rather than as a politeness marker. However, since its omission makes a request less courteous rather than less like a request, its function is, at least to some extent, to convey interpersonal, attitudinal meaning and not only to act as a discourse marker". "Please" can occur in initial, medial and final position, as in:

- "Please" could you "please" turn the fan on "please"?
There may be no particular syntactic constraints on "please". However, there does seem to be a strong pragmatic constraint restricting the speech act with which it can co-occur. For example, "Please" occurs when what is being requested is a minimal imposition on the hearer (such as passing the salt at table). In situations where the imposition is greater and/or the rights and obligations of the participants are not self-evident, "please" does not occur, (Wichmann, 2002). On the basis of this fact the use of "please" by the Arabs non-native speakers of English in Indian context will be discussed in detail.

Arab learners use "please" in most of the types of request strategies.

- Please, switch on the fan. It's really hot in here.
- Could I get a glass of water please?
- I need your help please.
- I feel thirsty. Is there any water, please?

The figure below shows the frequency of distribution of "please" across the two groups: Arabs learners and British English native speakers.

Figure-4: Use of "please" in different positions in head acts by both learners and native group
The figure mainly presents the occurrence of “please” in different positions i.e. utterance initially, medially and finally. Significantly, there is a difference in the positions in which “please” occurs across the native and non-native groups. In situation 1, for example, “please” is used initially in 32% of the learners’ requests, whereas the native speakers use it mostly utterance finally (in 56%) of the data. The preference for the final position by native speakers is explained as follows. Native speakers use Q.P. strategy in S1 in 87% of the responses. Query Preparatory patterns are indirect requests. According to Wichmann (2002), indirect requests have great tendency to use “please” in final position. That the Arab non-native speakers of English in this study prefer using “please” in initial position may have two explanations: (1) their tendency to use mitigated imperatives in S1 and (2) transferring from Arabic where they usually prefer the equivalent of “please” in Arabic (law samaht) in initial position. As for the first interpretation the tendency to use “please” in initial position in imperatives is common to both native speakers and learners. The difference in proportion between both groups is not significant in S2. The learners’ use of “please” with higher frequency than the native speakers in S3 and S4 is an indication of the unawareness of pragmatic constraints on the use of the formula in requests. According to (Stubbs 1983:71): “It can occur only with a sentence which is interpretable as a request, but cannot co-occur with statements, promises, offers, invitations and so on.” It has also been observed that please co-occurs only with certain kinds of requests, such as occur in situations in which the rights and obligations of participants are clear. This means that please typically occurs, for example, in service encounters, where the right to ask for something and the obligation to give it is inherent in the event. It also occurs when what is being requested is a minimal imposition on the hearer (such as passing the salt at table). In situations where the imposition is greater and/or the rights and obligations of the participants are not self-evident, please does not occur, (Anne Wichmann, 2002). Fukushima, (1990:322) states that learners usually “want to be polite by adding please but adding please to a request may imply sarcasm in English”. According to Tsuruta, et al. (1988:99), “when please is added to a
request that means “I am in a position to order this to you”, or “you cannot decline this request”. Adding please makes a sentence more polite when used with a command or with a direction, but not with a request. Arab learners’ perception is that any type of request should be accompanied by “please”. In many cases, particularly when it occurs utterance-initially, its function is an attention getter. This pragmalinguistic function given to “please” by Arab learners is a result of transfer from Arabic. “Please” is understood by many of the learners to be an equivalent to (law samaht) which is used in Arabic with double functions: (1) politeness marker, and (2) attention getter or conversation opener. It can also indicate the illocutionary force of an utterance.

2. If Clause:

Arabs in some situations tend to use another internal modifier starting with “if” and which can occur either as an equivalent to or having the same function of softening a request like “please”: “If clause”, pragmatically functions as a hedge on the force of the speech act.

- If you don't mind, switch the fan on.

The head act which carries the illocutionary force in this example is (switch the fan on.) The “if clause” functions here as a mitigating hedge which makes the act of requesting less face threatening or changes the imperative into a request.

They also use this expression along with please to minimize coerciveness.

- If you don't mind, please turn on the fan.

This softener is not commonly used by native speakers of English. Thus it seems to be a transfer from Arabic.

The softening expression “if you don’t mind” and the like are usually used with high frequency when potentiality of denial or objection exists. For example,
in situation 4 the waiter may not accept changing the order and to minimize the imposition the requester uses: "if it is possible, if you can, if you don't mind" which may evoke the listener's compliance.

- If you don't mind, can I change my order?
- I want to change the order if it is possible.
- If you don't mind, I'd like to have ...... instead.

Arab learners in their English inter-language use such softeners utterance initially as well as finally.

3. **Sorry/Pardon me:**

The softening device (sorry/ pardon me) was used by the learners in situation-2 only, as it is considered the most face threatening act in this study on requests.

- Sorry my dear teacher, I need little water.
- Thank you for this food. Now I am very thirsty. Please give me a glass of water and I am sorry if I disturb you.
- Pardon me. Could you please give me a glass of water?
- Excuse me sir, can you bring some water because I am thirsty. And sorry for troubling you.

Respondents did not use apology expressions in S1 and S3 because imposition is not great. In both situations, the favor asked is simple and the addressee is of equal social status. Ellen Rintell (1981: 19) in a study on requests and suggestions in English by Spanish learners states that: "'I am sorry' functions here as a conversational opening, much like 'excuse me'. At the same time, it might be interpreted as an elliptical form of, or an attempt to convey the
effect of, 'I'm sorry to disturb you, but......"or 'I'm sorry to be asking this of you', which would serve to acknowledge the possible imposition of the request that follows". The difference between native speakers and learners in the use of sorry/pardon lies in the length of utterance as well as its position within the utterance. Learners use full form of 'sorry' rather than elliptical form which is a characteristic of learners' language length of utterance. (Blum Kulka, (1986: 175). So far as position is concerned, "sorry" in the full form usually occurs either utterance initially or finally. In the data on requests collected from the native speakers, "sorry" was not used in S2. Some researchers say that the use of sorry in some requests can be rude rather than polite. Fukushima (1990: 323) describes this phenomenon as used by Japanese learners of English as follows: "In Japanese this (I'm sorry) is used as a softener of a request. Most of the Japanese subjects used "I'm sorry", before making a request, such as, "I'm sorry, but can I borrow some of your money to pay for my lunch? I left my wallet at home". When "sorry", meaning "I'm sorry to trouble you" is used with a request, it sounds rude. An example of this situation is, "It's a bit cold, isn't it? Sorry, could you shut the window?" this is rude, because the addresser has already decided that the addressee would accept the addressee's request (Tsuruta et al., 1988: 107). The problem encountered here relates to some transfers from Japanese". The same interpretation can be applied to the use of "sorry" by Arab learners. It can be concluded that one of the features of English inter-language of Arabs is the use of "sorry" functioning as either conversational opening or a remedial expression.

4. **Excuse me:**

Excuse me can be defined as a formula to remedy an immediately forthcoming breach of etiquette or other light infraction of a social rule on the part of the speaker. In many request situations, "excuse me" is used as a conversational opening along with other formulas like *hay, please, greeting,* etc. In the data of this study, native speakers use "excuse me" in two situations out of four, S1 (12.5%) and S3 (37%). In S1 the native group use varieties of
conversational openings along with "excuse me". For example they use (mate, name of the addressee, and hey) attention getters. The use of such conversational ‘openings by native speakers in S1 indicates the degree of closeness between speaker and listener. In S3 only, (excuse me) is used to open a conversation. Although the addressee is a student, informal attention getters are not used because the addressee is not known to the speaker. In S2, (excuse me) is not used by native speakers, perhaps because there is no conversational opening required as the interaction is already in progress and something cropped up (the need of water) in the course of conversation. On the other hand, the Arab learners, used (excuse me) in the beginning of the four request situations (S1-30%, S2-25%, S3-41% and S4-30%). The difference in percentage between the native and non-native group is very significant in two situations (S1 & S2). In S1 the difference can be explained pragmalinguistically. The learners do not have in their linguistic repertoire any other expressions to draw the attention of others except (excuse me) which they learnt in school. They use it with different types of addressees. So far as S2 is concerned, learners use (excuse me) in 25% of the data. In this situation, conversation is already on, hence no need for using any conversation opening. Explanations as to why learners use it in the middle of a conversation can be that they were taught in school that a request must be preceded by (excuse me) irrespective of when and where it occurs. Here it may also function as a minimizer of the forthcoming imposition. Requests and other speech acts are not introduced to students in schools in sufficient contextual situations. They are mostly presented as individual utterances with very little elaboration. In S3 and S4 there is no significant difference in percentage between the two groups. The learners appropriately use (excuse me) in S3 and S4 as a conversational opening and an attention getter respectively. In these two situations, conversation cannot start abruptly without any introduction and hence the use of (excuse me).

5. Sir:

"Sir" is an honorific address form. It is a softener which is used by learners.
in requests to acknowledge the superior status of the addressee or show deference to him/ her. The term “Sir” did not occur in the native speakers data in any of the four situations. However, Arab learners use it in 48.5% of the responses to S2 but not in any other situation. There is no equivalent to “Sir” in Arabic in its common sense and in English (American) “it is primarily an index of solidarity or rather its absence”, (Mehrotra, 1995:104). So it is neither a case of transfer from Arabic nor from English. The addressee in S2 is a teacher who has power over his guest (a student) and in a higher status. It seems that it is a case of transfer from the Indian variety of English. “In India the usage of “Sir” falls under the domain of the power semantic” (Zimmerman, 1981:16). Pride (1982) pointed out that: “(Sir) is commonly used by public servants such as railway ticket collectors, workers in shops and department stores, and clerks at office counters to show their readiness to serve the customers”. Apart from this type of use”, Pride elaborates, “the term sir” does normally indicate superior status”. However, the paradox here in situation (S2) is that ‘sir’ is used not to show readiness to serve; rather it is addressed to some one of superior status who is asked to serve or arrange for serving water. Native speakers of English in such situations opt for using speaker-perspective requests to minimize the risk of imposition and do not necessarily use ‘sir’ to indicate the superior status of the addressee. The style they follow in framing requests in such situations does not imply the need of physical involvement of the addressee. So they are highly speaker-oriented. Consider the examples listed below from the native speakers of British English data:

- *Is it alright if I could have a glass of water, please?*
- *Do you mind if I go and get myself a glass of water?*

Learners on the other hand, transferring from Indian English, use “Sir” more frequently than in British English. It usually follows (excuse me). Take the following examples:

- *Excuse me sir, glass of water please.*
• *Sir, can I have a glass of water, please?*

To conclude discussion on this point, "Sir" is overused by Arab learners to show respect, to indicate superiority, to open conversation, and to minimize imposition. This variation in functions of "Sir" may not exist in the standard varieties of English. New pragmatic functions have been added to the term as a result of being used in a non-native context.

**Politeness in Inter-language Requests:**

In this section requests will be used to examine the notion of politeness and politeness strategies in the field of second language acquisition. So far, most of the studies devoted to investigating politeness have been oriented towards examining the concept in the performance of adult L1 speakers. The interesting aspect of this study lies in that, the subjects who have served as informants are exposed to their own language and culture, to the Indian society and culture with the languages spoken as well as to the English language which definitely carries many inherent elements of the western culture. Therefore, it is expected that the performance of the learners in English would result in a variety of language with unique features.

In the field of second language acquisition, the learner’s pragmatic knowledge, notably politeness, has been investigated by some researchers on the basis of the analysis of production data (cf. Fraser, Rintell, and Walters, 1980, Rintell, 1979, Scarcella, 1980, Walters, 1980).

Before coming into the details of examining the learners performance of requests in English with view of highlighting the linguistic phenomenon of politeness a theoretical introduction will first be presented in a nutshell so that the coming discussion will become easy to understand.

As elaborated in (chapter-1), the early work on politeness was done by Goffman (1967), followed by Lakoff (1972, 1973, 1976, 1977), Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) and then Leech (1983). The most thorough treatment of
the concept of politeness is that of Brown and Levinson (1987). They argue that there are two forms of politeness: **positive politeness** and **negative politeness**. Positive politeness strategies are attempts by a speaker to treat the listener as a friend or as some one to be included in discourse. They are communicative ways of building solidarity, showing that the other is liked and seen as desirable. Negative politeness, on the other hand, is an attempt by the speaker to save the listener's face by engaging in some formality or restraint. Brown and Levinson propose that politeness arises when there is a face-threatening act (FTA). They identify five levels of strategies that potentially threaten the face of the involved parties in an interactive situation. These levels are referred to as superstrategies. They are arranged from most threatening to least threatening as follows:

- Do the FTA baldly on record
- Do the FTA on record with positive politeness.
- Do the FTA on record with negative politeness.
- Do the FTA off record.
- Don't do the FTA.

Brown and Levinson's hierarchical arrangement of the strategies is based on the extent to which they threaten the hearer's face. The most threatening strategy is performing the act bald on record (e.g., wash the dishes), and the least threatening linguistic strategy is performing the FTA off record, i.e., indirectly as a hint (e.g., I wonder if we have clean dishes.) Falling in between these two extremes are on record FTAs, which adopt either of two kinds of redressive action: positive politeness emphasizing solidarity with the hearer (e.g., How about washing the dishes for us?), and negative politeness, emphasizing distance by accentuating the hearer's right to freedom from imposition (e.g., Could you do the dishes?).

The selection of one of these superstrategies is determined by three social
factors, namely **Distance** (D), between the **speaker** (S) and the **hearer** (H) or **power** (P) of H over S or **Risk** (R) of imposition in a given culture. They are also called politeness determinants.

In what follows, the correlation between these three sociological variables and the politeness strategies selected by Arab learners of English will be examined on a set of four request situations. The realization of politeness strategies in L2 will be compared and contrasted with the politeness strategies as realized in Arabic L1 by the same subjects and also in English as produced by the English native speakers group.

**Politeness determinants and politeness strategies in inter-language requests:**

As mentioned above, politeness determinants are D, P and R. (D) is the value that measures the social distance between S (speaker) and H (hearer), P is a measure of the power that H has over S and R is a value that measures the degree to which the FTA is rated an imposition in a given culture. All three dimensions contribute to the seriousness of an FTA, and thus to a determination of the level of politeness.

In the present study, four request speech acts which vary in the ratings of D, P and R are examined. In situation-1 (a student asks another junior student to switch the fan on), D, P and R seem to be described as **(Low)** because both students seem to be in the same department, no power of S over H and the risk is not high as the action desired to be done by the hearer is a simple one; situation2 is a request made by a student to his teacher. The student is at his teacher's house and wants some water to be served. Here, D seems to be **low** as both S and H know each other, P appears high because the teacher definitely has power over the student. However, R in this situation can be given **low** ratings. The task of bringing water to a guest (whosoever) at your house is a minor thing and in the Arab culture, a guest has to be treated as a boss. In situation-3 both P and R can be rated as **Low**. The request is addressed to a
student by another student. The risk is not high because it is not a highly imposing act to ask another student, even a stranger, to give some of his time to reply to an information question. What could be given high rating in this situation is the distance \( D \) between \( S \) and \( H \). \( H \) is not known to \( S \). In the last situation the speaker (a customer) asks the hearer (waiter) to change the food served simply because he has changed mind and desires another. \( D \) value is high as no familiarity between \( S \) and \( H \); \( P \) seems to be low but \( R \) is supposed to be high. It is very imposing to ask for changing the food served simply because of mind change. The food you ask is usually prepared for you and it may not be ordered by any other customer. That would result in a loss to the restaurant owner.

The presentation below of the politeness super-strategies will focus on testing which of the three variables is really more effective than others in triggering the highest level of politeness.

**On Record Softened Requests:**

Situation-1 where the three determinants are rated as (low) is expected to trigger the greatest number of direct requests. So 25% of the learners responses have used imperatives softened by *please brother, if you don't mind* and *excuse me*.

- *Please, switch on the fan.*
- *If you don't mind, please turn on the fan.*

When this observation is compared with what happens in the case of both native groups of English and Arabic, it is found that English native speakers do not prefer directness even in such situation. The softened imperative is used in only 6% of the data, with three softeners:

- *Jack, do me a favour and just turn the fan on please.*

English people don't prefer using imperatives in framing requests. It is
argued that “English seems to have developed a particularly rich system of devices reflecting a characteristically Anglo-Saxon cultural tradition: a tradition which places special emphasis on the rights and on the autonomy of every individual, which abhors interference in other people’s affairs (it is none of my business), which is tolerant of individual idiosyncrasies and peculiarities, which respects every one’s privacy, which approves of compromises and disapproves of dogmatism of any kind.” Wierzbicka (1985: 150). In English, the imperative is mostly used in commands and in orders. To minimize the degree of imposition on others English people resort to indirect strategies.

The explanation as to why Arab learners of English tend to use the softened imperative in some request situations becomes clear when we look into their performance in their mother tongue, Arabic. In the Arabic data elicited from the same Arab participants in this study, softened imperatives are used in 68% of the responses to S (1). In Arabic, imperatives are common and favored among close interactants. Using interrogative directives can be offensive. In the Arabic culture the emphasis is on society more than on individuals. Using imperatives among close friends/people is a sign of solidarity. However, the rich use of lexical pragmatic indicators which are lacking in English in similar situations shows that Arabs are highly sensitive and caring of the hearer's negative face. This argument becomes clear when we look into the expressions which modify the head act and occur either before or after it, such as: *law tismah*/*law samaht* (if you allow me to request), *afwan* (sorry for disturbing you), *itha maa fi mane’* (if you have no objection), *itha takarramt* (if you are generous enough), *min fidhlak* (out of your kindness), *wa law su adab* (though it is rude/impolite), *uthran ma’ ihtirami*; (sorry with my respect to you), etc. All these expressions mitigate and soften the bareness of the imperative mood of the request. This observation contradicts the assertions made by Clark and Schunk (1980: 111) that: “When people make requests, they tend to make them indirectly. They generally avoid imperatives like *Tell me the time*, which are direct requests in preference for questions like *can you tell me the time?* Or assertions like “I’m trying to find out what time it is;” which are indirect requests”. According to
Wierzbicka (1985) “It is not people in general who behave in the way described, it is the speakers of English”. Therefore the interpretation of the use of imperative requests in 25% of the Arab learners’ data can be attributed to transferring Arabic norms into their English performance.

Softened imperatives again appear in situation-2 where it can never be imagined to be used in such a situation by English native speakers. The situation requires high degree of politeness because the request here is addressed by a student to his teacher. The P value is rated as very high which triggers high degree of respect, Arab learners of English, however, use the imperative device in only three responses out of seventy. Quantitatively, the observation may not be significant; however, it is significant in qualitative terms. This strategy can be used in this situation and it has some degree of appropriateness provided that it is accompanied by some mitigating devices.

- Thank you for this food. Now I am very thirsty. Please give me a glass of water, and I am very sorry if I disturb you.
- Please fetch me a glass of water.

The first example is a direct transfer from Arabic. Similar requests can be used in Arabic. It contains three speech acts with the request sandwiched between the speech act of expressing gratitude (thank you for this food) and an apology speech act (sorry if I disturb you). Due to the great risk of imposing on a teacher, the imperative is not softened by lexical items only, rather by concomitant speech acts. The second example cited above illustrates a case of pragmatic failure. The same utterance is neither appropriate in English nor in Arabic. In such situations, English favors highly indirect request and in Arabic either a greater number of softeners should be used or the request should be in the interrogative form starting with (mumkin) (Is it possible) and accompanied by other softeners. Intonation plays a great role in determining the illocutionary force and politeness of Arabic requests in the imperative mood. The following examples show how softened imperatives are used in Arabic in this situation:
• *ustathi law takarramt i'ti:ni kas maa*.

My teacher, if your generosity permits, give me a glass of water.

Such expression (if your generosity permits) evokes the value of generosity in the hearer which is a salient feature of the Arabic society, when such value is evoked, the hearer has to comply.

In situation-3 imperatives do not appear to be used. The distance value seems to be the main reason behind avoiding directness in this situation. The hearer (H) is unfamiliar to S which requires S to avoid threatening H’s negative face at the first encounter. Requesting H to provide S with some information about the best university in his country results in wasting some of his time (cost) for the(benefit) of the speaker, hence, imposition has to be minimized and the face threat has to be redressed by using indirect linguistic devices. In the data of the English native speakers no imperatives are used and in the Arabic data imperative requests are used in only two responses out of sixty which is not a significant percentage. So, it can be concluded that in both Arabic and English (D) value highly effects the selection of the politeness strategy.

Let us move to situation-4. In this situation “a customer at a restaurant wants to change the food he has already ordered and it has been served”. It is an embarrassing situation because it contains 2Hs: D is high and R is also high. The customer has no power over the waiter. The situation is face threatening to both S and H. S does not want to be embarrassed and H cannot be coerced. The situation calls for apology first and this speech act is examined in chapter-6 on apologies. It also calls for issuing a redressed directive which is our interest here. In the learners data softened imperatives appear in 10% of the responses as in the following:

• *Please change this order if you don’t mind*.

Framing the request this way is a direct transfer from Arabic. In such situation a request in the imperative mood can appropriately occur. However it is
not very common (10%) and the interrogative form is preferred. In the Arabic society risk of imposition in such situation is high. However in the English society, it is higher, hence no imperatives are used in the English of the native speakers but requests of complex structure in the interrogative form. The use of two softeners in the above example signifies the recognition of H's freedom from restraint, “Please” changes the command into a request and “if you don't mind” plays the role of minimizing coerciveness. It functions pragmatically as a hedge on the force of the speech act. The combination of such if clauses with a direct or indirect request is one of the standard ways of polite requesting in Arabic.

