

(In)directness in Saudi University Students' Request Strategies



Received: 05/08/2025; Accepted: 20/09/2025

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Abstract

This study investigated Saudi university students' Arabic and English requests and compared the (in)directness levels in their performance to identify their preferences. It also evaluated the impact of the contextual constraints of power, social distance, and level of request imposition on the students' choice of (in)direct strategies. The study used two discourse completion tests i.e., Arabic and English, to gather its data from 120 students from Shaqra University.

The results of the study showed that the subjects utilized the three request strategies i.e., direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect (hints) when responding to the two DCTs. It also showed that the subjects used more direct strategies in the Arabic DCT answers than in the English version, and more conventional indirect strategies in their responses to the English DCT than to the Arabic test. Moreover, it showed that the subjects resorted to the non-conventionally indirect requests the least. The results of the study revealed that the contextual factors had no impact on the subjects' strategy choice.

Keywords

Saudi university students;
Pragmatics;
Speech acts;
Request;
(In)direct requests;
Contextual constraints.

الكلمات المفتاحية

طلاب الجامعات السعودية؛
البراغماتية؛
أفعال الكلام؛
الطلب؛
الطلبات المباشرة وغير
المباشرة؛
القيود السياقية.

مقارنة مستويات (عدم) المباشرة في استراتيجيات طلب الطلاب الجامعيين السعوديين ملخص

تناولت هذه الدراسة الطلبات المستخدمة بواسطة طلاب الجامعات السعودية باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية وقارنت مستويات المباشرة وغير المباشرة في أدائهم لتحديد تفضيلاتهم. كما قامت بتقييم تأثير القيود السياقية للسلطة والمسافة الاجتماعية ومستوى فرض الطلب على اختيار الطلاب للاستراتيجيات المباشرة وغير المباشرة. استخدمت الدراسة اختبارين لإكمال الخطاب باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية لجمع بياناتها من 120 طالبا من جامعة شقراء بالمملكة العربية السعودية. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن الطلاب استخدموا استراتيجيات الطلب المباشرة وغير المباشرة التقليدية وغير المباشرة غير التقليدية (التلميحات) عند الإجابة على اختباري إكمال الخطاب. كما أظهرت أنهم استخدموا الاستراتيجيات المباشرة غير التقليدية في إجاباتهم على الاختبار باللغة العربية أكثر من النسخة الإنجليزية، والاستراتيجيات غير المباشرة التقليدية أكثر في ردودهم على النسخة الإنجليزية مقارنة باختبار اللغة العربية. وعلاوة على ذلك، تبين أن الطلاب يستخدمون الطلبات غير المباشرة غير التقليدية أقل من الاستراتيجيات الأخرى. كما كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن العوامل السياقية لم يكن لها أي تأثير على اختيارات المشاركين.

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1. Introduction:

Requests are important speech acts that facilitate cooperation between members of any society, and it constitutes a huge part of its members daily interaction. Searle (1969) defined a request as “a future act A of H, which is considered as an attempt to get H [hearer] do an act which S [speaker] wants H to do, and which S believes that H is able to do; and which it is not obvious that H will do in the normal course of events or of H’s own accord.” (Searle, 1969, p. 66). Requests are broadly defined as “polite ways of asking for something or getting someone to do something” (González-Cruz, 2014, p. 550). Requests are directive acts and pre-events that require the negotiation of face (Félix-Brasdefer, 2009, p. 474). It is a speech act that is inherently face threatening as the speaker infringes on the hearer’s freedom of action and put an imposition on him/her (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989, p. 11; Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Blum-kulka et al. (1989) divided the structure of a request into three components i.e. (1) alerters, which are used to draw the attention of the addressee to the request; (2) head-act, which states the request proper to be carried out; and (3) internal and external modifications, which serve as mitigating devices for the speech act.

The head-act of a request carries out the function of the speech act (Safont-Jordà, 2008, p. 42). It may be performed using varied levels of directness. In a direct speech act, there is usually a direct relationship between its structure and function (Yule, 1996, p. 54), while there is no such relation in indirect ones. Head-acts are categorized along three levels of directness. They are classified as direct (or impositives), conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect (or hints) (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Safont-Jordà, 2008).

Many studies suggested that the different request strategies are influenced by three contextual factors i.e., the power the requester has over the listener, the social distance between them, and the degree of imposition the request puts on the hearer (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Safont-Jordà, 2008; Dendenne, 2014; Aribi, 2012).

Generally, in English, indirect speech acts are associated with higher degree of politeness than the direct speech acts (Yule, 1998; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Trosborg, 1995; Jan et al., 2015). This higher degree of politeness is attributed to the speaker’s attempt to reduce the imposition on the requestee and give the latter freedom to comply with the speech act or decline it and that it tends to increase the degree of optionality (Leech, 1983).

The current study examines the use of Saudi university students of the speech act of requesting in their mother tongue i.e., Arabic and in English that they study as non-native speakers. It compares the subjects’ (in)directness levels of requests in the two languages to identify the strategies that they prefer more. Moreover, it studies the impact of the contextual constraints of power, social distance, and level of imposition on their choice of strategies.

2. Previous Studies:

Alfaleh (2019) studied the level of request directness and its interpretation among Saudi family members who speak Najdi dialect. The data of the study was collected from the episodes of a Saudi drama. The study found that Saudis prefer to use direct strategies and perceive it as polite.

Alqahtani (2015) investigated the strategies and modifications of Saudi requests and the impact of social factors on its choice. The study used a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) to collect the study data from 60 subjects. The study showed that the subjects preferred to use more direct strategies, and they resorted to the conventionally indirect ones to a lesser degree. The degree of imposition and social power influenced the subjects’ choice