Negative Politeness Strategies:

1. Ellipsis:

Under this heading, I argue against Brown and Levinson (1987) that the use of ellipsis in making requests is only a positive politeness strategy. Arab learners of English make use of elliptical requests in only two responses. Although it seems insignificant, it is noteworthy to discuss this observation with reference to Arabic. Let us first see the learners' examples:

- *Excuse me sir. Glass of water please.*
- *Excuse me. Glass of water please.*

Such examples appear only in S2 (student-teacher situation). English native speakers never use such technique in this situation. Arabs, however, use it in their first language in 17% of the data. In the two examples above, English learners use three pragmatic softeners in the first example (excuse me, sir, please) and two in the second (excuse me and please). These indicators support my argument that the request utterances in these examples are negatively polite. They are redressive techniques to negative face. The two examples, in question, illustrate a transfer case from Arabic to English. In Arabic ellipsis can be used in requesting for goods. The following examples are taken from S2 responses in Arabic:
These strategies of making requests are socially appropriate in the Arabic culture. Although the head act (a glass of water) is a very direct one, the use of the modifiers before and after the head act play a very essential role in face-risk minimization.

Summing up, the use of softened imperatives and ellipsis in the inter-language requests by the Arab learners of English is a result of transfer from Arabic whose speakers tend to be more direct in many request situations than the native speakers of English.

2- Don’t Coerce H/ Conventional Indirectness:

This strategy is either made by questioning H’s readiness/ preparedness/ willingness/ ability to do the desired act (can you, would you ...?) or by asserting that S wants/ would like something or wants/ would like H to do an act for him. In many contexts, such speech acts are conventionalized to the extent that there
can be no doubt about what is meant. This is one of the negative face-redressive
techniques used when the proposed FTA involves predicating an act of H
(requesting). For such FTA, negative face redress may be made by avoiding
coercing H’s response. This is done by giving H the option not to do the act. This
major strategy produces:

- The subordinate want to be conventionally indirect,
- The subordinate want (don’t assume H is willing/able to do A.)
- "Be pessimistic" strategy which involves S assuming H is not likely to do
  A.

The use of this strategy and its sub-strategies is prominent in the English
inter-language of Arab learners across the four request situations in this study.
Here, I delve into the details of the sub-strategies as used by the subjects giving
illustrative examples and interpretations.

A- Conventionally indirect requests in the interrogative form:

This sub-strategy is obviously preferred by the learners group across the
four situations (72%, 69%, 95% and 70%) and also favored in both Arabic (33%,
25%, 40%, and 61%) and English native data (88%, 81%, 93% and 56%).

However, there is a significant statistical difference between the three
types of data, particularly between the learners group performance in English
and their performance in Arabic except in S4 where the statistical difference is
not so significant. In S1, S2 and S3 learners are closer to the native-speakers
group of English. The difference is minor which imply positive transfer from
English, and hence learners’ requests are felicitous to a great extent. It was clear
that in using the on-record softened imperative requests, learners were under the
impact of their L1. However, in the case of selecting conventionally indirect
requests successfully, learners seem to be under the impact of their English
educational background as they learnt in schools that requests are framed only in
the interrogative form. When we delve into the details of the face-redressive techniques used by learners in their indirect requests in the interrogative form we can observe that there are some pragmatic failures, if looked into from the English perspective. These pragmatic failures are presented below in detail:

i. The Over-Use of “can”:

A remarkable feature of the interlanguage of Arab learners of English is the overuse of the modal “can” in requests. The table below shows that in the four request situations “can” is used with higher frequency (32.8%, 28% ,39% and 38%) than the other modals (could, would and may). The English native speakers, on the contrary, preferred (could in S1 (43%) and S3 (37%) and would in S2 (31%) and S4 (31%). Tanaka and Kawade (1982-83:18) pointed out that: “interrogative requests (could, would + you + VP [-stative]) sound more idiomatic, more indirect and hence more polite than their can/will counterparts”. So far as the overuse of “can” strategy by learners is concerned the explanation below by Al-Hamzi (1999:155,156) provides an attempt to the interpretation of this deviation. Although the observation made by him concerns the interlanguage of the Yemeni learners of English, the same can be said about the group of Arab learners of English in India who belong to five Arab states including Yemenis. Al-Hamzi pointed out that: “We found out that this strategy (‘can’ strategy) had a strong equivalence in Arabic which functioned as a pragmalinguistic device for making conventional requests. The Arabic request formula mumkin expressing possibility and ability served as typical pragmalinguistic equivalence to the English can. Hence can has the potentiality of being carried out by YALE into English .One might argue that since there are other linguistic devices in English other than can for expressing possibility (i.e. could, is it possible to and might), the equivalence to mumkin in English can be any one of them, but not necessarily can .There are, in fact, other factors that make can the only possible equivalence of the Arabic mumkin. First the Arabic mumkin – if used as requesting formula - has to be in the present tense, thus excluding could .On the other hand, may is not a strong candidate to be the equivalence to mumkin
because *may* expresses possibility but not ability. *Can* obviously stands a greater chance because it is more economical than *Is it possible* and is more frequently used as a request than *Is it possible* “After carrying out a verification experiment, Al-Hamzi, concluded that the overuse of *can* by Yemeni learners of English is attributed to the existence of its strong equivalence in Arabic which indicates a clear example of pragmalinguistic transfer. The following examples are cited to illustrate the point:

- Excuse me brother, can you switch on the fan?
- *Wa law su adab, mumkin tiftah almanwahah?*
- Sir can I have a glass of water, please?
- *Law samht ya ustathi mumkin tisqeeni kasah mayah?*
- Please can you change the order?
- *Hal min al-imkan taghyeer attalab?*

The observation of Al-Hamzi on the overuse of ‘*can*’ is corroborated in this study by comparing the frequency of occurrence of “*can*” in the learners’ data and that of “*mumkin*” in the Arabic data as shown in the figure below:
In addition to what is noticed by Al-Hamzi, this study reveals that the pragmalinguistic device “mumkin” in Arabic is highly productive and can occur in different forms and these various forms carry the meaning of “Is it possible?/ Is there any possibility” ..... ? If it is possible ..... ? So in addition to “mumkin” there are also the following derived forms:

*Fi imkaniah, hal min almumkin, biimkanak,* (usually occur utterance initially) and *in amkan, itha kan mumkin* (usually occur utterance finally). All these forms carry the same illocutionary force of “mumkin”: asking about possibility as well as ability. It is also important to note that “mumkin” plays same role played by *can, could, would* and *may* in English. This can provide another interpretation to the overuse of “can”. Other words like *fi majal, tigdir* etc. bear the same meaning of *mumkin* and pragmatically, they play the role of minimizing the threat posed by the face-threatening act of requesting .They convey the meaning that the act desired is not coercive but depends on the willingness and ability of the hearer .

The high frequency of occurrence of “mumkin” indicates that indirectness in Arabic requests is commonly preferred along with softened imperatives. It is a
pragmalinguistic indicator that plays a great role in minimizing the threat to the H's negative face.

ii- Deviation in Stating Perspective:

In English, when requesting somebody of an equal or lower status to do an action and the risk of imposition is not great, speakers don't hesitate to choose hearer-perspective directives naming the hearer as the performer of the requested act. However, they seem to feel less free to directly impose on their equals.

- *Could you lend me your notes?*
- *Mate, could you turn the fan on?*
- *Excuse me. Could you help me with some information about universities here? I'm really stuck about choosing.*
- *Would you mind changing my order, please?*

Arab learners of English in the present research seem to agree with the native speakers of English in stating hearer-oriented requests in S1 and S3, where no statistically significant difference is observed. Take the following examples from the learners' data.

- *Would you please switch on the fan?*
- *Excuse me gentleman, would you tell me about the best Indian universities?*
- *Please can you change the order?*

Though both the groups mostly agree on the choice of perspective in S1 and S3, they disagree in the selection of perspective in S2 and S4. In S2, learners choose hearer oriented requests in 21% of the data while the English
native speakers never once use this perspective in this situation. They resort to speaker-oriented requests (87%). This statistical difference is highly significant and requires interpretation. It seems, here, that the social variable P is the reason behind this significant difference. Unlike S2 and S4, the addressee here is higher in status and to soften the impact of the imposition, English native speakers show reluctance in referring directly to the teacher as the performer of the requested act. Consider the following examples from English as a first language:

- I was wondering if it is not too much trouble if I may have a drink.
- Could I get a glass of water please?
- Would it be alright if I went to the kitchen and got a glass of water?
- May I ask for a glass of water?

These examples indicate the high degree of indirectness involved in producing highly face-threatening requests in English.

Turning to the performance of the learners in this situation we obviously notice a high degree of directness in stating the hearer-oriented perspective. Hearer-oriented requests are used in about one third of the data.

- Sir, would you please give me a glass of water?
- Sir, could you give me a glass of water?
- Excuse me sir. Would you bring a glass of water please?

The selection of this perspective by learners can be traced back to what they say in their mother-tongue. It has already been mentioned that in the Arabic data for situation-2, imperatives are used in 6% of the responses and conventionalized indirect requests occur in 30% responses which if translated into English, the pronoun “you” stands out either (implicitly) (as in imperatives) or
explicitly (in conventionalized indirect requests). In Arabic, hidden second person pronoun (agent) inherently, implicitly accompanies the imperative forms and the conventionalized requests as in the following instance:

- *Ustathi alqadeer, law tikarramt, i’tini kawb maa.*
- My respected teacher, if you be generous enough, give me a glass of water.
- *Law samaht ya ustathi mumkin tisqeeni kasat mayyah lianni atshan kathir.*
- Please/ if you have no objection my teacher, is it possible/ can you give me water? I am very thirsty.

In S4, learners tend to use hearer-oriented requests in 38% of the responses, whereas English native speakers use it in only one of the responses. Native speakers prefer choosing speaker perspective requests. The risk of imposition (R) seems to be the determining factor this time. In the English society, requesting for changing an order at a restaurant after the food is served seems to be of great risk. This observation will be supported strongly when we discuss the politeness strategy (don’t do the FTA) below. The examples below indicate a high degree of indirectness in requesting for changing the order by the English native speakers.

- *Is it too late to change my order?*
- *Would it be possible to change the order?*
- *Would you mind if I change my order?*

Arab learners of English, on the other hand, are less indirect in making requests in situation-4. The high frequency of hearer-oriented requests is one evidence, and the use of imperative forms in 8% of the data is the other. Consider the following examples from the interlanguage data.
• Could you please change this order?

• Could you please change this order, if you don't mind?

Again, here, the reason behind the less degree of indirectness compared to that of the native speakers in this situation, is that the risk seems to be rated of lower value in the Arab culture, hence this social pragmatic perception is transferred to the learners performance in English. Arabs do not consider changing the order a big deal. It is not as imposing as in the English culture and, thus, referring to the addressee as the principal performer of the act is not highly face-threatening.

B- Conventionally Indirect Requests in the Declarative Assertive Form:

Want statements are the second type of conventionally indirect requests. Their illocutionary force is understandable. They are less indirect than the conventional requests in the interrogative form. In a study by Blum-kulka (1987) tapping native speakers perceptions of politeness and indirectness in Hebrew and English, want statements were rated in a directness scale as belonging to most direct group and interrogatives (Query preparatory) to the less direct group. English learners group in the present study use the assertive requests (I want, I would like ……) in S2, S3 and S4 with varying degree of frequency (7%, 14% and 11% respectively). When the use of this strategy by learners is compared to the native data in both languages, it is noticed that there is a greater tendency of using this strategy in Arabic (26%, 31%, 23%) than in English (0%, 0%, 25%). These percentages suggest the following significant indications:

(1) The greater tendency of Arabs towards directness.

(2) The greater tendency of English towards indirectness.

(3) Arab learners of English carry the element of directness in their English performance; hence they transfer assertive requests into English, with higher frequency. The following examples from the interlanguage data
may illustrate the point:

S2  • *Please my teacher, I want a glass of water.*

• *Sir, I need a cup of water please.*

S3  • *I want from you to provide me with some information about the best universities here.*

S4  • *I would like to take another dish not this one. Would you mind changing it?*

• *I want to change the order if it is possible.*

The examples from S2 and S3 would seem odd if used in the English community as people there prefer higher degree of indirectness in such situations. It is interesting to note that in S4 learners refrain to use this strategy as frequently as used in the two native data sets: Arabic (23%) and English (25%). Learners use this strategy in only 15% of the responses. The reason behind this lower tendency may be that learners prefer to ask about the possibility of requesting for changing the order. In Arabic, they have the pragmalinguistic device of using want statement followed by a modification in asking about the possibility of the action as in:

• *oreed aghayyer attalab itha mumkin*

• *I want to change the order if possible.*

They tend to use ‘if’ clause as a hedge. In the English inter-language, learners don’t feel much inclined to use “if” clause, hence they resort to the English query preparatory devices and avoid using want statements.

**Off Record Strategy:**

So far, we have discussed negative politeness strategy with some of its
substrategies that suit the situations in this study and how they are comprehended and produced in three data sets namely, English interlanguage, English as a mother tongue and Arabic as a first language. In this section, we are concerned with a strategy that represents the highest degree of indirectness and ambiguity in performing speech acts. According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 211), (..... the actor leaves himself an "out" by providing himself with a number of defensible interpretations; he cannot be held to have committed himself to just one particular interpretation of his act. Thus if a speaker wants to do an FTA, but wants to avoid the responsibility for doing it, he can do it off record and leave it up to the addressee to decide how to interpret it.) In what follows, the exploitation of this strategy by Arab learners of English will be discussed. Out of the four request speech acts, off recordedness seems to occur only in one situation, that is S2. In the learners' data; strong hints appear in five responses, below:

- *I am thirsty sir.*
- *It is hot and I feel thirsty.*
- *Sir, the food is good but I think with water will be very tasty.*
- *I will start coughing.*
- *Sir, really it is a very tasty food but will be more interesting with a glass of water.*

Although these examples can be considered as hints, the utterance meaning in each provides sufficient evidence of the content of the act. That some learners in this situation select this politeness strategy is a result of face considerations. It is not socially appropriate to be direct in your requests with a teacher. Therefore, the off record strategy selection serves in lessening the impact of the face-threatening act.
Don't Do the FTA:

The choice of not performing a speech act (opting out) is as much a pragmatic choice as any other strategic option employed in speech act performance. The strategy (Don’t do the FTA) is usually resorted to when a speaker seeks to avoid face-threatening acts. This strategy was ignored by Brown and Levinson and was not given any concern. Talking about this fifth strategic choice available to S they say that “..... the pay-off of this choice consists in avoiding causing offence to the hearer (H) but:” of course also fails to achieve his desired communication, and as there are naturally no interesting linguistic reflexes of this last-ditch strategy, we will ignore it in our discussion hence-forth). In the present study, this strategy occurs in S2, S3 and S4 in very few responses, however significant. It seems that the sociological variables lie behind the choice of opting out (using Bonikowska’s term, 1938) in these situations. In S2, power factor of the university teacher can be the responsible variable for the students’ selection of this strategy. Normally, directives are issued by a person of higher status to some one in a lower status. Turning positions upside down leads some students to opt out in some responses as in the following:

Examples:

- **I will not ask him at all.**
- **I wouldn’t say anything.**

Not even a single response in the native English data favours the choice of opting out. Instead, they prefer highly conventionalized indirect requests with the speaker-oriented perspective as shown above. It seems that in the British community, asking one's teacher for a glass of water while at his house is not an act that has to be potentially avoided, rather the desired act can be achieved by using negative-politeness oriented strategies of the high rank. The existence of such responses in the learners' data but not in the English native speakers’
responses relates to cross-cultural different assessments of relative power or social distance. Thomas (1983) in support to this observation states that: (In a student's own culture, for example, teachers may have a rather higher status than they do here (By here she refers to Britain), leading the student to behave more deferentially than would normally be expected). This observation applies to the learners who opt out in this study whether they are in the Indian society or the Arab community. It is noticed that the respondents who choose the (Don't do the FTA) strategy in their English interlanguage behave similarly in their mother tongue.

In S3, which is bifurcated into two prompts one is addressed to a male unfamiliar student and the other to a female one in a foreign country; all the subjects respond to the prompt calling for requesting a male student, however, few of them preferred not to ask a female one. Some others who take the risk of addressing a female student choose more deferent strategies in higher number than those addressing a male hearer. A third party reports they would use the same strategy used in the case of males. This variation reflects some of the aspects of the Arabic culture. In most of the Arab societies boys do not have the courage to talk to girls as freely as they do with their male counterparts. This restriction prevails following Islamic teachings that govern peoples' behaviour in the Arabic societies. This observation can help in accounting for the occurrence of the following responses in English by Arabs:

- I wouldn't have the courage to talk to a female student.
- I can never talk to a female student.
- I wouldn't ask a female student.

However, in the native speakers of English group, no respondent shows any kind of hesitation to ask a female student to provide him with information on the best university. British respondents feel free to ask the question irrespective of the addressee’s gender. This is again a point of divergence that reflects
different cultural judgments and determines what to be or not to be said at what
time and to whom. No doubt, the religious identity of the speaker plays a great
role in many aspects of his/her communicative behaviour. This is an area of
study which seems worth investigating and requires intensive examination,
cross-culturally. We may conclude from this discussion that resorting to the
choice of opting out by few of the respondents in S3 is based on cultural
restrictions and not social ones as in S2. It is also interesting to note here that
Arab learners of English in India maintain their cultural identity and give it a
chance to stand out through their verbal behaviour. Being in an Indian society
plays a role in maintaining some of their cultural perceptions because both Arabic
and Indian cultures have some common values where both communities can
converge.

The three responses of opting out in S4 add to the importance of
discussing this strategy pragmatically. These learners say:

- *I won’t ask for that. (changing the order)*
- *I feel shy to change the order.*
- *I will eat it. (without asking for a new order)*

The size of imposition in this situation leads the speakers (only three) to
opt out in order to save their as well as the addressee’s face. The English native
speakers use the same strategy in three responses out of sixteen which is an
indication that request in this situation is commonly imposing in both societies
(Arabic and British) with some variation in the degree of imposition.

The strategy (Don’t do FTA) discussed above illustrates one case of
positive transfer in S4 and two cases of negative transfer in S2 and S3.
Lexical–Grammatical Pragmatic Indicators in EL2 and their role in politeness:

Any human language is expected to have a bulk of lexical and grammatical expressions which serve as the indicators of speech act functions. In this section, we shall discuss the pragmatic indicators used by English language learners of Arabic background; how they deviate from the target norm, what corresponding indicators are used in Arabic, the amount of transfer and how those indicators play a great role in the realisation of politeness strategies. The whole discussion will be based on the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English(L1)</th>
<th>English(L2)</th>
<th>Arabic(L1)</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>-mate, hey, hi, name of the addressee, excuse me</td>
<td>Please/brother, excuse me brother, if you don’t mind</td>
<td>- ya ax/ox t(hey brother/sister), billah ya tayyeb (by God oh good man), ya bush-shabab (hey father of the youth)</td>
<td>EL1 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- law tismah/samaht(if you please), itha takarramt (if you be generous enough), min fadhlak (out of your bounty)</td>
<td>EL2 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- afwan, ma'thiratan, ma'al-asaf, uthran (apologetic formulas)</td>
<td>AL1 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- wa law su adab (though it is impoliteness), itha ma fi mane’(if there is no objection)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- billah (by God), Allah yixalleek (May Allah save you)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>Please, if I--</td>
<td>- sir, my teacher, doctor</td>
<td>- ustathi (my teacher), doctoor (university teacher),</td>
<td>EL1 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- please, excuse me, if you don’t mind</td>
<td>- law samah/tismah (if you please), law takarramt (if you be generous enough), mumkin billah (can you by God), wa law kallaft aleik (though it is troubling), itha ma fi mane’(if there is no objection), min fadhlak(out of your bounty), wala aleik amr (it is not a command)</td>
<td>EL2 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- sorry sir, sorry if I disturb you/to trouble you, pardon me</td>
<td>- afwan, ma'thiratan, na'tathir li-iz'ajak, aasif (apologetic formulas)</td>
<td>AL1 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- thanks, thank you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

102
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S3</th>
<th>S4</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Hi , excuse me, please, kindly</td>
<td>- mate, waiter, please, excuse me</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excuse me brother/gentleman, hello brother</td>
<td>please, if I am not troubling you ,if you don't mind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ya ax/oxt (hey brother/sister), ya abush-shabab (hey father of the youth)</td>
<td>- axi (my brother), ya xabeer (hey experienced man), ya izzie (hey dear), ya mu'allem (hey master)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- itha samaht li (if you permit), itha fi ma'ak waqt kafi (if you have enough time), itha kun la oz'jak (if I am not troubling you), law samah waqtak (if your time permits), itha kan mumkin (if it is possible), wa law adhaa'na qaleel min waqtak (though it is a waste of your time), mumkin aaxuth min waqtak alkareem (can I take of your valuable time?), mumkin laithah (a moment please), shuwayyah (only little), surah muxtasarah (in bref), afwan, ma'thiratan, samihna (apologetic formulas)</td>
<td>- law tismah/samaht (if you please), law takarram (if you be generous enough), min fadhlak (out of your bounty)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- itha ma fi manea' (if there is no objection), itha ma fi mushkilah (if there is no problem), in amkan (if possible), itha kan min almumkin (if it is possible)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- sa-akoon shakiran lak (I will be grateful)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EL1 4</td>
<td>EL2 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most striking observation is the quantitative difference between the total number of the pragmatic indicators in each data set (EN=15, EL2=27 and AL1=52). Learners appear halfway between both native sets. Arabic seems very rich in using softeners, whereas English as used by native speakers reveals a feature of economy in using pragmalinguistic devices. Our primary concern here is the learners' data, and divergence from the target norm (English). As the table shows, only two linguistic devices are common in both E2 and E1 namely, please and excuse me. Arab learners of English seem to have succeeded in transferring those two indicators into their English which are both negative politeness terms. The reason may be the source of input. Learners are not always exposed to the target linguistic norms in their real life situations. In addition, the English they have been taught does not present language usage in various social situations. The following elaboration further explains the argument. Starting with kindly it is never used by learners as an equivalent to “please” in function because it is not common in the type of English they are exposed to. The use of address terms and attention getters like (mate, name, hey, hi) never appear in the learners’ data. Instead they use “brother” with attention getters like: (excuse me brother, please brother, hello brother) which are considered negative-positive politeness strategies. The use of ‘brother’ in English requests by Arabs is imported to interlanguage from Arabic where it is used as a solidarity marker among all Muslims familiar or not familiar to each other. In the responses to S2, the overuse of ‘Sir’ (which native speakers of English do not use at least in this corpus) is a sociopragmatic element imported from Indian English. The use of the address form (my teacher) directly comes from Arabic. In spoken Arabic the use of (my / our teacher) is more deferent than using only (teacher). It even suggests some solidarity. While ‘Sir’ indicates ‘distance’, hence a negative politeness respect term, “my teacher” indicates “closeness”, hence a positive politeness respect form.

The overuse of hedges:

Another feature of learners requests is the overuse of hedges starting with
“if clause”. These hedges have various linguistic realisations as shown below:

- If you don’t mind.
- If I am not bothering you.
- If it is possible,
- If you can.

These expressions usually follow the head-act and function as minimizers of imposition on the hearers’ negative face. So, they are negative politeness strategies. They can also occur as initiators of requests in the imperative form as in:

- If you don’t mind, switch on the fan.

They can also accompany conventionalised indirect requests:

- Could you please change this order if you don’t mind?
- I want to change the order if it is possible.

In the corpus collected from the native speakers of English, hedges with “if clause” do not occur. However, in the data from Arabic, similar hedges are found to be used like:

- *itha ma fi mane’* (if you have no objection)
- *itha fi ma’ak waqt kafi* (if you have enough time)
- *itha kan mumkin* (if it is possible)
- *itha ma fi mushkilah* (if there is no problem)

Such kind of variation in the use of hedges in Arabic seems to be responsible for the use of similar expressions in the interlanguage of English
learners.

Apologies

Arabic learners group (in 8% of the response to S2) indicate their reluctance to impinge on their teacher’s negative face, therefore partially redress that impingement by apologizing for asking for water. In the corpus from English L1 there is no instance of such reluctance. In the Arabic data apologetic expressions that redress impingement are noticed in almost the four situations. We find expressions like: *afwan, alma’thirah, aasif ala-l- iz’aj, uthran, ma’a ihitrami, samihna itha ta”abnak*) all carrying the meaning of (sorry or excuse me). In Arabic, speakers tend to start many requests or end them with apologizing as recognition of others’ negative face. This communicative style of Arabic seems to be projected to the interlanguage of the learners of English.

Some pragmatic indicators in Arabic requests:

Arabic is allegedly a positive-politeness oriented language. In other words, Arabic speakers put more emphasis on directness rather than indirectness and on solidarity rather than distancing in their interpersonal communication. This section argues that Arabs show high respect and recognition of hearer’s negative face in such a way that may contradict the above argument. Indirectness is not the only criterion that determines the degree of recognition of others negative face. The huge bulk of hedges and politeness markers used in Arabic requests reveals the high degree of sensitivity to and care of the addressee’s basic wants and desires. Although head acts seem to be more direct than possible requestive head acts in English, the prolific pragmatic mitigators accompanying the head act pre-and post-sententially play a vital role in changing the seemingly inappropriate directness into a high degree of politeness. In what follows, a discussion of some pragmatic indicators used in the Arabic responses to the four request situations in this study is presented to illustrate the above argument.
(a) **Address form:**

The address forms used in the Arabic data set in the four request situations are presented in the following:

S1  
- *ya ax* -------- (vocative + brother + name)
- *Billah ya tayyeb* (by God + vocative + good man)
- *ya abush-shabab* (vocative + father of the youth)

S2  
- *doctoor* (professor or university teacher)
- *ustathi* (my teacher)

S3  
- *ya ax* (vocative + brother)
- *ya oxt* (vocative + sister)

S4  
- *ya axi* (vocative + my brother)
- *Ya xabeer* (vocative + experienced man)
- *Ya izzi* (vocative + a dear person)
- *Ya mu’allem* (vocative + master) particularly used with restaurant’s chief cook.
- *Ya zalameh* (vocative + man) used by Jordanians & Palestinian.
- *Ya zoal* (vocative + man) used exclusively by Sudanese.

Note that in S2 and S3 the address forms show distance rather than solidarity and familiarity. The use of ‘*doctoor*’ is a common address form by Arab students in India which is used for referring to a university teacher as a deference marker. *Ustathi “my teacher”* is an attempt by the speaker to minimise the distance with the hearer (who is usually of a higher status). This address form
can also be used by Arabs while addressing any person believed to be superior (senior to the speaker in terms of knowledge, social status, profession, etc.) Therefore, the addition of the pronoun “my” to “teacher” in Arabic creates a positive politeness strategy out of a negatively polite one. The term “doctors” remains a negative politeness strategy. The use of only one address form to male addressee and another one to a female student in S3 is significant and worth elaborating. The Arabic “ax” means “brother” and “oxf” means “sister”. Although, “ax” and “oxf” semantically express the meaning of solidarity, when not followed by a name like (ya ax Ali) or by a possessive pronoun like(axi) they indicate unfamiliarity and distance as in ya ax Law samah fein maktab al bareed (hi brother, please where is the post office?) Al-Hamzi (1999: 103) points out that: other compensatory mitigating devices used by YANS (Yemeni Arabic Native Speakers) were the use of lexical downgraders like ya axi (hai my brother) which is to be distinguished from ya ax (hai brother). It is interesting to note that the use of ya axi (hai my brother) functions differently from (ya ax) (hai brother). The former indicates + familiarity and + closeness while the latter functions as - familiarity and -closeness. However, the use of either of them indicates solidarity with the hearer). Other address forms used in informal situations are xabeer (experienced man), izzi (dear) (both are common in Yemeni Arabic), zalameh (man), (In Jordanian and Palestinian Arabic), zoal (man) in Sudanese Arabic etc. It is noticed that different address forms are used by different Arab nationals depending on the variety of Arabic they use. Variation in address forms in the Arabic speaking countries is itself a separate interesting area of research.

Adjuncts to Head Act:

Adjuncts to head act are modifications supporting the speech act. These modifying devices indicate the recognition of H’s negative face by S and hence function as minimizers or downtoners of the face threat, modulate the impact an utterance is likely to have on the hearer and signal the possibility of non-compliance. Consider the following devices with their translation into English.
- Law tismah/samaht (if you have no objection)
- itha takarramt (if you be generous enough)
- min fadhlak (out of your bounty)
- itha ma fi iz'aj (if there is no bother)
- itha kan mumkin (if it is possible)
- itha mafi mane' (if there is no objection.)
- itha kan fi ma'ak waqt kafi (if you have sufficient time)
- law samah waqtak (if your time permits)
- wa law su adab (though it is impolite to ask)
- wa law ta"abnak (though we have caused you bother)
- wa law axathna qalil min waqtak (through it is a waste to your time)
- mumkin axoth min waqtak al kareem (can I take some of your valuable time)

All these expressions along with so many others which can be used in other social contexts are considered necessary elements of request speech act sequence. Pragmatically, they are the linguistic devices that a speaker has to use before, while or after the encroachment to others' territories to facilitate the task.

**Apologies as Adjuncts in Arabic**

Another technique used in Arabic to compensate the directness as well as the tendency to using hearer-perspective requests is by using apologies. The following apologetic expressions appear in four request situations used in this study. Situation-4 is already a compound speech act which requires both an
apology (discussed in another chapter) and a request, so we are not interested in delving into the details of apology in this situation. S1, S2 and S3 are merely request situations. However the following apology formulas accompany many of the responses to these three situations:

S1  
- *afwan law ta’abnak* (sorry for troubling you)
- *alma’thurah* (excuse)
- *ma’alasaf ala-l-iz’aj* (with apology for interruption)
- *uthran ma’ ihtirami.* (excuse me, with my respect)

S2  
- *afwan* (sorry functioning as an attention getter)
- *ma’thurah minnak* (forgiveness from you)
- *a’tathir alal-iz’az* (sorry for disturbing)
- *aasif* (sorry)

S3  
- *alma’thurah* (Excuse me)
- *samihna itha ta’abnak* (forgive us if we trouble you.)

Some of these expressions can occur utterance-initially. Others have to occur utterance-finally. Some expressions have no constraints. They can occur in any position. Short expressions usually occur initially as initiators, attention getters or conversational openings. Longer expressions tend to occur just after the head act or sometimes after the action desired is achieved.

The pragmatic role apologies play in requests is to indicate one’s reluctance to impinge on H’s negative face and can be a redressive action to H’s threat. If apology occurs in pre-event position it is to recognize that an encroachment into H’s territory is likely and if it occurs in post-event position it is a redressive technique to the impingement that took place on H’s face.
The discussion above aims at urging researchers to do further research on politeness phenomenon and politeness strategies in Arabic. The observations mentioned regarding pragmatic indicators in Arabic are based on a very scanty corpus, however they reveal potential variation, creation and productivity on the linguistic devices that Arabic speakers possess to perform various pragmatic functions. The list of pragmatic indicators presented in the last section is illustrative and not comprehensive, and the findings require to be supported by further studies on different aspects of social interaction.
Chapter 5

Invitations in Arabic-English Interlanguage: Strategy Patterns

Introduction

Social invitations represent a very important speech act for non-native speakers to acquire. When an L2 learner enters into any target culture new to him, he/she must learn how to recognize, respond and form social invitations. If the student were to misinterpret the invitations or form an invitation incorrectly, a breakdown in communication would occur. There can be problems at all three levels of the speech act. At the level of the locutionary act, there can be the use of the incorrect form. Also, a student might want to invite someone but be unable to convey his/her intention, which is a breakdown at the illocutionary level. An example of this is if a student would try to translate an indirect invitation such as “I was wondering whether you are free tonight”, into another language with the meaning of invitation when it may just be interpreted as a question. Finally, the student could react inappropriately to an invitation that results in an improper perlocutionary effect. It is important for the L2 learner to understand the differences in forms and cultural norms before entering the target culture.

Invitations are usually viewed as arrangements for a social commitment. Wolfson (1989) cited in Salmani-Nodushan's study (1995) states that “According to popular wisdom, social commitments are normally arrived at through unambiguous invitations. Our operational definition of such a speech act is that it contains reference to time and/or mention of place or activity, and most important, a request for response. A simple example would be the following:

Do you want to have lunch tomorrow?

(request for response) (activity) (time)

The main focus of this chapter is to test the hypothesis regarding the components of an invitation speech act, particularly 'a request for response'
which is likely to vary in linguistic form across languages, cultures and situations.

**Types of Invitations:**

On the basis of empirical studies, some researchers divide social invitations into ‘genuine invitations’ and ‘ostensible invitations’, (Clark and Isaacs, 1990). Both types are presented below in some detail.

(a) **Ostensible Invitations:**

This type refers to invitations that are not real. In other words, invitations, sometimes, extended which are not intended to be taken seriously are called ostensible invitations, (Clark and Isaacs, 1990). Such invitations are not necessarily followed by the conclusion of the arrangement under discussion. The aim of such invitations is not to establish invitations but to accomplish some other unstated purpose. These two authors have pointed out that ostensible invitations seem patently designed as face-saving devices. According to Clark and Isaacs (1990), ostensible invitations possess five defining properties:

1. **Pretense:** The inviter, in ostensible invitations, is only pretending to extend a sincere invitation.

2. **Mutual Recognition:** Inviters intend their pretense to be vividly recognized by them and their addressee. This is called mutual recognition. Mutual recognition is highly significant in that it distinguishes ostensible invitations from genuine but insincere ones;

3. **Collusion:** Invitees are intended to collude with the inviters on the pretense by responding in kind. In other words, they are intended to respond in a way which is appropriate to the pretense.

4. **Ambivalence:** If inviters were asked, “Do you really mean it?” they could not honestly answer either yes or no. This is a paradoxical point in relation to ostensible invitations. Ambivalence usually differentiates between ostensible speech acts and other forms of non-serious speech uses like
5. **Off-record Purpose:** Ostensible invitations are extended as a way of expressing certain intentions off-record. Any given utterance has a set of vivid implications which the speaker can be held accountable for. These implications are said to be on record. There are, on the other hand, certain other plausible but not necessary implications for which the speaker cannot be held accountable. These are referred to as off-record (cf. Brown and Levinson, 1978).

**Genuine Invitations:**

Genuine invitations are real arrangements for a social commitment. They are extended and intended to be taken seriously. Such invitations are necessarily followed (in most cases) by the conclusion of the arrangement under discussion. Ali Akbar Dehkhoda (1955), the most outstanding Iranian lexicalist ‘cited in Salmani-Nodushan (1995)’, defined “genuine invitations” as: A speaker (A) invites a hearer (B) to receive something or to perform some task. Nodushan gives an operational definition of “genuine invitations” as: A speaker (A) invites a hearer (B) to receive something or perform some task the primary aim of which is to benefit the hearer himself/herself. Wolfson (1983) refers to this type as unambiguous invitations. Their definition requires that the following properties be present: (1) reference to time and/or mention of place or activity and (2) a request for response.

**Invitations, Politeness and Face:**

The speech act of invitation has been shown to be a source of cross-cultural variation. The conceptualization of whether an invitation poses a threat to the negative face of the invitee or that it is perceived as a positive politeness strategy varies across languages and cultures. The reason behind this variation is that the notion of face is not of the same interpretation in every human language and culture. The following elaboration by Gu, (1990,242) on politeness
phenomena in modern Chinese supports this argument offering, inviting, and promising in Chinese, under ordinary circumstances, will not be considered as threatening H’s negative face, i.e., impeding H’s freedom. A Chinese S will insist on inviting H to dinner (which implies that S will pay H’s bill) even if H has already explicitly expressed his desire that S not do it. In this situation, a European will feel that S’s act of inviting is intrinsically impeding, and that S’s way of performing it is even more so. A Chinese, on the other hand, will think that S’s act is intrinsically polite, and the way S performs it shows that S is genuinely polite, for S’s insistence on H’s accepting the invitation serves as good evidence of S’s sincerity. The Chinese negative face is not threatened in this case. Rather, it is threatened when self cannot live up to what s/he has claimed, or when what self has done is likely to incur ill fame or reputation.” The same observation aptly fits the Arabic language and culture. Atawneh and Sridhar (1993), examined the imposing nature of invitations by Arabs which illustrates different strategies of performing this speech act in both Arabic and North American English. They quote Nydell’s book “Understanding Arabs” (1987) where it is mentioned that “Arabs are generous in the hospitality they offer to friends and strangers alike and admire and value the same in others.” (57) Nydell ‘in the same book’ quotes Dr. Fathi Yousef, an Arab sociologist, saying that “A North American would likely ask guests, ‘Would you care for coffee or tea?’ using an intonation pattern which suggests that they may or may not want any refreshment. A Middle Easterner would ask, ‘what would you like – coffee or tea?’ simply giving the guests a choice.”

It has been observed, on the basis of some empirical studies as well as the present study that ‘invitations’ by Arabs EFL/ESL learners are mostly bald-on-record. Brown and Levinson (1987, 99) point out that bald-on-recordedness in making invitations is a sign of observing politeness and “actually oriented to face.” They allude to offers and invitations as involving some face work intended to lessen the potential face threat that haunts the hearer, hence they refer to them as ‘pre-emptive invitations.’ They note that “in certain circumstances it is reasonable for S to assume that H will be especially preoccupied with H’s
potential infringement of S’s preserve. In these circumstances it is polite, in a broad sense, for S to alleviate H’s anxieties by pre-emptively inviting H to impinge on S preserve. Three areas where one would expect such pre-emptive invitations to occur in all languages are these: (i) welcomings………; (ii) farewells… (iii) offers, where S insists that H may impose on S’s negative face. These three functional categories are all potential FTA: there is a risk that H may not wish to receive such invitations. Where this risk is great, we would expect some other strategy than bold on record to be utilized. Thus S will not say ‘Come in’ to persons who are clearly more important than he and are clearly in a hurry. But we would predict that where such risk is small, these pre-emptive invitations will always and in all languages be delivered baldly on record. The reason for this is clear: if H is reluctant to impinge, he will be the less reluctant the firmer the invitation is. So, provided that no other face wants are infringed, the firmer the invitation, the more polite it is. The classic example of such invitations is perhaps ‘Come’, which is bald-on-record imperative in many languages.”

Realization Patterns of Invitations by Arab Learners of English:

Based on the available data under discussion, eight strategy types that can accomplish the speech act of invitation have been identified in Arab interlanguage responses. Two situations are used to elicit this speech act strategies. Both differ in the sociological variables. The first situation engages a close friend in the invitation, whereas in the second situation the invitee is quite superior in social status (a senior research student). In S-1 (the first situation), the invitee is a close friend; hence a high degree of directness is expected. Close friendship implies solidarity; and solidarity entails making bald-on-record invitations. In S-2 (the second situation), both interlocutors are quite socially distant and, therefore, the prompt may elicit some Deference Politeness strategy (Scollon and Scollon, 1983) that implies formality and respect. This hypothesis will be tested below in the course of discussing the various syntactic forms of invitations.
Situation (1): Inviting a Close Friend

You are having a wedding party. You invite a very close friend and request him to come accompanied by some other friends. What would you say?

The strategies used by the interlanguage users of English to invite a close friend are:

(a) Bald-on-record (softened) imperative invitations: (20%)

The pattern demonstrating the highest incidence in the Arab learners' data is the use of the imperative mood. It appears to be used in 20% of the data. In 13% of the responses, the imperative invitations are softened with the negative politeness marker 'please'. The examples below illustrate the use of this pattern in the learners' data:

- I have a wedding party. Please come with your friends. I will be waiting for you.

This is a typical invitation by Arab learners of English. It starts with reference to the activity involved 'I have a wedding party'; then a 'request for response' (Wolfson's terms, 1983) follows which is here a mitigated imperative. To intensify the force of invitation, the respondent adds the following supporting move: 'I will be waiting for you' which upgrades the sincerity of the invitation and the necessity that the hearer complies. Other similar examples exist which illustrate the same pattern:

- Hey, it is my wedding. Call all guys and be there at (time).
- My brother's wedding is on (time). Come to the party. Don't forget.

Note that in the last two examples, 'please' does not occur.

Explanations as to why invitations in the imperative form occur with the highest frequency compared with the other strategy types can be that learners
here transfer a pragmalinguistic strategy from Arabic L1. Arabic is believed to be a positive politeness oriented language; hence the use of bald-on-record speech acts in most of the interpersonal communication among intimates and close friends. English native speakers, on the other hand, do not prefer using the imperative form of invitations because it implies coerciveness and imposition which native English speakers try to avoid while communication. They mostly resort to negative politeness strategies. However, imperative invitations are found to be used in their responses, yet with very low frequency (only two responses) and both are preceded by 'please' to mitigate the imposition.

- Please attend my wedding on (time).
- Please come to my wedding.

Indians using English seem to use the imperative form of verbal invitations to close friends very often (30%). It is usually a common way of invitation (both genuine and ostensible) in the Indian society. The researcher has been in India for quite a long time and has observed the common use of this strategy among the intimates (e.g., come sometime.) Arabs using Arabic perform the speech act of invitation in the imperative mood with exactly the same frequency as in their English interlanguage (20%). Therefore, the use of imperative invitations in the Arab learners' responses results from the impact of Arabic (L1) on their EL2 performance. However, interestingly, it has been observed that 9 of the 14 bald-on-record invitations in the learners' EL2 responses are mitigated by 'please' and no use of any of its equivalents seems to be used in the Arabic L1. This observation suggests that the L2 users have acquired the concept of avoiding bare imperatives without mitigators. The type of input responsible for this understanding needs further investigation in order to be accounted for.

(b) Statements of Personal Desire: (20%)

Scarcella and Brunak (1981, 69), point out that statements of personal desire such as "I would like" and "I want" may be, for at least some L2 acquirers,
formulaic devices not reflective of the L2 speaker's grammatical competence. These 'statements of personal desire' appear to be one of the first directive types to emerge in second language acquisition. In their study on invitations conducted on 20 Arabic-speaking learners of English who served as the subjects, one of the findings was that L2 speakers confined themselves almost entirely to 'statements of personal desire'. However, in the present study, this pattern is one of eight patterns identified in the L2 data. It is used with the highest frequency of incidence having the same percentage found in the first pattern (bald-on-record imperative invitations). The examples below illustrate the occurrence of this strategy type.

- *We have a wedding party and I want you to come with your friends. Look, it is important that you have to come otherwise I will be angry.*

- *I am having my wedding party next Thursday. I would like you and the other guys to be there.*

- *Tomorrow I have a wedding party and I'd like you to join us.*

- *I would like to invite you to our wedding party. Please come and invite your friends. You must come.*

These examples once again demonstrate the complex structure of invitation speech act which is a salient feature of the Arabic-English interlanguage. Let us take the last example as evidence. The sequence starts with a statement of personal desire containing the performative verb 'invite', followed by a mitigated imperative mood invitation 'please come and invite your friends'. The sequence concludes with an obligatory statement 'you must come'. The complexity of the speech act structure and the use of high degree of directness suggest a feeling of deliberate imposition on the hearer's negative face which leaves no option but to comply, otherwise the inviter would feel offended. Failing to comply with this adamantine invitation threatens the inviter's positive face. This interpretation is applicable to Arabic language and culture. In
the Arabic data, such invitations are used in 13% of the responses. The native speakers of British English resort to this strategy in 25% of the data (4 out of 16 responses). However, the examples below show that they are simple invitations and not as complex as those made by Arabs using English.

- We would like you to come to A’s wedding party.
- I would like to invite you to a marriage party.
- My brother is getting married and I’d love you to come and celebrate with us.

The use of this pattern in one fourth of the native British English data indicates that this strategy is socially acceptable to be used with intimate friends in the English society. Indian English users resort to this structure in only 10% of the data. The way Indians use such type of invitations suggests that there is no hesitation in imposing invitations on their intimate friends.

- Hey yaar (friend). There is a party at my house tomorrow. I want you to come early. Bring your friends also.

‘Personal desire statements’ can also contain the verb ‘hope’ as in the following:

- I have a wedding party. I hope you attend the party accompanied by our friends
- Friend, I hope you will come to my party and please invite our friends.

(c) Invitations using the performative verb: (17%)

This type of invitations is so called because the utterance contains the performative verb (invite) or any of its inflected forms. The expression ‘I invite you’ is called a performative clause because the speaker ‘I’ actually performs the act of inviting (i.e. makes the invitation by means of uttering this clause). The
crucial constituent of an explicitly performative clause is the performative verb. According to Keith Allan (1986, vol.II), “Because the meaning of the performative verb is the essence of the illocution, the verb effectively spells out the illocutionary force of the performative clause”. The use of this pattern by Arabs using English comes as of third rank in frequency of occurrence after imperative invitations and statements of personal desire. It is a rather formal way of inviting. Consider the following examples from the interlanguage data:

- Please try to do your best to come to my party. You are all invited.

- Hi X, I want to tell you that we are having a wedding party on (time). So you are invited with your friends. Don’t forget. You should come.

Note that in the second example the illocutionary force is indicated by three invitation speech acts: (1) ‘You are invited’, (2) ‘Don’t forget.’ and (3) ‘You should come.’ They combine to collectively make a highly emphatic invitation. The use of the inclusive ‘we’ suggests solidarity between the interlocutors. This feeling of solidarity is spelled out in other examples where the inviter tells his interlocutor that the occasion is a source of happiness for both. It is also very interesting to point out that 6 of the total 12 invitations in this pattern use the passive voice structure “you are invited” which is a direct transfer from Arabic invitations, both spoken and written. The second half of this type of invitations is in the active form ‘I came to invite you’, ‘It is my pleasure to invite you’, etc. A very interesting example which occurs with the performative verb is the following:

- I need not invite you because it is yours too. Try to invite some friends.

It suggests a feeling of intimacy which makes the close friend a member of the inviter’s close relatives who need not be invited formally. This is a reflection of the concept of solidarity and intimacy found among friends in the Arabic culture. Inviting a very close friend formally can imply distancing him/her. He/She ‘has to’ come without invitation. This pattern (using the performative verbs in invitations) never once occurs in the British English data, perhaps because it
seems a formal way of invitation. In the informal invitations (verbal ones to intimates), performatives may not be used in English. In the English of the Indians, such invitations are used by two respondents. However, their wording suggests they are same like printed invitations

- You are specially invited to attend the party with all your near and dear friends.

In the Arabic data, this pattern is used by 21.5% of the respondents which is the highest frequency compared with other realization patterns. This finding is in consistence with the findings of Atawneh & Snidhar (1993, 291) with regard to the typical spoken invitations in Arabic L1.

- ṭinī ma’zum walazīm tīr a’ll hafīr

- ‘You are invited and must come to the party.’

(d) Invitations in the form of imperative reminders:

Reminders refer to invitations which start with the reminding clause ‘Don’t forget’. This pattern is given the fourth rank among invitation patterns in the learners’ data. It is used by 13% of the respondents. Reminders in the form presented below are positive politeness strategies (though they are in the form of orders) which imply socially shared knowledge. When you invite someone to come to your party starting with ‘Don’t forget’, it suggests that the hearer already knows about the forthcoming activity and only needs to be informally reminded rather than formally invited. This pattern is used in the imperative form and it seems like an instruction by S to H. It is highly informal. Take the examples below

- Please don’t forget to come to my party

- Don’t forget to come to my party and you should come accompanied by your friends.
Hay man I will be waiting for you. It would be bad if you didn’t come. Ok?

The last example, again, illustrates the imposing nature of Arabic-English interlanguage invitations.

The native speakers of British English consider this type of invitation socially unacceptable. When I asked a native speaker of English about the reaction of English people to such invitations, he responded that, ‘the invitee would probably refuse to accept the invitation.” It is simply because the speaker does not give an option to the hearer to reply negatively to the requested act. This is an imposition on H’s freedom of action as perceived in the Anglo-Saxon culture. Generally speaking, in English one is not expected to make directives without at the same time, acknowledging the addressee’s personal autonomy (Wierzbicka, 1991, 89). On the other hand, failing to comply with the invitation is socially costly. It can badly affect the relationship between the intimates. In the data from English used by the Indian group, this realization pattern does not exist. It may not be commonly used among Indians.

Summing up, the use of invitations in the form of imperative reminders is a typical feature of the Arabic-English interlanguage and it is imported from Arabic (L1) where such pattern occurs in four responses.

(e) Invitations in the form of obligatory/necessity statement:

This type of invitations is found in 15.7% of the interlanguage data. It refers to any invitation speech act which contains any one of the following expressions that express obligation or necessity ‘you should come/join us’, ‘you have to come’, and ‘you must come’. This strategy is a highly bald-on-record invitation. It is imposing and of obligatory force and leaves no escape route to the hearer. The following examples demonstrate how this strategy is used by Arabs using English.

• Brother A, we have a party. So you should join us with your friends.
• Brother B, today it is my brother’s wedding party. You have to come and don’t forget to call the others.

• You must come with some friends. Otherwise I will be very angry with you. I won’t accept any excuse you would give.

The way these invitations are made indicates that Arabs using English can freely encroach upon their interlocutor’s private territory. This is a feature of Arabic culture where the notion of collectivism is highly valued and placed over individualism. Markus and Kitayama (1991) propose two kinds of self—the independent and the interdependent. The independent self, basic to most western cultures, places emphasis on “faith in the inherent separateness of distinct persons”, while the interdependent self, typical of many non-Western cultures, places faith on the “fundamental connectedness of human beings to each other”. Indeed, in many Asian cultures, where the basic principle is that of “social relativism” (Kasper, 1990, p 18), the concept of face is interpreted very differently from that in Western cultures. In such cultures, the focus is on concerns about group belonging, proper place occupancy, and acceptance by the group (Kasper, 1990, Matsumoto, 1988) and the guiding principle behind interaction becomes the “maintenance of the relative position of others rather than preservation of an individual’s proper territory” (Matsumoto, 1988, p 405).

The Arabic culture can be categorized under the cultures which place more emphasis on connectedness of human beings to each other in a society than on individuals’ self wants. Invitations can help in maintaining social relations. Therefore, no harm if these invitations are coercively given using obligatory statements. The Arabic data contains responses that represent this pattern in 18% of the invitations which is an indication that Arabs using English transfer the strategy of obligatory invitations from their mother tongue. British English speakers never use this pattern, and if used in a British society, it may be considered rude because it implies threatening the self-autonomy and independent self notion which is an inherent feature of the Western cultures. In a Western society, articulating invitations the way presented in this section by
interlanguage users implies that the inviter does not respect the invitee's negative face wants.

The concept of “independent self” and perception of invitations as “positive politeness strategies” when they are addressed to a close friend seems to be a part of the Indian culture. The evidence is the use of “obligatory invitations” by 30% of the Indians using English as in the examples below:

- Mr. A, your presence at my party is must.
- Dear…., I have a party in Taj. You must be there with all the friends.
- X, I am having a wedding party on (time). So you have to come along with your friends. Do not forget.

(f) Conditionally Hedged Invitations:

Unlike some of the previously presented strategies, this pattern is not coercive. The invitee is given the option to come or not. This invitation threatens the H’s positive face. If he/she accepts the invitation, it is an indication of observing S’s positive face wants. The inviter would be happy ‘if the invitee attends the party’. This is a positive face want. If H does not join the party, it implies he/she does not want the same wants of S. This pattern is called conditionally hedged invitation because the speech act contains ‘if clause’ which modifies the force of the act. Take the illustrative examples below:

- I have a wedding party on Thursday. I will be happy if you come.
- I will be happy if you come tomorrow to my party.
- My dear friend, it will be my pleasure if you come to attend my party.

These invitations, however, occur in the learners’ data with low frequency (7%).

‘Conditionally hedged invitations’ are used by Arabs in (6.6%) of their
Arabic data. This strategy neither figures in the British English data nor in the Indian English data set. The interpretation of the occurrence of this strategy by Arabs EL2 respondents is again due to the impact of Arabic and insufficient exposure to how this speech act is uttered by the target language speakers.

(g) Interrogative Invitations:

This strategy mainly addresses H's negative face wants and gives him/her a way out. It occurs in the Arab learners' data with low frequency (5.7%). Invitations taking the interrogative form are 'requests for responses.' Look at the following examples:

- *Could you please come to my wedding party? Please come accompanied by some other friends*
- *Can you attend my wedding party on (time) with your friends?*
- *May I request you one thing? Can you please come to my wedding party if you have a free time on Sunday along with your friends?*

The occurrence of such type of invitations is rare in the learners' data. They are not imposing in nature. They show respect to the independence and autonomy of the interlocutor's self. Such invitations are the most common in the British English society. They appear in 56% of the responses. This observation is in consistency with the findings in the chapter on requests and corrections which state that the interrogative form is a safe strategy to perform FTAs which potentially put H's face at stake. This is also the finding which has been highlighted by many researchers (e.g., Wierzbicka, 1991) as an inherent feature of English language. The examples below show how invitations are preferred to be made by English native speakers in such a situation:

- *Would you like to accompany me to a party we are having at my place?*
- *Would you like to come along to my party?*
• *Do you think you could make it to X wedding on (time) at (place)?>

• *My mother and father are having a party to celebrate A’s marriage. Do you want to come?>

• *Ello mate, wats apnin? Do you fancy comin to a party this weekend?>

Such invitations are socially acceptable among the intimates in the English culture.

Arabs using Arabic never once use interrogative invitations. They are not socially the most suitable. Some of them as used by English native speakers can be considered by Arabs rude and insincere invitations. An invitation like ‘Do you want to come?’ which is acceptable in English is very embarrassing in the Arabic context. An invitation should be sincere, serious and firm especially in the context of inviting someone to a party. Similarly, invitations starting with ‘would you like’ are not emphatic and therefore, may not be taken seriously. The perlocution they have on the hearer is that the speaker seems not interested in the interlocutor’s presence in the party. An effective invitation should be emphatic and the best way to achieve emphasis in the Arabic society is through bald-on-record imposing invitations. The Arabs’ invitation norm is coercive in mood. This cross-cultural difference between Arabic and English is a potential reason for cross-cultural miscommunication. The very low frequency of occurrence of this pattern in Arabic–English interlanguage can be attributed to the influence of Arabic cultural norms.

Indian English respondents seem to share the same conception as Arabs with regard to invitations to parties. The evidence is that interrogative invitations occur only once (5%) in the data.

(h) **Tacitly Declarative Invitations:**

There are only two responses which illustrate this pattern. They are
• Just to remind you, today is my wedding and without you, marriage party would be nothing.

• Dear friend, I am sure you will be with us along with the friends. It is going to be a wonderful party

In this pattern, there is no obligation statement, no imperative invitation, no performative verb exists, no interrogative, etc. The invitation is made in a simple declarative statement which presupposes ‘shared knowledge’ as in the first example or indirect request as in the second example and the hearer is left to infer the illocutionary force of the statements. The British English native speakers use very clear and direct declarative statements in 12.5% of the responses. Although they are declarative in structure, they seem to be interrogative in tone. Consider the examples below:

• Alright mate, you are coming to my wedding bash. You’d better. It’s not like I’m planning to have another one.

• Yes (name), you are coming the wedding, yeah?

According to Wolfson (1983), an English speech act necessarily contains a ‘request for response’ as an important constituent. In the interlanguage users’ examples, the requests for response are not directly spoken, whereas the English native speakers give clear declaratives.

Indian English respondents use this pattern in only one response,

• “dear, you will come to the party”.

This statement is emphatic rather than informative. The use of ‘will’ conveys the meaning of certainty.

In the Arabic data, tacit declarative invitations are found to be used by 11.6% of the respondents. Most of the examples given under this category in the Arabic data express the meaning that the invitee (close friend) is just like a
member of the inviter's family and need not to be formally invited. His/Her coming to the party is expected without invitation. The example below demonstrates how close friends can be invited in the Arab culture

- tab'an ant mush bihajah li 'uzumah . al-ors orsak.
- Of course, you need not be invited. The wedding is yours.

The example shows that H is highly respected by S and giving an invitation (formal) would bring about distancing both, hence it is not clearly declared but tacitly implied.

**Situation (2): Inviting a Superior**

You are having a wedding party. You invite a research scholar "senior to you" to attend the party. How would you say it? You request him/her to come accompanied by other friends as well.

The following discussion reports on the style shifting of invitation realization patterns when the addressee is of higher social status. In situation (1) the invitee is a close friend. Therefore, the value of (D) is low. The situation can be explained as (-distance, +familiarity). It is hypothesized that invitations become more polite when the distance is maximized and familiarity is minimized.

How the style shifts to make the invitation more polite when addressing a senior interlocutor is the core of discussion in this section. The figure below demonstrates the invitation strategies as employed by Arabs using English in both S (1) and S (2).
The most striking observation is that the number of strategies used in S1 is more than those in S2. The patterns that appear in S1 but do not figure in S2 are: (1) imperative reminders, (2) obligatory statements and (3) tacitly declarative/assertive statements. This observation is very important and worthy of interpretation. The explanation of the difference in strategy number is that the missing patterns in S2 seem to be imposing and coercive. The invitee in this situation is a senior student. Consequently, face wants have to be respected and impositions should better be avoided. Another important observation based on the percentages shown in the table is that in S1, interlanguage users resort to
using 'imperative invitations with the highest frequency of occurrence (20%) whereas in S2, the pattern demonstrating the highest incidence is 'statements of personal desire' (27%) which can be categorized under negative politeness strategies Interestingly, in S2, 'imperative invitations' are pushed down to become of the lowest frequency of occurrence (10%) Although 'imperative invitations' are pushed down, they are yet distinct from the 'imperative invitations of S1 in that all responses demonstrating this pattern contain the politeness marker 'please' preceding each utterance

- Please come and bring all the friends
- Please join us with the friends
- Please come along with the friends

The third clear case of style shifting in S2 is the increase in the frequency of occurrence of strategies which demonstrate respecting H's negative face wants, minimizing the imposition and giving H an option to accept or to decline the invitation The evidences supporting this argument are

1. The interrogative forms of invitation which occur in only 5.75% of the learners’ responses to S1 (lowest percentage) is raised in S2 (inviting a senior) to become (18.5%)

2. Conditionally hedged invitations occurring in S1 with lowest frequency (5.7%) take the second position in S2 (25%) after statements of personal desire

On the basis of the above discussion and comments on the content of the table, it is concluded that the speech act of invitation becomes more face-threatening with the increase of social distance value and the decrease of familiarity value between the interlocutors The more the addressee is intimate and familiar, the less the degree of threat to H’s face is Similarly, the less the degree of intimacy and familiarity, the more the degree of threat to H’s face is
The highly face-threatening acts call for great face-redressive work.

The discussion of style shift in strategy selection by Arabs using English to perform invitation speech act to a close friend and to a senior student suggests that the subjects under study are sensitive to social relations and that they choose the invitation patterns accordingly. This sensitivity is also clear in the data from Arabic L1 and Indian English data. However, the native speakers of British English demonstrate less sensitivity to social relations and no statistically significant difference is found between their performance in S1 and S2. Most of the respondents reported that they would use the same structures and patterns with both close friends and senior students while performing the act of invitation. Native speakers of British English consider these two situations formal and some of them were even reluctant to give verbal invitations which lessen the degree of the formality of the situation. This observation indicates a cross-cultural variation that exists between Arabic and English. The following figure demonstrates the use of different invitation strategy types by British speakers of English in the two situations.

![Figure-8: Invitation strategies by the native speakers of English](image-url)
Note that the strategy type (interrogatives) that occurs with the highest incidence (56.25%) is exactly the same in both the situations. The next highest realization pattern is ‘statements of personal desire’ which shows no statistically significant difference in frequency between S1 (25%) and S2 (31.25%). Bald-on-record imperatives do not occur in S2 but used in S1 with low frequency (12.25%). The use of conditional hedges in S2 and not in S1 is supportive evidence. This suggests that there is a degree of sensitivity, though low, to social relations and their influence on performing an invitation in the English community.

To conclude, the realization patterns of invitation speech acts vary in both Arabic and English. Arabs using English in India demonstrate the great influence of Arabic on their performance. The cross-cultural variation in realization strategies results from variation in the conceptualization and definition of politeness and face wants in both cultures.

Supportive Moves:

Accompanying the head acts are supportive moves which, in the case of invitations, intensify the sincerity of the act and the insistence on compliance. Strategy types used as supporting moves in making interlanguage invitations include (1) the use of multiple head acts, (2) expressions of anger over non-compliance and (3) expressions of pleasure and appreciation over compliance. The three types of supporting moves are used in S1. In S2, only two of them are found to be used. The intensifying strategy ‘expressing anger over non-compliance’ is avoided because the invitee is of higher status. ‘Expressions of anger’ can be acceptable among the intimate friends, but not in the case of addressing a more senior interlocutor. Explanations of strategy types used as supporting moves are seen below along with samples of each.

(1) Multiple Head Acts:

‘Multiple head acts’ strategy refers to the use of additional head acts to the main one which can stand on its own as a separate invitation. The function this
repetition performs is the intensification of the illocutionary force. This intensification brings about certain reactions in the addressees. These reactions are traditionally called perlocutionary effects or perlocutions. Multiple invitations or head acts can lead the invitee to believe that the inviter is very adamant. The examples below demonstrate this strategy.

- *Hi X, I want to tell you that tomorrow we will have a wedding party. So you are invited with your friends. Don’t forget. You should come by 5 p.m.*

  The frequent use of ‘Don’t forget’ leads to the perlocutionary effect on the addressee that the addresser is highly interested in his/her presence. Multiplicity of head acts is also used while inviting a senior addressee.

- *I invite you with your friends to my wedding party. Please come.*

  The second head act in this example ‘please come’ is modified by the deference marker ‘please’.

(2) Expressing pleasure/appreciation over compliance:

Expressions of pleasure over accepting an invitation raise the degree of solidarity among the interlocutors. These are positive politeness strategies. They indicate that the presence of friends in such occasions is itself a source of pleasure and joy, hence the happiness would be multiplied. When an invitee receives an invitation that contains such expressions, he/she would feel that his/her presence in the party is very essential to maintain the rapport with the inviter. The examples below are taken from both S1 and S2 responses.

- *My friend, you are invited to my party. I will be glad to see you.*

In S2 this intensifying strategy is more frequently used and appears in 10 out of the 20 responses in which modifications occur.

- *I am honored to invite you to my wedding party. I would be highly delighted if you could come.*


- Can you please come to our wedding party with your friends? I really love to have your company.

- I’d like to invite you to my wedding party. It is my pleasure to be with us.

The frequent reference to the presence of the ‘senior’ invitee to the party as a source of honor and pleasure to the host is a transfer from Arabic invitations where this notion is recurrent in most of their formal and informal invitations. Such examples reinforce the argument that in the Arabic culture, inviting others to any kind of activity is a source of honor, pleasure, rapport, solidarity and appreciation. In the western culture, however, invitations are understood as impositions on the inviter’s negative face.

Arabs using English, in some responses, express their appreciation over the invitee’s acceptance of the invitation.

- We have a wedding party, so I would like to invite you. I appreciate your coming. Please do come.

The structure of the invitation sequence in this example consists of (1) introducing the topic, (2) head act 1, (3) Appreciation expression and (4) head act 2. The last two constituents of the sequence upgrade the intensity of the illocutionary force.

(3) Expressions of anger over non-compliance:

This type of supporting move occurs in the responses to S1. Such expressions are used by six of the twenty respondents who modify their invitations with supporting moves. Accepting an invitation and attending a friend’s party implies that the invitee respects his friend’s wants and desires. Failing to attend or declining an invitation may bring about the feeling and impression that the inviter’s wants and desires are not approved or respected by his friend. The result is anger from the part of the inviter. This feeling of anger is explicitly expressed that it would take place in case of failure to accept the invitation. The
feeling of anger may harm the friend’s rapport. When the inviter issues such threats, he/she puts his/her interlocutor’s negative face at risk. The imposition on H’s negative face is maximized. Look at the following responses:

- *We have a wedding party, and I want you to come with your friends. Look, it is important that you have to come; otherwise, I would be angry.*

- *You must come to the party with some friends; otherwise I would be angry with you. I wouldn’t accept any excuse you would give.*

Supporting moves as presented are a prominently typical feature of Arabic-English interlanguage invitations. Indian English users share some of these strategy types with Arabs using English but not with the same high frequency. The British English respondents do not rely much on these external modifications, perhaps because the supporting moves as presented are mostly imposing in nature. The English native speakers in their interaction seem to minimize the imposition on their interlocutors’ negative face; hence the avoidance of similar supporting moves.
Chapter 6

Politeness Strategies Used by Arabs in English Interlanguage

Apologizing

Defining Apologies:

An apology is a speech act which is a part of human interaction in every culture and which is called for when social norms are violated. Apologies are generally post-event acts. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984:206) point out that "By apologizing, the speaker recognizes the fact that a violation of a social norm has been committed and admits to the fact that s/he is at least partially involved in its cause. Hence, by their very nature, apologies involve loss of face for the speaker and support for the hearer." Goffman (1971:143) (cited in Owen 1983) states that "An apology is a gesture through which an individual splits himself into two parts, the part that is guilty of an offence and the part that dissociates itself from the delict and affirms a belief in the offended rule." Janet Holmes (1990:156) refers to an apology as "primarily and essentially a social act. It is aimed at maintaining good relations between participants." For the apology act to take place, three preconditions must hold true. These are:

a. S did X or abstained from doing X (or is about to do it)

b. X is perceived by S only, by H only, by both S and H, or by a third party as a breach of a social norm

c. X is perceived by at least one of the parties involved as offending, harming, or affecting H in some way

In order for the apology to materialize when these three preconditions exist, S must be aware of all the preconditions and infer the need for him/her to apologize (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984)
Apology and Politeness:

The model of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) predicts that in human interaction there is a need to maintain H’s face and that there has to be an increase in politeness in relation to the degree of face threat involved in a speech act. Citing Holmes (1990,176) “Assuming that an apology is quintessentially a politeness strategy (in that its predominant function relates to the maintenance of participants’ face needs), variation in features of apologies presumably reflects the speaker’s assessment of the appropriate balance between the support work required to maintain H’s face and the inevitable face loss incurred by the apologizer. One would predict, then, that the greater the offense, the more “polite” the remedy would need to be.” Indeed, Brown and Levinson commented on this quite explicitly at one point “If a breach of face respect occurs, this constitutes a kind of debt that must be made up by positive reparation if the original level of face respect is to be maintained. Reparation should be of an appropriate kind and paid in a degree proportionate to the breach” (1987 236). The application of Brown and Levinson’s theory of politeness to the analysis of apology supports the claim by some researchers (Wierzbicka, 1991) that speech acts and other verbal behavior cannot be truly understood without reference to cultural values and attitudes. Brown and Levinson (1987 187) refer to apology only marginally, listing it as intrinsically a negative politeness strategy, which indicates the speaker’s reluctance to impinge on H(hearer)’s negative face, i.e. “H’s want that his actions be unimpeded by others.” From S’s perspective, apologies are FTAs because they imply damage to S’s positive face” (Brown and Levinson, 1987 68, 76). Olshtain (1989 156), (cited in Suszczynska, 1999) attempts to incorporate these aspects, defining apology as “a speech act which is intended to provide support for the hearer who was actually or potentially mal-affected by a violation.” Here the act of apologizing is face-saving for the H and face-threatening for the S (speaker), in Brown and Levinson’s (1987) terms.” Holmes (1990 159) defines an apology in terms of face needs involving two interlocutors A and B. She states that “An apology is a speech act addressed to B’s face-needs and intended to remedy an
offence for which A takes responsibility, and thus to restore equilibrium between A and B (where A is the apologizer and B is the person offended)”. Summing up, then, an apologizer’s response has a two-fold aim: he must placate the victim to restore social harmony and he must restore his own social status.

**Apology Strategies:**

The linguistic realization of the act of apologizing can take one or more than one form in a single response. A number of researchers have developed classification systems for apology strategies (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984; Olshtain & Cohen 1983; Owen 1983; Trosborg 1987). This study follows the framework of Olshtain and Cohen (1983) as well as the CCSARP coding manual (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). This model has been chosen because it has been developed out of empirical observation. It has also shown its universality because it has been successfully tested on several languages (Olshtain 1989 cited in Suszczynska 1999). It shows that apologies generally use a limited number of verbal strategies. However, the variation in the choice and linguistic realization of these strategies is context- and culture-specific. This finding is supported by some observations in the discussion below which show the difference and variation in strategy selection and linguistic realizations across Arabic and English which represent entirely divergent cultures. Six broad basic categories have been used, with a number of subcategories where required:

1. **Illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs)**
   - An expression of regret, e.g. 'I'm sorry'
   - A request for forgiveness and accepting the apology, e.g. 'Please forgive me/please accept my apology.'

2. **Explanation or Account:** Any external mitigating circumstances, "objective" reasons for the violation, e.g.
   - Explicit: ‘The traffic was terrible.'
Implicit: ‘Traffic is always so heavy in the morning.’

3. **Taking on Responsibility**

- Explicit self-blame, e.g. ‘It is my fault/my mistake’
- Lack of intent, e.g. ‘I didn’t mean it’
- Expression of self-deficiency, e.g. ‘I was confused / I didn’t see you / forgot’
- Expression of embarrassment, e.g. ‘I feel awful about it’
- Self-dispraise, e.g. ‘I’m such a dimwit!’
- Justify hearer, e.g. ‘You’re right to be angry’
- Refusal to acknowledge guilt
  - Denial of responsibility, e.g. ‘It wasn’t my fault’
  - Blame the hearer, e.g. ‘It’s your own fault’
  - Pretend to be offended, e.g. ‘I’m the one to be offended.’

4. **Concern for the hearer**, e.g. ‘I hope I didn’t upset you /Are you all right?’

5. **Offer of repair**, e.g. ‘I’ll pay for the damage.’

6. **Promise of Forbearance**, e.g. ‘It won’t happen again’

The selection of the appropriate apology strategy is determined by any or all of the following variables:

- **Type of offense**: (whether it is of inconvenience, space, talk, time, possessions or social gaffe).
- **Seriousness of offense**: (light offense, medium offense or heavy offense) and
The relationship between the participants: (how socially distant they are and what relative power relations they hold). These variables are discussed in detail in Holmes (1990).

The present study on apologies is based on responses elicited from the Arab learners to three situations calling for apology speech act. These situations are specifically designed to reveal the subjects' use of semantic formulas when apologizing and how these formulas vary according to the degree of severity of offense, type of norm violated and the relationship between the interlocutors.

Situation 1:

"You accidentally bump into a well-dressed elderly lady at an elegant department store, causing her to spill her packages all over the floor. You hurt her leg too. It's clearly your fault and you want to apologize."

She: "Ow! My goodness!"

You: .................................................................

This situation is the most face-threatening among all the three. The offense seems very serious and both the apologizer and the offended are socially distant. Such situation is expected to elicit a range of responses, including a majority of the more heavily ranked apology strategies. According to Holmes (1990) "The more serious the offense, the more likely the remedial exchange will involve an explicit apology and the more elaborated the apology is likely to be by the inclusion of an explanation, an acknowledgement of responsibility or an offer of restitution."

Apology Strategies in Situation 1:

1. IFIDs:

IFIDs (Illlocutionary Force Indicating Devices) are the most direct and explicit realization of an apology which select a routinized, formulaic expression
of regret such as: (be) sorry, apologize, excuse, forgive, etc. IFIDs are the most central strategy for an apology in various languages. Generally, IFIDs are the first formula in apology as a speech act set. Figure-9 demonstrates the use of IFIDs in the data sets under investigation in this study.

The second IFID (an offer of apology) marked by the use of the performative verb (apologize) seems to be rarely used by all the groups. The
learners group does not offer apologies in the performative form apparently because this formula is very rarely used in British English (6.25%) “I apologize” and not used in Indian English. In Arabic, this formula is considered as a formal way of apologizing and commonly used in the high variety both spoken and written, hence never appears in L1 responses.

As it is demonstrated in the figure, the next highly used IFID is “A request for accepting the apology and forgiveness”. Unlike “sorry” which seems to play a very formulaic role (expressing perfunctory politeness), the request for accepting the apology and forgiveness is a real apology and has its root in the Arabic and Muslim culture. Muslims consider an offense as a sin and unless the offended forgives the apologizer, it is believed s/he will be punished for that in the Hereafter, hence a request for forgiveness. Socially speaking, the aim of such formulas is to restore social relationships once the victim forgives the offender by acting so as to ‘wipe the slate clean’, as if the offense had never happened. This formula is used in 20% of the whole interlanguage data. The following examples illustrate the point:

- “I hope to forgive me.”
- “Please accept my apology”
- “Please excuse me”
- “Could you pardon me?”
- “Would you please accept my apology and forgive me?”

This finding is supported by the high frequency of occurrence of the same IFIDs in Arabic data (50.7%). Indian English responses have the same strategy in 40% of the data. This suggests that Indians using English have the same concept in mind like Arab learners or that they transfer this strategy from their native languages. The British English subjects do not seem to use this strategy with high frequency. It is used by only one respondent out of the sixteen
participants in the present study whose response is “Please accept my apology.” It can be concluded that Arabs using English positively transfer the use of “sorry” from native English to their interlanguage, but negatively transfer the use of “requests for accepting the apology and forgiveness” from their mother tongue as well as the variety of English used in India.

Modifications of the IFIDs:

Generally, the remedial action starts with an IFID preceded by intensified adverbials. This intensification is one type of modifications an IFID undergoes in order to upgrade the apology. Other modifications (upgraders) observed in the learners’ data are the repetitive use of intensifiers and the use of more than one IFID in one utterance. The figure below demonstrates the different types of modifications the English learners group resort to in their production of apologies in situation 1.

![Figure-10: Modifications of IFIDs in situation-1](image)

It is observed that EI2 respondents use modifications to IFIDs in this situation with high frequency. Intensified adverbials occur in 70 per cent of the responses. The most common intensifying adverbial used is “so” (37%), followed by “very” (22.8%) and lowest frequently occurring adverbials are “really,
The high frequency of occurrence of “so” in the data is a salient feature of the learners’ interlanguage. The British English speaking group uses it in only 18.75% of their apologies, and they rarely use “very” (6.25%). In 18.75% of the time they use the intensifying adverb “terribly.” Surprisingly, in not even a single response “so” is used by Indian English users. “Very” precedes 25% of their IFIDs. Adverbs like “extremely, really, and terribly” are highly frequent in Indian English responses (50%) with preference to “extremely.” On the basis of these findings, Arabs using English are highly influenced by Indian English speakers in the use of intensifiers in apologies. The same percentage (70%) of intensifiers is used by both groups.

Let us now consider the second type of modifications: repetitive use of intensifiers. This is another technique followed by the Arab learners in order to intensify the force of an apology. The repetitive use of adverbials illustrates a case of deviation from the British English data as it appears in this study. Intensification by repetition is illustrated in only one British response “I am ever so sorry”, whereas in the interlanguage data, repetition appears in 17% of the total number of apologies. In some responses we find the repetitive use of “so”, “I am so so sorry”, “very” (“I am very very sorry”) and “really” (“I am really really sorry”). In some other responses, adverbs like “really, extremely” are either juxtaposed and precede the expression of regret “I am really extremely sorry” or either of them is placed side by side with “very” or “sorry” to intensify the illocutionary force “I am really very sorry”, “Extremely I am so sorry.” This feature of the learners’ interlanguage may be attributed to the influence of Arabic system of repetition because in the whole Arabic data there is one type of intensifiers repeated “jiddan jiddan” which means either “so so” or “very very” in only 9.5% of the data. Therefore, the repetitive use of “so” and “very” can be a direct translation from Arabic. In 20% of the Indian English apologies modification techniques similar to those used by Arab learners are observed which may suggest that this feature is also imported to the learners’ interlanguage as a result of contact with Indians using English.
The last type of modifications interlanguage apologies heavily undergo is that where either the same IFID is repeated in the same utterance usually with intensification “Sorry. Really I am very sorry” or more than one IFID is also repeated within the same utterance as in “I am so sorry. Would you please accept my apology?” As the figure shows, this strategy is highly frequent in the learner’s responses and figures in 41% of the time. Again this feature is a result of transfer from both Arabic L1 (39%) and Indian English (45%). Both the groups resort to the repetition of the same IFID or the use of more than one type of IFIDs in the same utterance to achieve the modification desired. The British English speakers do not use this strategy as frequently as Arabs or Indians. In only one response (6.25%) we find this kind of modification “Oh God! I am sorry. Are you ok? Here let me help you up. I’ll pick them up. Sorry again”.

IFIDs are considered the most important apology strategy. In the learners’ data they are used in every response. The total number of IFIDs in all the learners’ responses to this situation is 88. The next highly frequent apology strategy used by learners is “taking on responsibility” which will be discussed below. It occurred 43 times in the whole corpus.

1. **Taking on Responsibility**

   The apologizer resorts to this strategy only when s/he recognizes responsibility for the offense. There are four sub-formulas in this case and they can be described as follows:

   a. Expressing Lack of Intent

   b. Expressing self Deficiency

   c. Accepting the Blame/Self Blame

   d. Expression of Embarrassment

   The frequency of distribution of these sub-formulas as used by Arabs in English is shown in the following figure:
As the figure illustrates, Arab learners of English use a wider range of strategies to take on responsibility for the offense than the British English speakers do. They express lack of intent in 24.2% ("I didn’t mean to hurt you"), self-deficiency in 20% ("I didn’t see you"), accept the blame/self-blame in 8.5% ("It is my fault") and in only two responses they use expressions of embarrassment ("Really I am very embarrassed"). The native speakers of British English take on responsibility by only expressing self-deficiency (31.25%) ("Thai was very clumsy of me"; "I wasn’t looking where I was going"). On the other hand, in the Indian English as well as the Arabic L1 responses it is found that the four sub-formulas are used with similar frequency to that of the English interlanguage as used by Arabs. The various linguistic manifestations of “Taking on Responsibility” strategy indicate that the group of learners seems to be keener on taking on responsibility than the native English speakers group. This feature of apologies is imported from Arabic where “taking on responsibility” strategy is used in 64.5% of the data.

3. Offer of Repair:

“Offer of Repair” is a situation-specific semantic formula. Repair is an
attempt by the offender to compensate the incurred damage. An offer of repair is often required in cases in which a verbal apology is felt to be insufficient to restore social harmony.

Offers of repair used by the Arab learners of English are few in number (17%) compared with those used by the British speakers of English (93.75%). Indians use it in 30% of their responses. In the Arabic data this strategy is not highly frequent (27%). The content of these offers of repair as used by Arabs EL2 learners suggests that there are two kinds of forms: offers in the form of requests which can be only formulaic and direct concrete offers. The formulaic offers in the form of requests take the following generic form “Can I help you?” The second type of offers of help is typical of the learners’ responses and similar offers do not exist in either British or Indian English. They can be illustrated with the following examples:

- “I will take you to the hospital if you are seriously hurt.”
- “I will take you to the nearest hospital.”
- “Let me take you to the hospital to get your leg x-rayed.”

Although such responses are few in number, they are qualitatively significant. They reflect some cultural differences in dealing with such situations in both Arabic and English cultures. Such “offers of help” strategy shows that the immunity of one’s private self is much less part of the Arab culture. While Arabs can easily encroach into the territory of the offended by saying “I will take you to the hospital…,” the British English respondents either indirectly ask for permission to help “Can I carry your packages for you?”, “May I help you up?” or they use negative politeness terms like “please” to ask for permission to help “Please let me help you pick those up.”

This strategy seems of perfunctory function in English. In Arabic culture, in such situation, attention is focused on what to be done rather than what to be
said to redress the affront. Indian English users offer help in 30% of their responses. Most of these offers are requests to be allowed to help "May I help you?" and two responses take the form of "Please let me help you". The figure below demonstrates the use of this strategy as well as the strategy: "concern for the hearer" (it will be discussed below) in the four data sets.

![Graph showing the frequency of "offer of repair" and "concern for the hearer" strategies in situation-1](image)

4- **Concern for the Hearer:**

This strategy is situation-dependent. The offender expresses his concern about what happened to the victim in order to placate him/her. The analysis of the learners' responses shows that this strategy is mostly formulaic in character. In six out of the nine expressions (8.5%) which express concern for the hearer, the response is "Are you alright/ok?" In the remaining three responses (4.28%) there are some concrete expressions of concern like

- "Does your leg pain you too much?" and
- "Are you hurt? I hope it is not serious."

This strategy is more frequently used in the British English data than in the other three data sets. It appears in 43.75% of the responses and more than half
of these expressions of concern exhibit formulaic character “Are you ok/alright?”
In 18.75% of the data, the offender asks concrete questions about the seriousness of the damage:

- “Is your leg badly hurt?”
- “Are you ok? How is your leg?”

In Indian English expressions of concern for the hearer are not frequently used. They are used in only two responses (10%) of their apologies and these two responses are not formulaic but quite concrete

- “Are you hurt?”
- “I hope I haven’t hurt you.”

It can be concluded that expressions of concern for the hearer as used by the learners group (particularly the formulaic ones) are a direct transfer from English. These formulaic expressions are neither used in the Arabic data nor in the Indian English responses to this situation. In Arabic, most of the responses are concrete questions which can be translated as

- “Is your leg hurt?”
- “Are you badly hurt?”
- “How is your leg?”
- “I hope you are not badly hurt.” etc.

Apologies in English seem routinized in nature, whereas apology strategies in Arabic are more concrete, highly context-dependent and show a lot of variation.
5- An account or explanation of the situation:

This strategy is inherently situation-dependent and closely related to the type of violation which occurred. By using this strategy an apologizer tries to mitigate his guilt by giving an explanation or account of the situation. According to Blum-Kulka and Olhtain (1984:208) "....when S (speaker) intends to justify the offence as resulting from external factors over which s/he has no (or very little) control, then an explanation or account of the situation fulfills the function of an apology. Such an explanation may be explicitly related to the offense or it may present the ‘state of affairs’ in a general way, thus relating implicitly to the offence."

In the situation presently discussed this strategy is not important because the offense that has happened cannot be accounted for in terms of giving reasons why it happened. The offender did not do it on purpose. Therefore, in the whole data, this strategy appears in only two of the learners’ responses, in one of the Indian English responses and in four of the Arabic responses. All the accounts/explanations given are the same across the three groups “I was in a hurry.” In the British English data, this strategy never occurs.

Apology Situation 2:

At a restaurant, you change your mind after the food has already been served. You want to apologize and change the order. What would you say?...............................................................

The type of offense involved in this situation is of both different type and different degree of seriousness or severity. In situation one, offense was that of "space type". In this situation it seems of inconvenience. Inconvenience offenses include examples where the apologizer had not performed adequately in a particular context. The type of offense involved here is not highly offensive. It can be categorized under medium or low offense. There is a variation in the perception of the degree of severity of the offense in this situation. This variation
is attributed to different cultural conceptualizations. The norm infringement involved is expected to elicit politeness strategies oriented towards saving the face-loss of the speaker rather than the hearer. These apology strategies also play a great role in mitigating the forthcoming imposition on the “waiter” or “any member of the restaurant staff” to change the order which is already served. They aim at showing the addressee that the apologizer / requester is not impolite and the order change is not coercive. The figure below demonstrates the apology strategies used by the three groups of respondents.

![Apology Strategies as used in situation-2 by all the groups](image)

**Figure-13: Apology Strategies as used in situation-2 by all the groups**

As it is demonstrated in the figure, the main apology strategies used in this situation are “IFIDs” and “Giving Explanations or Accounts”. It is the type and degree of seriousness of offense which are responsible for the selection of the appropriate strategy. The social norm “in a restaurant” followed in almost different cultures is that “you order the food you like and once it is served it has to be taken”. A violation of this norm can be that the food is not liked after it is served due to some change in plan or taste. Therefore, it becomes challenging to
the speaker's face to ask for changing the order. It is also threatening to the hearer's negative face to impose on him to change the order. It may go against the rules of the restaurant. As a result of all this, the apologizer needs three things to perform his desire. He/she needs to use:

a- an illocutionary indicating device (IFID),

b- giving explanations or accounts to justify his plan change and
c- a polite request for changing the order.

We are here concerned with the points (1) and (2)

A. IFIDs:

The interlanguage users (Arabs) use IFIDs in only 38.5% of the data. The only IFID used is “an expression of regret”: (I am sorry.) Intensified adverbials occur in only 7% of the apologies. Repetition of the intensified adverbials occurs in only one response. Multiple IFIDs are used in only three responses (4%) and the IFID repeated is the “expression of regret” as in the following example: “I am really so sorry Sorry to disturb you.” Similarly, the British English group and the Indian English group do not use any other IFID except the “expression of regret”; however, they occur with higher frequency in both (81.25% and 60%) respectively. The native English group intensifies 25% of their apologies with (really, terribly, and very) and do not repeat IFIDs. The Indian English respondents intensify 20% (with heartily, really and very) of their responses and repeat intensified adverbials in only one response “I am heartily very sorry.” In the Arabic data IFIDs are used in 31% of the time and two types of IFIDs are used: “expression of regret” (12%) and “excuse/forgiveness expressions” (19%). Few IFIDs are intensified (4.7%).

Based on the discussion above on IFIDs, it can be concluded that Arabs using English have different perception of the severity of the social norm violation in this situation from that of the British English speakers. Arabs consider asking
for changing the order as a minor offense. So they use only few number of IFIDs (38.5%), whereas, the English native speakers weigh this offense heavily, hence IFIDs are used with high frequency (81%). Indian English users are mid-way. The important finding is that IFIDs are not positively transferred from the target language to the learners’ interlanguage in this situation as in situation 1. It is prevented by the cultural divergence in evaluating the seriousness of the offense.

B. An explanation or account of the situation:

This is the second main strategy that occurs in this situation along with IFIDs. After expressing regret over the norm violation, the apologizer needs to lessen the blame and provide justification for his behavior. Unless the speaker gives explanations, the hearer (the waiter and the whole staff running the restaurant) would feel offended. So, to avoid face-loss, some accounts of why the order is to be changed have to be given. The Arabs E2 respondents use this strategy in 27% of the data. It is interesting to go into the details of the “content” of explanations given by them. Various accounts are given; some are real and the others are not. In the real accounts (12.8%), the respondents honestly state that they have changed their mind about what they would like to eat (I changed my mind). They mean (I have changed my mind) and the difficulty of understanding the function and the proper use of the present perfect in English by Arabs leads to such grammatical mistakes. In the nine answers in which such real accounts are stated, not even once the proper tense form is used. The other type of justifications (14.2%) can be described as tricky. These tricky explanations take different realization forms. In one of the patterns, the respondent claims he has mistakenly ordered that food and what he wants to eat is something else. For example “I ordered that by mistake.” Another tricky response is “I don’t like spicy food. This food is full of spices”. This is a claim against the quality of the food and it is face-threatening to the hearer’s positive face. In a rather very interesting deceptive response, the respondent states he would say “I forgot the doctor’s advice. He told me not to eat this food.” An apologizer may deny that he ordered that food and it was not his mistake but that
of the waiter who served the wrong order “I didn’t place this order”. The function of resorting to such explanations is that the speaker dissociates him/herself from the intentional violation of the norm, hence saves his face. (Al-Zumor, 2003)

In the data from the native speakers of British English, similar explanations to those found in the learners’ data, particularly the real type, are used. In 50% of the data, the response is an acknowledgment that the wish to change the food served is a matter of change in mind

- “I’d like to change my order”,
- “There has been a slight change of plan”,
- “I seem to have changed my mind”.

In only one response the native speakers resort to a tricky explanation of the situation “I didn’t realize this food had . . . . . and I am allergic”. The Indian English users give the real accounts of the situation in 45% of their apologies and in 15% they give tricky explanations:

- “I forgot that I have been advised by my doctor not to take this kind of food”.

No other apology strategy is used in the learners’ data except one expression of self deficiency “I forgot the doctor’s advice”. The native speakers of British English, however, use the strategy “expression of concern for the hearer” in 18.75% of their responses:

- “I hope this does not cause you too much trouble”,
- “I hope I have not inconvenienced you in any way”.

In one response one native English speaker acknowledges responsibility by expressing self-blame:
• “It is my fault”.

**Opting out:**

The strategy of avoiding performing a speech act is called opting out. In the whole four data sets, this strategy occurs with very low frequency. Though instances of opting out are statistically insignificant, they are qualitatively so. In the interlanguage data, the examples of opting out (5.7%) are explained in terms of shyness, whereas in the native English data they are interpreted in terms of social restrictions. Shyness is clearly stated as the reason behind opting out by two of the Arab interlanguage users

• “*I would feel shy to replace the food.*”

• “*I would feel shy to change the order.*”

The British native speakers of English show tendency to opting out in 12.5% of the cases. The expressions that indicate opting out as used by the English natives suggest that in the British culture it seems more difficult to change the order after the food is served than in the Arabic culture. This argument is supported by the following examples from British English data:

• “*You would not do that in England and get away with it. They would make you pay for both.*” and

• “*I could never imagine doing that unless there was something wrong with the food.*”

In the contrary to this, there are responses in the Arabs' E2 data which have no expression of apology at all, as in

• “*Can you change this please?*”

• “*May I place another order please?*”
According to the Arabs, a polite request is sufficient for the purpose.

Apology Situation 3:

"You forget a book which you borrowed from your classmate and you are supposed to return it. How would you apologize?"

The new variables to test in this situation are the effect of familiarity as well as the type of offense on the selection of apology strategies. The addressee is a classmate who is well-known to the apologizer and the type of offense is that of failing to abide by an obligation. The offense involved in this situation implies a threat to positive face since it implies that the apologizer does not respect the contract between him and the other person (classmate). In Holme’s study on “Apologies in New Zealand English” (1990:183), this offense is rated as a “light offense” in a scale to categorize the seriousness of the offense. However, in the present study, this offense can be classified under a “medium” category. This finding is based on the type of remedial action involved for redressing the contract violation. The apology strategies used in the four data sets will be discussed below:

A. IFIDs:

The picture of IFIDs in the Arab learners group is complex and its complexity is somewhat similar to that of the first situation (bumping into a lady in a department store). This complexity stems from the influence of the very nature of the Arabic IFID realizations. Arabs in their English interlanguage use almost all formulas of IFIDs with a preference for (‘I am sorry, 80%). The remaining formulas (‘forgive me’, ‘I request you to accept my apology’, ‘I really apologize’ and ‘excuse me’) are used in 22.8%. In the British English data, the most common form is ‘sorry’ which occurs in 93.75% of the responses. No other IFID is used. In the Indian English responses, ‘sorry’ is used by 80% of the
respondents (the same percentage as in the Arabic-English interlanguage data) and only one respondent resorts to 'excuse me'. The lowest frequency of occurrence of aasif 'sorry' is observed in the Arabic data (62%) where other IFID formulae samihni ‘forgive me’, i’turni, ma’thiratan 'excuse me', a’tathir ‘I apologize’ are used in about 30% of the data. This variation of the use of IFIDs in Arabic seems responsible for the same variation observed in Arabs’ interlanguage responses. The figure below illustrates the use of IFIDs in the four data sets:

![Figure 14: IFIDs as used in the four data sets in situation-3](image)

**Upgrading the Apology:**

To intensify the illocutionary force of the utterance and make it a more sincere apology, upgraders are usually used. These are either intensifiers within the IFID or the use of multiple IFIDs. In some cases the same IFID is repeated once or twice. The following figure shows how apologies are upgraded by the three groups in the four data sets.
As it is demonstrated in the figure above, Arabs using English precede their expressions of regret by intensified adverbials in 34.2% of the data. The adverbs used are again 'so, very, really and extremely' as in situation1 (bumping into a lady) with a preference for 'so' and 'very'; 'really' and 'extremely' are used with very low frequency. Interestingly, the percentage of the frequency of occurrence of intensifiers preceding IFIDs in the Arab learners group is almost the same as it is in the Indian English group (35%). Indians use 'really' and 'extremely' more often. This type of adverbials occurs in the British English data with low frequency. The native speakers of English seem to appear less apologetic in this situation than their Arab and Indian counterparts. In the Arabic data, the only intensifier that follows the expression of regret is jiddan jiddan (27%). The equivalence to this intensifier in English can be any one of the following 'very', 'so', 'really', 'extremely' etc.

The repetition of internal intensifications in this situation is not statistically significant across the four types of data, apparently because the type of offense is medium. There are only three examples in the learners' data which illustrate the use of this type of upgrading; two examples with 'very' and one example with 'so'.
The multiple use of IFIDs as intensifiers of the apology by the interlanguage users in (18.2%) of the English data is a clear transfer from Arabic. The examples of responses in which IFIDs are multiply used are below:

- “I am sorry. I request you to accept my apologies”
- “I am so sorry. Please forgive me”
- “Excuse me……..forgive me”

The multiple use of IFIDs appear in only one response in the native speakers of English data “I am really sorry. I forgot your book. I was in a rush. Sorry.” The Indian English group never once uses this technique of intensification. It is, therefore, a typical feature of the Arabs’ interlanguage data and it results from transferring from Arabic L1 where it figures in 12.6% of their responses. The examples below from Arabic illustrate the point:

- ana aasif jiddan . afwan minnak. ‘I am very sorry. Your forgiveness’
- aasif jiddan jiddan. Samihni. ‘I am very very sorry. Forgive me’
- afwan. i’thurni. ‘Forgiveness. Excuse me’

In Arabic, the multiple use of IFIDs is very common. Therefore, this feature of Arabic influences the use of apology strategies by Arabs when they use English.

There is a fourth type of intensifiers which is typical of Arabic language: **swearing by God** after or before the expression of regret *aasif* as in

‘aasif wa-Allahi’ ‘sorry, by God’

Or

‘wa-Allahi aasif jiddan’. ‘By God, sorry’
It is very common in spoken Arabic and it expresses the most sincere type of apology according to Arabs’ perception.

A. Taking on Responsibility:

It has been mentioned in the above discussion in situation-1 that the strategy “Taking on Responsibility” has various sub-formulas. However, not all the sub-formulas are used in every situation of apologizing. They are situation-dependent and the selection of a certain sub-formula is determined by the seriousness and type of offense. In this situation, the sub-formula ‘expressing self-deficiency’ is the only strategy used in 74% of the second language learners’ data. All the responses which represent this strategy refer to the deficiency of forgetting to bring in the book on the time agreed upon. The following generic formula can be posited with respect to how interlanguage users use this strategy: (I forgot to bring your book). In all the responses which express ‘self-deficiency’ in the British English the following generic expression appears ‘I forgot your book’. The use of the infinitive “to bring” never once appears in the native English responses apparently because its meaning which is required to be conveyed is already implied in the proposition “I forgot your book” (43.75%). The non-native users of a second language tend to use more words than the native speakers in order to accomplish a similar pragmatic act (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1980). The Indian English users resort to ‘expressing self deficiency’ in 65% of the responses. They use structures similar to those used by Arabs in their English: ‘I have forgotten/forgot to bring /return your book’. Therefore, it can be said that the use of an infinitive (to bring/return) after ‘forgot’ is common to both Arabs and Indians in their use of English. Arabs may have transferred this feature from Indian English.

In addition to ‘expressing self-deficiency’ two more sub-formulas of the strategy “Taking on Responsibility” appear in the two native groups’ data. In Arabic, the sub-formula ‘expressing lack of intent’ is used by two subjects mush qasdi ta’xeer alkitab ‘I did not mean to delay returning the book’. In the
English of the native speakers, the sub-formula ‘expressing self-dispraise’ is used by 18.75% of the subjects. For example, one of the respondents disparages himself for the delay by mocking at his own weak-mindedness and reports he would say ‘I’m such an idiot’.

What has been discussed as “expressing self deficiency” which is a sub-formula of “Taking on Responsibility” strategy in Olshtain and Cohen model (1983), can also been explained with reference to Owen’s model (1983:169). Owen refers to the process of apologizing as ‘Primary Remedial Moves (PRMs)’ and proposes a set of apology strategies providing examples of formulaic PRMs from a variety of languages. She hypothesizes that in all cultures, PRMs will realize one or other of these strategies. In this model, the strategies for primary remedial moves with their sub-strategies are presented below:

A: Non-substantive (ritual) strategies:

(1) Assert imbalance or show deference
(2) Assert that an offence has occurred
(3) Express attitude towards offence
(4) Request restoration of balance

B: Semi-substantive strategies

- Give an account

C: Substantive strategies

(1) Repair the damage
(2) Provide compensation

In this situation (3), that an offender takes on responsibility by saying “I forgot your book” is put under the category “Assert that an offence has occurred”
strategy (A) in Owens’ model. According to her “The rationale for this strategy is......the offence itself is stated to have occurred. ......in this way the offender shows not only that he is not attempting to escape censure (in the hope that his act may have gone unnoticed), but also that he is actually willing to draw attention to the offence.”

Admitting the significance of Brown and Levinson’s theory (1978), Owen (168) points out that “Cross-cultural differences in the selection of PRMs strategies) may be accounted for along the lines proposed by Brown and Levinson for politeness strategies:

Predominant interactional styles, which constitute a crucial part of cultural ethos, are at least in part built up of strategies for face redress that are in turn anchored to types of social relationships, as measured in terms of vertical and horizontal social distance. (Brown and Levinson, 1978:256)

B. Offer of Repair:

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984:208) point out that an offer of repair can either be ‘specified’ “I’ll pay for the damage” or ‘unspecified’ “I’ll see what I can do”. All the responses which offer repair in the interlanguage data (61.4%) are clearly specified. Mainly two formulas are used to realize the ‘specified offer of repair’ in the learners’ responses, namely ‘promising to bring the book next day or at a later time’ and ‘asking the offended about the possibility of returning the book next day or at a later time’. So far as the first formula is concerned, it is used with two types of time indicators: ‘specified’ and ‘unspecified’. The following examples from the English as used by Arabs illustrate the point:

“I will bring it tomorrow” (specified time)
“I will bring it next time” (unspecified time)
# “By next day I will return it” (specified time)
“May I get it later?” (unspecified)
"Can I return the book tomorrow?"  (specified)

"Is it ok if I give it to you tomorrow?"  (specified)

Arab learners of English tend to be specific in terms of the time when they intend to return the book. The use of ‘tomorrow’ in 49% of the data supports this finding. The unspecified future time indicators are used in only 4% of the responses.

Native speakers of British English, on the other hand, seem to use three kinds of formulas for realizing offers of repair:

(1)  ‘specified’ “I will return it tomorrow”,

(2)  ‘unspecified’ “I would like to make it up to you.” And

(3)  ‘asking the offended about the way to redress’ “Is there anything I can do to make it up to you?” In the Indian English responses, only ‘specified’ offers of repair are used (50%) and time indicators are all specified and refer to ‘tomorrow’ as the time for returning the book.

One important feature of the interlanguage ‘offers of repair’ is the use of intensifiers by 18.5% of the subjects. Various forms of emphatic forms are used which make the ‘offer of repair ‘more sincere (‘promise’, ‘definitely’, ‘sure’, ‘100 %’). For example,

- ‘I promise I will bring it tomorrow’,
- ‘Definitely, I will bring it tomorrow’,
- ‘Tomorrow, surely I will bring it’,
- ‘Tomorrow 100% I will bring you the book.’

In the data from Arabic, there is a very important modification (hedge) of the ‘offer of repair ‘which is used by 22% of the subjects in this situation. The
expression is *insha Allah* which means ‘if Allah wills’ or ‘God willing’ and it is used when the speaker refers to the future to indicate uncertainty. The feeling of uncertainty stems from the notion of “death may come any time” or “plans may change” as no body knows what would happen next day. This concept is a very significant part of the Muslims’ faith and it is responsible for the frequent use of the expression *insha Allah* in their spoken language. Although no single example occurs in the interlanguage data of Arabs, it is very common in their spoken English in the Indian context. Indian Muslims using English use this formula very often in spoken interaction.

Another feature that should be mentioned here is the variation in the use of the performative verb of ‘repair’. A range of verbs are used by the three groups using English; ‘bring’ is used in 49% of the data by Arabs in English, 31% by native speakers and 25% by the Indian English group; ‘get’ is used in only 2% of the learners’ responses, 19% of the natives’ data and not used by Indians; ‘return’ appears in 4% of the Interlanguage data, 12% by the native speakers and 15% of the Indian English responses. The verb ‘give’ occurs in 4% of the learners’ responses and 5% of the Indians’ responses and does not seem to be used by the native speakers of English. The verb ‘give’ is not appropriate in this context from the point of view of English native speakers. The verb ‘give’ is used in the context when A gives B something for example as a gift. So it implies permanence (Blum-Kulka and Levenston, 1987:162). So it is inappropriate to use the verb ‘give’ with some one who already owns the possession of the thing under discussion (the book). The distribution of the use of performative verbs shows that Arab subjects are not fully aware of the use of the verbs ‘get’ and ‘give’ and their propositional functions. Due to the high influence of Arabic on the English interlanguage, Arab respondents use the verbs mentioned indiscriminately.

D. An explanation or account of the situation:

The group of Arab learners of English gives accounts or justifications for
the delay of returning the book in only 7% of their responses. The following examples are taken from the interlanguage data to illustrate the use of this strategy:

- "I was in a hurry."
- "I was busy in some work."
- "It was of a great use to me."
- "I have got little to finish."

It has been mentioned that the strategy of providing accounts of the situation is context-dependent. Therefore, in this situation giving explanations is not of great importance. The respondents have already expressed their self-deficiency "forgetting" in 74% of the data as the main reason behind the inconvenience. The accounts given by the English native speakers (18.75%) are almost the same as those given by the Arab learners:

- 'It is a bit late but I needed it a bit longer than I imagined',
- 'It's late because it is such a good read and I am enjoying it so much'.

In another response one native English speaker refers to being in a hurry as the reason for forgetting the book

- 'I was in a rush.'

The first two examples of apologies are actually positive politeness strategies. The apologizer expects that the offended likes his likes and wants his wants, so he assumed he would not mind extending the time of enjoyment to his classmate.

Similarly, Indian English users use these explanations in 15% of their responses. Examples are:
• ‘I came to class so hurriedly that I forgot to bring your book’;
• ‘Due to an urgent piece of work, I forgot to return your book’.

It is observed that the three groups do not use this strategy with significantly great frequency. Arabs in their English, resort to attributing the reason of the offense to “forgetfulness” with greater frequency (74%) than both native English group (43%) and Indian English group (65%).

Three Situations Compared:

The three situations used in the present study to test apology strategies as used by Arabs using English in the Indian context differ in many respects. In the first situation (bumping into a lady at a department store), the offense is serious and, the offender and the victim are socially distant. In the second situation (changing the order), the undesired action made by the apologizer is not of the same degree of seriousness as that in situation (1). However, the customer at a restaurant is generally socially distant. So, the changing variable in this situation (seriousness of the offense) can be responsible for eliciting higher number of apology strategies required to ‘set things right.’ In the third situation (forgetting the book of a classmate), the degree of seriousness of the undesired action is in between the one involved in S(1) and that of S(2). The most important variable to be tested here is how intimates apologize to each other.

This section is, therefore, concerned with investigating the variation in apology strategy selection by interlanguage users across the three situations. Some hints to cross-cultural variation in the realization of apology strategies will also be given.

Based on the analysis of the three situations above, it has been observed that the patterns of strategy choice in the three situations arranged from highest frequency to the lowest frequency in each situation take the following forms:
- Situation (1):

IFIDs > Acknowledgement of responsibility > Offers of repair > Concern for the hearer > Accounts/Explanations

- Situation (2):

IFIDs > Accounts/Explanations > Acknowledgement of responsibility

- Situation (3):

IFIDs > Acknowledgement of responsibility > Offers of repair > Explanations

This patterning demonstrates that in S (1) the total number of apology strategies preferred to be used in the whole corpus is five. The strategy that occurs with the largest percentage is the IFIDs and the one of the smallest percentage is giving accounts or explanations. The other strategies are mid-way and arranged from higher to lower frequency. In S (2), however, the fewest number of strategies are used by the learners. 'IFIDs' remain the strategy used with the highest frequency followed by 'explanations'. 'Acknowledgement of responsibility' strategy is marginally used. The third situation elicits four strategy types arranged from higher to lower frequency as follows: 'IFIDs', 'Acknowledgement of responsibility', 'offers of repair' and 'explanations or accounts'. A major finding noticed in this study is that the frequency of occurrence of the major apology strategies in the Arab learners' English data is the same as those found in the Indian English data. Patterns are the same. The native speakers of British English use slightly different patterning that is shown below:

Situation (1):

IFIDs > Offers of Repair > Concern for the Hearer > Acknowledgement of Responsibility

Situation (2):
These differences in strategies arrangement stem from cultural differences. The correlation between strategies arrangement in Indian English and in the data from Arabic-English interlanguage and Arabic may be interpreted as a result of some aspects of cultural similarities. Arabs as well as Indians seem to value acknowledgements of responsibility as prior to offers of repair in case of offenses. To restore social harmony, they pay more attention to emotionally placating the victim/offended first (by acknowledging responsibility) than to offer repair which comes at a next step. Perfunctory ‘offers of repair’ are not highly frequent in the interlanguage data (particularly of S (1)) which can be explained in the light of what Cohen and Olshtain (1985) pointed out that “It is possible that in some cultures the need to be ‘matter of fact’ and ‘efficient’ is more valued than a ritualized show of emotion. The result would be less verbal apology and more concern with the actual violation”. In offering repair, Arabs using English tend to be more concrete than the native English speakers. British English speakers’ use of ‘offers of repair’ is more ritualized than concrete.

Comparing the realization patterns of the major strategies by Arabs using English in the three situations is presented below in detail.

The use of IFIDs:

IFIDs are identified by Holmes (1990) as ‘an explicit expression of apology’. They are direct speech acts functioning as apologies. It is clear from the figures presented earlier in the three situations that an explicit expression of apology, and, in particular, the strategy of expressing regret, is the most frequent apology strategy selected. In situation (1), ‘be sorry’ formula appears in every
response (100%) , 'forgive me' , 'excuse me' , 'please accept my apologies' and 'pardon me' are selected by 20% of the subjects They either occur as the only IFID in an utterance or combined with other indirect apologies In S (2), explicit expressions of apology occur with very low frequency (38%) No direct expressions of apology are used other than 'expressing regret' This formula is used by 80% of the respondents in S (3) Modifications IFIDs undergo in the learners' responses in the three situations are demonstrated as below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intensified Adverbials</th>
<th>Repetition of intens Adv</th>
<th>Multiple IFIDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S (1)</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S (2)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1 4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S (3)</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>4 2%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above presentation of IFIDs and their modifications in the three situations suggests the following findings

1- The higher the degree of offense, the higher the frequency of occurrence of IFIDs

2- **The higher the degree of offense, the more the variation in using IFIDs.**

3- The higher the degree of offense, the higher the frequency of occurrence of modifications in a situation

The findings (1) and (3) are common to all the groups participating in this study The second result is specifically an Arabic-English interlanguage feature which is a direct transfer from Arabic

**Acknowledgement of Responsibility in Interlanguage Apologies:**

By acknowledging responsibility the offender recognizes his/her fault in causing the infraction The degree of such recognition on the part of the
apologizer can be placed on a scale. The highest level of intensity is an acceptance of the blame: ‘It’s my fault’. At a somewhat lower level would be an expression of self-deficiency: ‘I was confused/I didn’t see you /You are right’. At a still lower level would be the expression of lack of intent: ‘I didn’t mean to’. An apologizer can also express embarrassment: ‘I feel shy’. The offender may also dispraise him/herself as a sign of acknowledging responsibility: ‘I’m such an idiot’.

This strategy seems to occur with high frequency and variation in the forms it takes when the offensive action involved is highly severe. In situation (1), Arabs using English use four sub-categories of ‘taking on responsibility’ strategy. They express lack of intent, self-deficiency, self-blame and use expressions of embarrassment. In the second situation which is rated by Arabs as less severe ‘acknowledgement of responsibility’ is used by only one respondent. The type of offense involved can be responsible for that. Although the last situation is quite offensive with medium severity, only one sub-type of this strategy is used in 65% of the data, namely ‘expressing self-deficiency’. The result of this discussion can be formulated as follows: the higher the degree of severity of the offense, the more the variation in the forms realizing the strategy of ‘taking on responsibility’.

This finding is found to be shared by both Arabs (in their English as well as in their Arabic) and Indians using English. The English native speakers group seems to be economic in using the sub-categories of this strategy even though the offense is of a high severity type. In situation (1), they use only ‘self-deficiency’ sub-strategy; in S (2), ‘expressing self-blame’ figures only once; and in S (3) two sub-strategies are employed to show acknowledgement of responsibility, namely ‘expressing self-deficiency’ and ‘expressing self-dispraise’.

Other Strategies:

In the interlanguage data, Arab learners offer repair in S (1) (as a linguistic strategy) with very low frequency (17%). In S (2), no offers of repair are used and
in S (3) it is used by 61% of the subjects. It can be concluded from these percentages that: the strategy ‘offer of repair’ is situation-dependent and that in situations which involve physical damage, taking redressive action is more valued than asking for permission to take redressive action. The former choice is a feature of Arabic-English interlanguage, whereas, the later option is a feature of British English.

Similarly, the strategy ‘concern for the hearer’ is down-valued in the interlanguage responses. However, it is used in S (1) and S (2) in the native English. This indicates that in the western culture, verbal strategies used to redress offensive actions are very common.

Finally, the strategy of ‘giving accounts or explanations’ has been found to be context-dependent. It is used by Arabs using English in the second situation with very significant frequency. The offense involved in the situation has to be accounted for by giving explanations as to why ‘the food is to be changed’. Unless explanations are given, the blame cannot be lessened. In the first and third situation the percentages of the occurrence of this strategy is insignificant. Explanations given have to be sincere; otherwise the face risk may not be avoided.

In concluding, this chapter is a contribution to a more detailed analysis of interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics with reference to apology speech act. It may help in producing a clearer picture of differences in apologetic responses and help understanding the nature of stylistic variation across cultures. The study can also have some pedagogical implications. Syllabus designers and material preparers have to take the findings of this study into account during the preparation of foreign language materials to the learners of both English and Arabic.
Chapter 7

Features of Correction Speech Act in the Interlanguage
Pragmatics of Arab Learners of English

Introduction:

Face-threatening acts are important to study because they are the source of so many cross-cultural miscommunications. Many face-threatening speech acts have been investigated, like apologies, requests, refusals, complaints, disagreements, expressions of disapproval, expressions of gratitude, correction, etc. One of the conclusions derived from these studies is that second-language learners face the great risk of offending their interlocutors or of miscommunication when performing face threatening acts. Because languages differ in the social rules of speaking such problems may occur when L2 learners are not aware of pragmatic competence in the target language. This may result in what Thomas (1983) calls “Pragmatic failure”. Leech (1983) also observes that “transfer of the norms of one community to another may well lead to ‘pragmatic failure’ and to the judgment that the speaker is in some way being impolite”.

Correction is a highly face-threatening speech act mainly to the hearer’s positive face. It also threatens the speaker’s positive face as well. According to Brown and Gilman (1989:173) “Of the FTAs (face threatening acts) that threaten positive face, the most frequent and most easily identified are criticisms, insults, disagreements, and corrections......Positive FTAs always threaten to damage, directly or indirectly, the hearer's self esteem”. In this chapter, the performance of the face-threatening speech act of correction by Arabs using English in India is investigated. The primary concern of the chapter is to examine how this speech act is performed with status unequal – a person of lower status addressing someone of higher status and a person of higher status addressing someone of lower status. How the speech act of correction is performed when interlocutors are of equal status will also be investigated.
The study is based on the analysis of elicited responses from Arabs using English as a second language to three prompts presented below:

**Correction situation 1 (Participants equal):**

Your specialization is history and you are one of the senior participants in an academic discussion. Participants are not of an equal seniority. One of your colleagues who is equal to you in seniority gives an account of a famous historical event with the wrong date. You correct him saying…………………………………………………………………………………

The questions this chapter is expected to answer are:

(a) What are the various politeness strategies Arabs use in English to make the correction speech act less face-threatening?

(b) What influences have Arabic, British English and Indian English upon the interlanguage of the learners (transfer).

(c) Are status relationships critical in determining the character of communicative behaviour of the learners?

**Results and Discussions:**

In reply to the first question of this chapter, the semantic formulas used to realize this speech act will be divided into three parts which comprise the structure of the speech act: (i) **adjuncts** (positive remarks), (ii) **softeners**, and (iii) **main body of the speech act** (To use the terms of Takahashi and Beebe, 1993). The adjunct refers to the positive remarks that preface a correction. Softeners are expressions that soften the correction and make it the least face-threatening possible. ‘Main body of the speech act is the act of correcting the factual error by stating that a mistake has taken place, showing disagreement with the interlocutor, indirect correction in the form of a question or it can take the form of directly providing the correct piece of information. The components of this speech act are discussed in the following sections:
1. **Adjuncts:**

Prefacing a correction act with a positive remark is a positive politeness strategy the aim of which is to express approval of certain performance by H (hearer) which results in enhancing his positive face. Brown and Levinson (1987:113) refer to these remarks as ‘token agreement’: “The desire to agree or appear to agree with H, leads also to mechanism for pretending to agree.” In this situation, even if positive remarks are used by all respondents it is justified because the factual error is partial and minor compared with the whole presentation. However, not all the subjects use this strategy. The use of positive remarks by only 12% of the Arab learners seems to be strategic aiming at lessening the forthcoming threat to the interlocutor's positive face that is posed by correction act. The interlocutor is of equal status and hence, Arabs using English (only seven), to make their counterparts feel comfortable and appreciated, preface their correction with expressions like:

- “What you have said is correct”,
- “Your discussion was excellent”,
- “You are absolutely right”, etc.

Such remarks satisfy the hearer's positive face wants to be approved and liked in his presentation by the audience. This is the importance of positive remarks for the benefit of the hearer. As for the speaker, positive remarks play the role of mitigating the forthcoming threat to H's face, and give S (speaker) a chance to proceed further giving his comments without appearing to be rude.

Arabs in their Arabic responses use positive remarks in 18% of the data. The 6% difference between their positive remarks in English and Arabic indicates that there is a greater tendency to use this strategy in Arabic. The limitation of the learner's linguistic competence hinders them from expressing what they would say in L1 when using L2. This observation is supported by considering what exactly they say in Arabic. Take the following examples:
• *ma ashaar ila'hi al-ax yushkar ila'hi min hāith assard,* (what has been pointed out by the brother is to be appreciated from the point of view of presenting the account).

• *musharakat al ax azzameel kanat mumtazah,* (The presentation of our brother and mate was excellent).

• *ashkurak ala al ma'lumat al qayyimah,* (Thank you for the valuable information).

All these comments are extremely important even if there is no face-threatening act. They satisfy the speaker’s positive face.

The second normative group (British English native speakers) never once use positive remarks to preface the act. It may seem inappropriate to use a positive remark with equals in the British society. According to Takahashi and Beebe (1993:151), “The positive remark often used in corrections is praise of the interlocutor, and such praise usually comes from the “superior”, not from the lower-status to the higher-status person”. Hence, I can add that since the conception in the American society (and may be British as well) is that praise should come only from superiors, it is not also appropriate to be used among equal participants. This may be the interpretation of avoiding this positive politeness strategy by the British respondents in this situation. Indians using English use a real positive remark in only one response “My honorable colleague has given a very good account of the event, but.....”. Another respondent gives a very lukewarm remark that would hardly comfort the interlocutor: “factually you are correct but chronologically you are wrong.” For Indians it seems that prefacing their corrections with positive remarks to equals is not of great importance. The figure below demonstrates the use of adjuncts and softeners by the participating groups.
Figure-16: The use of Adjuncts and Softeners in the four data sets in correction situation 1 (correcting another of equal status).

2. Softeners:

The softening devices used by respondents to this speech act to soften the correction and make it the least face-threatening possible are of three types: hedges, questions and other expressions (intended to lighten the gravity of the interlocutor's mistake or to defend the interlocutor).

(a) Hedges:

"One characteristic device in positive politeness is to hedge......, so as to make one's own opinion safely vague (Brown & Levinson 1987: 116). As a negative politeness strategy hedges of this kind (discussed here) are called quality hedges by B & L which may suggest that the speaker is not taking full responsibility for the truth of his utterance". Arab learners of English use this strategy in 38% of their responses to their equal participants. The function of hedges is to soften the correction that immediately follows.
The pattern for hedges is not the same as that for positive remarks. The largest percentage, (81%) of hedges, appears to be used by the British subjects, followed by Indian English speakers (41%), English learners (38%) and last percentage (26%) is found in the Arabic data.

Arabs in their English use the following hedges: “I think, May be, Most probably, I believe, it is possible that”. In 32% of all, the softener “I think” is used. The other expressions: “may be, most probably, I believe, it is possible” occur in only 6% of the hedges or along with “I think” in the same utterance to make the act least face-threatening. For example:

- “May be the date is not accurate.”
- “If I am not mistaken, I believe the date is……”
- “Oh my friend, It is not…. I think it was in ……”

The overuse of “I think…..” is an indication of transfer from Arabic where the equivalents to (I think): “athunn” and “a’taqed” are the only hedges in the Arabic data (26%). The softener “athunn” is the proper equivalent to “I think”. Though in classical Arabic “a’taqed”, used to mean “believe”, in the modern spoken Arabic it has mostly lost the assertive meaning, and now both “athunn” and “a’taqed” can be used interchangeably. The low percentage of hedges indicates that Arabs are more direct in their correction than both British English speakers and Indian English users.

British native speakers of English use hedges in (81%) of the data with greater variation in the linguistic expressions that are used as hedges. The following expressions appear in their responses: “I believe, may be, I am afraid, I feel, I hate to say……., actually I think, I could be wrong, probably, I don’t wish to appear rude, but…….”. This variation suggests that British native speakers of English seem to rely much on strategic verbal means of correcting for undoing the threat to face. The most common hedges in the English native data are “I think…..” and “I believe….”. Both are equally used in (31%) of the responses.
While learners group resort to positive remarks to lessen the face threat, English native speakers rely on softeners. Indians' hedges, in this situation are also few in number. They use “I think, perhaps, if I am not mistaken, I am little confused.” The hedging expression “I think...” is common to all the groups. Other expressions used by Indians do not appear in the learners' responses except one response said by a Sudanese student who has been in India for about ten years. The way he performed the speech act of correction is interesting. The response is “If I am not mistaken, I believe the data is.......” The first part is imported to his interlanguage from Indian English and the second part seems British.

3. Questions

The second type of softeners that can accompany the speech act of correction is the use of questions. In some responses, learners use this semantic formula to accomplish the speech act of correction itself. Asking a question rather than stating the mistake outright results in a less face-threatening act. For example, when the interlocutor receives the correction as follows:

- Is that the date of the historical event you just stated? Or
- Should it be 1960 if I am not mistaken?

He/she would feel more comfortable than when he hears it as

- “I think the date is 1960 not 1975”.

Questions are also used by Arabs using English to pretend that they just want to confirm their knowledge about the correct date. Such questions follow the act of correction as an attempt to minimize the face threat as in:

- “I think that the date of the event was 1915. Am I right?”
- “I think the date is 1915. What do you think?”

A third function of questions according to the learners' responses is a
request for correction. Learners ask their equal participants to correct their mistakes

- “Can you correct the mistake?”
- “Can you change it?”

or they make a request to be given a chance to correct the wrong date

- “May I correct?”
- “Can I correct you?”
- “Would you mind if I say the right date?”

The performance of the speech act of correction in the form of questions which appear to confirm the piece of information received from the interlocutor is less embarrassing than asking him directly to correct his mistake or to give others chance for correction. While former questions are politeness strategies to save the interlocutor’s face, the later questions can aggravate the situation and result in the face loss of the other person.

Interestingly, Arabs in their Arabic data use questions in only one response (1.5%) compared to (14%) in their English interlanguage. The question used in the Arabic data is a request for permission to modify slightly what was said wrongly,

- “mumkin a’addil ala kalamak shwai”
- May I make little modification to what you have said?

In Arabic data, speakers prefer to be direct in stating that a factual error has been made. This observation is supported by the use of few examples of hedges and questions.

Indians in their Indian English seem to share with Arabic EL2 users the
feature of requesting the interlocutor to correct or give chance to others to correct
the wrong information Questions are used in 9% of the Indian English
responses

The British group use questions as softeners in a way that differs from
both Arabs E2 respondents and Indian English speakers Native speakers of
English use questions in 31% of the responses One of the questions aims at
drawing the addressee’s attention indirectly to the factual error hoping that he
may realize the error and correct it The question “Did you in fact, mean 1966?’
makes the listeners assume that what happened was a slip of the tongue
Another question seems more direct in drawing the addressee’s attention to his
error “Did you realize you gave the wrong date?” Though it is a direct threat to
H’s face, it remains more polite than stating the correction in a declarative
sentence In three responses native speakers ask questions like,

- “Isn’t the correct date 1066?”
- “Was it not 1066?”

The referee in all questions remains the presenter of the account which
maintains his face wants. No sentence appears to be directly used to request the
addressee to do the correction or to let others do it In most of the questions
native speakers of English avoid reference to “I” or “you” pronoun in their
correction They prefer impersonal perspective Referring to “you” would expose
deficiency and to “I” would expose some sense of boasting Therefore, the
following neutral questions soften the threat to H’s face

- “Isn’t it 1960? I could be wrong, but I think it is then ”
- “Was it not 1960?” Isn’t the correct date 1960?”

Learners, on the other hand, never once put a question to their
interlocutors without referring to “I” or “you” pronoun This is a reminder of the
concept of “perspective” as discussed in the chapter on “requests" Arabs using
English seem to apply their tendency towards directness which is a feature of Arabic discourse to their English interlanguage. The relevance of pointing to directness is that referring to “I” or “you” makes corrections more direct than when they are avoided.

(c) Other expressions:

During the performance of correcting someone, irrespective of his/her relational status, speakers may use expressions which lighten the gravity of their interlocutor’s mistakes with the aim of preserving their positive face wants. One of the Arab learners of English prefaces his correction with this remark, “one can never forget…….” The speaker refers to an unavoidable deficiency of any human, like memory lapse, unconscious slip, etc. This positive politeness strategy makes the correction process very smooth and the hearer feels somewhat comfortable and less challenged. Other respondents use some similar expressions like “He may have missed the exact date”, “There is confusion”, “May be you are confused a little…….” However, these expressions are not as effective as the first one in saving H’s face wants.

In the Arabic data, Arabs, mention “memory lapse” as the reason behind the mistake in three responses and in one response mistake is attributed to tension. Native speakers of English, on the other hand, do not prefer exposing one’s or others’ deficiency to public, so they, in one response, refer to the mistake as “innocent”, “It was probably an unconscious slip…….innocent mistake……. something we all do at times”. Indian English speakers do not use any of these “other expressions” in their responses.

(d) In-group Identity markers:

In 18% of the data, Arabs in their English use in-group identity markers (address forms). Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that “By using any of the innumerable ways to convey in-group membership, S (speaker) can implicitly claim the common ground with H (hearer)…….” These markers represent a
positive politeness strategy. The address forms used by learners are "brother/collleague, my dear and friend", the last of which (friend) is very commonly used in their responses. This seems again a case of transfer from Indian English. The Indian group uses in-group address forms in 41% of the data with preference to “friend” which is used in 22% of the responses. In Arabic (L1) there is preference for the use of “brother” which appears in only one response in learners’ language. In the British English responses, in-group identity markers like “Friend, brother, colleague, dear” are not used. In only one response, the name of the addressee is mentioned.

The results with regard to the use of address forms suggest that Arabs in their English and in Arabic (L1) and Indians as well put great emphasis on the use of in-group address forms, particularly when addressing their equal participants, unlike British English speakers who do not rely much on these forms. Our group of learners transfers the use of “friend” from the Indian society which has replaced the use of “brother” in their Arabic L1.

(3) Main Body of the Speech Act:

The above discussion of the use of adjuncts and softeners presented the semantic formulas used as politeness strategies whose function is to make the “main body of the speech act of correction” as less face-threatening as possible. Now this main body of the act will be investigated to explore how Arabs in their English perform this act. The selection of words, transfer and the degree of directness and politeness, will also be explored. The different realization patterns of the main body of this speech act are presented below:
(a) **Stating the occurrence of the factual error:**

In such pattern language users declare that something has gone wrong. There are many words and phrases that can convey this meaning. Any utterance or response that contains one or more such words or phrases, it is classified under this pattern. These expressions are “wrong, incorrect, not correct, not accurate, mistaken, error, mistake, mixed up”. Arabs using English use this pattern in 30.7% of their responses. They prefer using the words “wrong” (18%), "mistake" (9%), incorrect/not correct (3%). For example:

- “**Brother, you are wrong and the right date is 1966**”,
- “**Excuse me, you made some mistake**”,
- “**The date is not correct**”.

In the data from Arabic as a first language, it is observed that in (31.6%) of the data the same pattern of stating the occurrence of a factual error is used suggesting no significant difference between both data sets. This is an indication
Native speakers of English as well as Indian English speakers use this strategy with higher frequency (68% and 63% respectively) than Arabs in their English interlanguage. The British group prefers to use “wrong (25%), incorrect (18%) mistaken (18%), error (6%)” as indicators of the illocutionary force. Indians use “wrong” in 41%, “incorrect” in (4%) and “error/mistake” in (4%).

The difference in percentage between English learners group (30%) and English native group (68%) with regard to the use of this realization pattern can be attributed to the fact that in the British society, participants in an academic session are encouraged to oppose in case their interlocutors make factual errors. Academic gatherings seem to be more interactive. Arabs, on the other hand, are not in the habit of such academic experiences, so they do not very often state the occurrence of factual errors as openly as the British. However, they deviate from the English native norm with regard to the use of softeners which are highly strategically used by English native speakers to make light of the candid corrections.

(b) Direct Corrections:

Learners, in most of their responses, resort to give direct corrections without stating the occurrence of a factual error. For instance one of the responses is

- “Excuse me. I’m sorry for interruption, but I think the event took place in 1966”.

Such pattern is used by Arab learners of English in 47.5% of their responses. In Arabic it is used in 43% and Indians use it in only 22% of the data. Interestingly, British speakers of English use this strategy in only 6% of the data, (only one respondent). In order to avoid confrontations with their equal participants the learners group prefer to perform the face-threatening act using this safe strategy.
(c) Questions:

In the last section, questions were discussed under softeners and one type of questions was that which represents the main body of the speech act. Such type of corrections is the least face-threatening. They are so because they suggest that the speaker (the one who seeks correction) is in a confused state regarding some fact and needs clarification from some one who is more knowledgeable (the interlocutor). This pattern is used, in this sense, by native speakers of English in 31% of their responses. The learners group resorts to a type of questions (only in 6%) which seem more face-threatening to the hearer, such as:

- “Is that the date of the historical event you just stated or should it be 1970 if I am not mistaken?”

Still more face-threatening act is:

- “Would you mind if I put for you the right date?”
- “Can I correct you?”

All the question patterns seem to be attempts by learners to minimize the face threat. However, they fail to express the desired illocutionary force because of linguistic deficiency. In the Arabic data, questions are not preferred and used in only two responses. Similarly Indians do not rely much on this pattern in their English.

(d) Disagreements:

The last realization pattern of the main body of this speech act is to show disagreement with the interlocutor. In the scale of face-threatening realization patterns of correction, this pattern can be given the value of second highly face-threatening act after “stating the occurrence of a factual error” pattern. Expressions of disagreement are bold on record acts. They are used by learners
in about 11% of their responses with very few softeners. For example one of the responses is

- "I don’t think so. It happened in 1819;"

another is:

- "There is an important note I should mention here. Actually, the date of the event is not 1915 as my colleague mentioned. The right date is 1920;"
and more bold on record is

- "I am afraid, I entirely disagree with you"

The use of this pattern the way presented is an indication of transfer of the degree of directness in performing FTA in Arabic. Similarly, native speakers of English use this strategy in 12% (two responses) of the data. The responses given are also bold on record and with very few softeners:

- "The date is 1066 not 1166"

- "I feel I have to point out that I don’t altogether agree with your last statement. I think you will find it is 1066."

The directness implied by the use of this pattern in the learners responses is attributed to this feature as inherent in Arabic language; and in the English native’s data is explained in terms of directness that operates in the western society in the academic atmospheres.

Summing up, the structure of the correction speech act addressed to an equal participant can contain the following: positive remarks, softeners, and the main body of the act. Positive remarks cannot occur alone to accomplish the correction task. Softeners can, in some cases like (questions), and the main body of the act is the nucleus. There are four realization patterns for the main body of the act. Learners group in both their Arabic and English responses and Indian English group prefer two realization patterns (stating the occurrence of a factual
error and direct corrections); native speakers of English share preference for the first strategy with both the groups but opts for another strategy (making questions) as the next preferred for making corrections.

Correction situation 2: (A student to a professor):

2 - You are a student in a sociology class. During the lecture, the teacher quotes a famous statement, attributing it to the wrong scholar. What would you say to correct him?..............................

In this situation, participants are not of equal status. A person of lower status (a student) corrects a factual error of a person of higher status (a professor). The error is “attributing a famous statement to the wrong scholar”. The same model of analysis used in situation-1 (participants are of equal status) will also be followed now. Responses will be investigated in terms of the same semantic formulas in S1 which represent the politeness strategies employed, namely “Adjuncts, softeners and realization of the main body of the act”. If, in some cases, respondents opt out, that will be highlighted.

Figure-18: The use of Adjuncts and Softeners in the four data sets in correction situation 2 (correcting a Professor).
Adjuncts and Softeners:

So far as adjuncts (positive remarks) are concerned, learners group use them in only one response where the respondent reports he would say

- "You are absolutely right, but I think the correct name will be (name of the scholar)."

Avoiding giving positive remarks by Arab learners group to the professor supports the observation made by Takahashi and Beebe (1993) that it is inappropriate if positive remarks are made by some one of lower status to another of a higher status. This perception seems to be shared among Arab learners of English in both their responses to English and Arabic and both the native speakers of British English (no positive remarks) as well as Indian English respondents (no positive remarks reported).

Let’s now move to “softeners”. Softeners have four sub-formulas: hedges, questions, other expressions and address terms. Hedges are used in 35% of the data. In addition to “I think”, other hedges (not used in S1) occur. For example:

- “I don’t know actually”..., “I am not sure about it”

which occur immediately after making corrections in the learners data. The use of such hedges help in minimizing the intellectual threat to the professor by making the student appears hesitant and not certain in what he says.

In the Arabic responses, fewer hedges are used. The same commonly used form ‘a’taqed’ (I think) is repeated in most of the hedges. The native speakers of British English, on the other hand, seem to have wider range of possibilities. Variation is observed in the selection of hedged expressions such as “I am afraid, I thought, I think, I believe, if I remember correctly, I am probably wrong but I thought it might have been....” Indian English speakers use fewer hedges than native speakers “I think, perhaps, if I am not mistaken".
It has to be pointed out that native speakers of English in this situation prefer to use (I thought (18%)) rather than “I think (6%)” which makes the correction act more polite. Arabs using English commonly use “I think” (32%) as a result of transfer of “a’taqed ‘I think’” from Arabic. It may also be explained as a result of the impact of Indian English where “I think” is used in 32% of the responses.

Questions used as softeners in this situation have various forms compared with those in S1. In 7 out of 20 questions by learners, we find option questions such as

• “Is the scholar x or y?”

which give the professor a chance to correct himself and to avoid direct confrontation. Other types of questions which can play the same function are those requests addressed to the professor to repeat the statement (4 responses) such as

• “Could you repeat the statement?”

and tag questions (3 responses) like in

• “I think this statement is for………., isn’t it?”

Those three types of questions (14 out of 20) are very important. They play a vital role of maintaining the professor’s face and saving it from the potential loss (if he/she sets things right). Three questions out of the total 20 are requests for permitting the student to correct the professor

• “May I correct you?”

• “Can I correct you sir?”

• “Can I correct you if you don’t mind please?”

These questions can be face-threatening rather than face-saving. Other
face threatening acts are the last three questions which require the professor to act immediately setting things right

- “Can you please put it in the right way”,
- Would you please check it?,
- Are you sure about the scholar?”

Questions used as softeners by native speakers of British English differ in forms and functions from those used by English learners in this study. Majority of the questions (6 out of ten) used by native speakers of English imply the correct name of the scholar. Questions are framed in a way that they can pragmatically function as clues to the right name and as a chance given to the professor to correct himself/herself, hence his/her face is maintained. Examples:

- “wasn’t it ……. who said that?” and
- “Should that be attributed to ……?”

Two questions made by the native speakers of English are direct requests for verifying the name:

- “Can you verify the name you have given?”, and
- “Can you go over the name of the scholar again?”

Other two questions evoke the impression that what is said by the professor is questionable:

- Are you sure about your last statement?
- Is that right?

Indian English speakers do not rely much on questions as softeners. In only two responses questions used by them soften the correction act by avoiding direct
confrontation.

- “Am I wrong if I say that Mr. X said that statement”,
- “Am I correct?”

As for softeners discussed under the rubric “other expressions”, the three groups in the four data sets seem to unanimously agree on the inappropriateness of referring to the professor as “confused” or referring to the error made as a memory lapse or tongue slip. Such hints have to be avoided in case of correcting someone of higher status. Moreover, expressions lightening the gravity of the mistake are inappropriate if used by a person of a lower status to another of a higher status. They can be acceptable if they are addressed to an equal or from a higher status person to a lower status one.

Realization patterns of the main body of the act:

a. Stating the occurrence of a factual error:

The use of this pattern in 14% of the responses indicates that Arab learners of English do not tend to state the occurrence of errors by their professors as openly as they did with their equals (30%). The word “wrong” is used in only two responses; “mistake” in five responses, “not right”, “not correct” are used once each. Because the word “wrong” implies strong confrontation, it is used in only 3% of the data and “mistake” which seems less challenging is used in 8% of the whole data. Both words were used by learners in 18% and 9% respectively when addressed to an equal participant. No significant difference is observed between the use of this pattern by learners of English (14.5%), native speakers of English (18%) and learners in their Arabic responses (11%). Indian English speakers use this pattern with very high frequency (45%).
b. Disagreement Statements:

Statements in which respondents (students) contradict what is said by speakers (professor) are given the label disagreement statements. A typical example of these statements is:

- "The quote you have just said was by x not y."

In 8% of the responses, learners disagree with their professor using similar statements. In the Arabic data, disagreements occur in 16% of the responses. Disagreements framed the way used by learners group seem to be a reflection (transfer) of a stylistic feature of Arabic disagreements: (right fact + negative marker + wrong fact). This structure is not as common in English as in Arabic in such situation. Disagreements as used by Arabs in both their English and their Arabic native responses imply strong threats to the professor's face. Native speakers of British English never once use such disagreement statements in their responses to this situation. Instead they resort to using questions which are less face threatening to H's face. Indian English respondents show disagreement in 18% of the responses. Indian English speakers are found to use

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<tr>
<td>Stating the occurrence of a factual error</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagreement statements</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>Interrogative statements</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<td>Direct corrections</td>
<td>34%</td>
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disagreement statements (18%) which are structurally similar to those in the learner's data. For example one response is:

- “Excuse me sir. This statement was made by x not the one you mentioned”.

Thus, the use of this pattern by learners may also be attributed to the effect of English as used by Indians.

c. Questions:

A professor is the source of information in a class and corrections made in the form of questions enhance the recognition of his/her intellectual authority. To satisfy this positive face want of a professor, Arab learners of English use this strategy in 24% of their responses. Questions like

- “Is that statement said by x or y?”
- “I think this statement is for x, isn't it?”

are used to give the professor a chance for self correction. Interestingly, in their Arabic responses, questions are not commonly used (only 5%). What is said in Arabic in the imperative form which is translated as:

- “Sorry my teacher, if you be generous enough, that you repeat who said the statement” (a literal translation for what is said in Arabic),

is said in English in the interrogative form:

- “Sir, could you please repeat the name of the writer? Is it Mr. X?”

These two responses are given by the same subject. The first one is from his Arabic responses and the second one is from his English.

The pattern of using questions as the main body of the correction speech act is the most common in English native speaker's responses (62%). In English,
achieving indirectness is mainly manifested by the use of interrogative forms. The following examples from British English responses illustrate the point:

- “Did x say something similar?”
- “Didn’t x say that?”
- “Excuse me, should that be attributed to x?” etc.

It can be concluded from this discussion on questions that Arabs in their English transfer the use of questions to perform indirect face-threatening acts.

d. Direct Statements of Correction:

These statements are not as face-threatening as statements of factual errors or disagreement statements. They are also not attempts for saving addressee’s face as questions used in corrections. In this pattern of direct correction, respondents state outright the right fact. So, they pose a considerable threat to the interlocutor’s face. Learners group use it in most of their responses (34%). Similarly, Indian English speakers use this pattern in 36% of the responses and the same strategy is found in 40% of the Arabic data set. English native speakers do not rely much on this pattern (6%), perhaps because of its high degree of directness.

It is observed that Arabs using English tend to present their “self” in their corrections in a way that is avoided by English native speakers. For example some of the learners use the following expressions to preface their corrections:

- “As far as I know, it is said by ……..”
- “As far as my knowledge goes, it was said by….”
- “I read it in a book….“
- “According to my information, what you said is not right”,

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• “According to my knowledge, this statement belongs to....."

The potentiality for boasting stands out and the professor is indirectly offended.

Opting Out:

There are two kinds of opting-out choice in this situation. The first type is that in which respondents say they would not correct the professor at all. The other type is that in which respondents express that they would delay correction till the class finishes. The reason behind opting out in this speech act is strategic and used as a politeness strategy. Correction is a face-threatening act (whatever the strategy adopted may be) and keeping quiet is a face-saving strategy. Consider the following examples from the learner’s data:

• “I cannot say anything to correct him”

• “I would say nothing and after the class, I would try to talk to him”

• “I would correct him after the class, if I could”

Interestingly, one of the responses is

• “I would not correct him, because if I did it, I would never succeed,”

The motivation behind opting out in this response is not to save the professor’s face but the student’s marks (according to the student). The politeness implied by keeping quiet is instrumental and for the benefit of the student.

Learners choose to opt out in 9% of the data. British speakers of English opt out in 12% of the responses (2 responses). In one of them the reason for opting out is shyness,

• “I probably would not as I am not one of speaking out in classes”

which is a very important psychological reason behind opting out in many social
situations. In the other response the motivation of opting out is the assumption of memory and tongue slip,

- “I would not correct him/her as it may be a slip of the tongue.”

**Correction Situation 3**: (a person of higher status to a person of lower status)

3-Your specialization is history. You are the senior participant in an academic discussion with some of your colleagues. One of your juniors gives an account of a famous historical event with the wrong date. You correct him saying:............................

This section deals with an utterance that will be made by a person in a higher-status position (a professor/a senior participant in an academic discussion) to a person in a lower-status position (a student/a junior participant in the discussion).

**Adjuncts and Softeners:**

Let’s start with positive remarks as the first adjunct (modifier) that is likely to occur utterance-initially. Arabs using English (5 out of 62) preface their corrections with positive remarks. Examples of these remarks are:

- “Your explanation is good”,
- “Thank you for the valuable information”,
- “You are absolutely right”, etc.

In the learners’ responses to the Arabic prompts, positive remarks are used more frequently (15%) (10 responses) than in their English interlanguage. Praising and thanking a presenter after he finishes is commonly used among Arabs in such academic gatherings irrespective of what is to be said next or what was said earlier. It is usually used as a routined formula that fills the gaps between the items of an on-going function. Positive remarks addressed to a
person of a lower-status position play the role of encouraging the interlocutor as well as minimizing the face threat posed by forthcoming correction. Only one British English native speaker uses a positive remark utterance—finally

- "I believe……., but carry on the rest of the account is very accurate"

and only two responses with positive remarks are used by Indians using English

- "You have confidently presented the account", "your account is right"

Arabs transferring from Arabic use positive remarks with interlocutors of lower status but less frequently than when the addressee is of equal status. They share this feature with Indian English speakers. British English speakers seem to use these remarks exclusively with junior interlocutors with a very low frequency.

Figure-20: The use of Adjuncts and softeners in the four data sets in correction situation 3 (correcting a person of a lower-status position).
Softeners (hedges) seem to be used by learners with lower frequency (21%) compared with the other two situations (S1:38% and S2: 35%). The expressions used for the realization of hedges are only three: "think, seem, I am not sure about it". The last two occur only once each in the whole responses and "I think..." remains the most commonly used hedging expression (in 11 responses out of the 13 in which hedges occur). Arabs using English almost share the same percentage with Indians using English (22%). In addition to the use of "I think..." Indians use "probably", "if I am not wrong" as softeners. The British English speakers show a very high tendency to use hedges in their responses (68%) and they use "I believe...." more frequently (5 out of 11 hedges) than "I think......" (4 out of 11), and "seem" (in 2 out of 11 hedges).

It is important to point out that in the Arabic data hedges are used in only 9% of the responses. In Arabic, hedges are not exclusively used to minimize the threats to H's face. They can also function as discourse initiators. Therefore along with the hedges (a'taqed and athunn), we have initiators like (ureed an osahheh, oheb an owadheh) both mean "I want to correct, I want to clarify" respectively which appear in 11% of the Arabic responses and are typical of Arabic and Indian English. So, they can compensate the use of hedges, particularly in the case when the interlocutor is of equal or lower-status position. Such hedges with "I want ....." are transferred to some of the learners' responses in English such as

- "I want to correct your information about what you said".

Now we turn to questions used as softeners. Questions softening the act of correction occur in this situation in 11% of the learner's data. All of them pragmatically function as chances given to the interlocutor (junior presenter) to correct a piece of information, wrongly given. They either ask about the certainty of the date:

- "Are you sure about the date?"
or request for repetition:

- “Please can you repeat...?”

It is interesting to note that native speakers of British English do not prefer questions with juniors, as they commonly prefer to use them with the professor (62%) and the colleague (31%). In this situation it is used in only (6%), i.e., only one response takes the form of a question and softens the act of correction:

- “Was the date not 1066?”

Indian English users never once use questions as softeners. In the Arabic responses questions are not used as softeners. Interestingly, what, in the learners' responses to English prompts, takes the interrogative form and performs the softening function e.g.,

- “Could you please repeat the date?”

is used by the same respondents in Arabic responses in the imperative form as shown below:

- “a'ed law samahf (repeat please)

and can play the same function. This is an indication of the understanding of the use of the interrogative form to achieve indirectness which is according to the English speakers more polite than using the softened imperative forms.

The third type of softeners “other expressions” are used in very few examples in the four data sets. One Arab learner of English, in a response that intends to lighten the gravity of the interlocutor's mistake, says

- “Just you have fallen in a small mistake”.

In the Arabic data two interesting examples are found. In the first one, the respondent says
• “We all sometimes forget and Allah is the Most Perfect”.

In the other response the softeners is

• “My colleague means…… and may be the mistake is because of misprint or due to the similarity between events in history”.

Both the examples are attempts to defend the junior participant. A similar softener figures in the responses of the British English data. One of the respondents says

• “We all get them wrong now and then, carry on”.

The intention here is to make light of the correction and to minimize the face threat. In the Indian English data, one response is

• “Mr. X has got mixed up with dates as it always happens in history”.

This softener makes the act of correction less face-threatening.

Realization Patterns of the Main Body of the Speech Act:

In what follows, realization patterns of the main body of the correction speech act will be discussed. The learners seem to be more direct in correcting their juniors. In 37% of their responses they openly declare the occurrence of a factual mistake:

• “Unfortunately what you said is wrong”,

• “You have given a wrong date.”

Likewise, statements expressing disagreement with the interlocutor increase in number and the percentage becomes 17%:

• “The date of this event was not as you said, It was in ……..”

• “Sorry I don’t agree with you”.
Similarly, the types of questions used by Arab learners of English in this situation to represent the main body of the act are more face threatening than in the case of the professor or an equal participant

- "Please can you repeat the date of the historical event? There is some mistake",

- "Can I correct you my friend?"

Direct corrections which are the least face-threatening of the four patterns in this situation are used in 27% of the responses (less than the direct statements used with the professor and the equal interlocutor).

![Figure-21: Realization patterns of "the main body of the speech act" in correction situation-3 (correcting a person of a lower-status position)](image)

The high degree of indirectness that is observed in this case can be attributed to the relative status of the interlocutor which plays a role in determining the politeness strategy to be employed.

The results shown above with regard to the realization patterns of the nucleus of the speech act by the English learners are almost similar to the results observed in the Arabic data set, except that questions never once occur. This
indicates the high influence of Arabic on the learners' performance. The highly statistically significant difference is found between learners' responses and those of the British English speakers and Indian English users. Native speakers of English use the pattern “stating factual errors occurrence” with very high frequency (68%) (almost twice the number used by learners group) which is the same percentage observed in the case of an equal interlocutor. The native English group do not use “disagreement statements”. It seems such structures are undesirable and, hence uncommon in English. Questions which are usually used by English speakers to produce indirect speech acts with high degree of politeness are used in only one response in this situation. This is an indication of the tendency of English speakers towards being more direct with those interlocutors of lower status. The only strategy that seems to be preferred by English speakers to make the nucleus of the act less face threatening is “Direct corrections”.

The degree of directness in “stating the occurrence of factual error” is the highest in the data of the Indian English group (86%). No “disagreement statements” are used, and no questions are preferred. “Direct corrections” are used in only 9% of the responses. Style shifting is very clear in the case of correcting a junior interlocutor. The explanation as to why Indian English respondents clearly style-shift in this situation is the concept of power structure within the academic institutions in India. The power of senior academics over junior ones is highly recognized and the conceptualization of the nature of this power differs across the three groups participating in this study.

**Style shifting across the three situations:**

**Adjuncts and Softeners:**

The use of softeners is not quantitatively the same across the three situations in the learners' data. The highest number of positive remarks (12%) is used when addressing an equal interactant. Fewer remarks (8%) are used with the junior addressee. Only one respondent prefers his correction with a positive
remark in the case of correcting the professor. This distribution of positive remarks in the learner’s data is similar to that used in Arabic responses. Therefore, Arabs style shifting according to the social status of the addressee in their English interlanguage is a direct socio-pragmatic transfer from Arabic. Positive remarks are used with all interlocutors. However, equals receive more positive remarks than any other type of addressee.

The native speakers of British English shift their style only when they address participants of lower-status position. (This is with reference to positive remarks). Participants with equal or higher status do not receive any positive remarks. In the Indian English data, both equal and junior interlocutors can receive positive remarks but not the professor.

Another case of striking style-shift in the learners’ interlanguage is observed when we consider the distribution of “hedges”. Equal interlocutors, once again, receive the highest percentage of hedges (38%), followed by the professor situation (35%) and lowest percentage of hedges is used with the junior participant (21%). Similar results are found in the Arabic data. So, a case of pragmalinguistic transfer can be reported here. In the data elicited from the native speakers of English it is observed that, like Arabs, English respondents use the highest percentage of hedges with participants of equal position (81%). However, the next high number of hedges is used with juniors (68%). A professor receives the lowest percentage of hedges (37%). Hedges make hesitant corrections. Therefore, native English speakers do not want to appear hesitant in their corrections. Arabs, on the other hand, use more hedges with the professor than with the junior and do not mind appearing hesitant in front of their professor in the correction process so that the intellectual threat is minimized. Indians using English do not style-shift their hedges in the case of an equal addressee and a professor. In both situations, hedges are used equally (41% each). A striking decline to use hedges with junior is observed. In an Indian context, drawbacks of the interlocutors who are equal in status to the speaker have to be handled with same care given to those of higher status interlocutors.
The figure below demonstrates the use of positive remarks and softeners by the three participating groups in the four data sets:

![Figure-22: Comparing the three situations with regard to the use of adjuncts and softeners in the four data sets.](image)

Expressions that are intended to lighten the gravity of the interlocutor’s mistake or to defend the interlocutor are very few in the learners’ responses. They are not used with the professor. Such expressions are expected to be used by a person addressing either another person who is of the same status or with a junior interlocutor. Arabs using English use such expressions with equal interlocutors to show solidarity and minimize the threat to their face. All respondents in this study agree on not using such expressions with the professor in the four data sets. The style-shift as it appears in the learners’ data with regard to these expressions is a gain attributed to the Arabic influence on their interlanguage. Native speakers of British English and Indian English group adopt a different type of style shifting across the three situations as shown in the table.

It can be concluded from the above discussion of style shifting, so far, that
Arabs exert greater effort to save their interlocutors' face when they are of the same status rather than those who are of a higher (like a professor) or lower status. It is observed that equal interlocutors receive more positive remarks (12%), more hedges (38%) and more "other expressions (6%)" than any other interlocutor.

Let's now move to style-shifting phenomenon in "questions" used as "softeners". More questions are used in the interlanguage data with the professor (22%) than with the equal (14%) or junior participant (11%). This is the only softener which seems to represent a case of consistency with what the English speakers prefer. Native speakers of English use more questions with the professor (37.5%), followed by fewer questions addressed to their equals (31.7%). The lowest number of questions is used with juniors (6%). In the Arabic data, questions functioning as softeners are very few (only once with the equal interlocutor and once with the professor). The use of the interrogative form in Arabic to show politeness is not as common as in English.

So far as style shifting is concerned, that more questions are used with professor than with the other two interlocutors is because of his/her intellectual power and authority being the main source of information. The use of questions as softeners provides an opportunity for the addressee to correct himself. The result is a less face threatening act of correction. Fewer questions are used with equal as well as junior interlocutors because other possibilities are available like direct corrections which do not pose the same threat to them as if they are used with the professor.

Main Body of the Speech Act:

Style-shifting phenomenon is also observable in the selection of the realization pattern to perform the main body of the correction speech act. Statements that declare the occurrence of a factual error are used with highest frequency in S3 (with the lower-status addressee). Such statements are used with lowest frequency in S2 (with the higher-status addressee). Participants of
equal status are in between. Such stylistic variation indicates the effort made to make correction as less face-threatening to the professor as possible. The same results can apply to disagreement statements. The distribution of these two realization patterns as mentioned is neither the same as in the native English data nor in the Arabic responses. It does not also resemble Indian English data. It is typical of the learners' interlanguage.

Questions that represent the main body of the speech act are also a source of style shifting. Questions are used with the “professor” in 24% of the data, whereas in the case of equal and junior interlocutors, questions are used in only (6% and 8% respectively). Again this kind of style shifting is not similar to any of the control groups. It is again a feature of the learners' interlanguage. Although questions are used in three situations, they are fewer in number than those used by native speakers of British English. The following figure shows these findings:

Figure 23: Comparing the three situations with regard to the use of realization patterns of the main body of the speech act of correction in the four data sets.
Style shifting also occurs with the pattern “direct correction statements.” Participants of equal status receive the highest “direct correction statements” which is considered less face threatening than the first, second and sometimes the third realization pattern. In the case of a “professor” direct corrections are fewer apparently because questions are also preferred which are not commonly used with the equal participants. The junior interlocutors on the other hand, receive the fewest direct corrections because other patterns are also used which are highly face threatening. It is the social status of the junior interlocutor that makes his face wants vulnerable.

Address Forms:

The study of address forms is very important as they comprise an essential part of many speech acts. They have been accounted for within the theory of Brown & Levinson (1987). They can be a positive politeness strategy and a negative politeness strategy as well. In other words, address forms can either redress or threaten H’s positive or negative face.

In the present study on correction speech act, address forms are used as in-group identity markers in 18% of the learner’s responses to the first situation. The address forms like “Brother, friend, colleague, my friend, dear, etc” play a great role in making smooth corrections. In the Arabic data such in-group identity markers, particularly ‘brother’ are used in 30% of the responses. In 45% of the Indian English data similar forms occur. Native speakers of British English never once use such markers to address an interlocutor of the same status. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of address forms in this situation is imported to the learners’ interlanguage from both Arabic and Indian English. Almost the same observation is found to be repeated in the case of addressing a junior interlocutor. Various address forms are used in 17% of the responses. Most of them are in-group identity markers. They lighten the threat to the addressee. It is again observed that native speakers of English do not use such forms with interlocutors of a lower-status position.
The address forms used in the “professor” situation are of different kind. They are negative politeness forms which maintain the distance between interlocutors. The most common address forms used in the four data sets is “Sir”. In the learners’ data address forms like “my teacher” and “teacher” occur. Native speakers of British English use both “Sir” and “Professor”. Indian English speakers use “Sir” very commonly. The use of such formal address forms in this situation indicates that the superiority and respect of the professor is maintained and not downgraded because of the occurrence of a factual error.

Conclusion:

In the study reported in this chapter, a number of interlanguage features of correction speech act by Arabs using English have been established. The structure of this speech act has been analyzed into its main constituents, namely adjuncts, softeners and the main body of the act. Adjuncts and softeners represent the politeness strategies employed by the respondents to produce smooth corrections. It has been found that Arabs using English make greater efforts to minimize the face-threats to interlocutors of equal status than to a “professor” or a “junior”. Nevertheless, an interlocutor of a “higher-status position” (a professor) receives the highest degree of softeners in the form of questions. The first observation is attributed to Arabic influence and the later is a result of the impact of exposure to English. Very few features of learners’ interlanguage are attributed to the influence of Indian English, mainly the use of address forms.

Native speakers of British English tend to be direct in stating the occurrence of a factual mistake. However, they use the highest number of softeners in the three situations to lighten the correction process. Arabs using English are also direct in their corrections. However, the techniques followed to make the act less face-threatening are not only the high number of softeners (mainly questions). They additionally, use positive remarks, address forms and less face-threatening patterns for realizing the main body of the act (direct corrections) which collectively reduce face risk, signal that a speaker is
attempting to be polite, show good intentions and consideration for the feeling of the interlocutor, and preserve the positive face damage of the addressee.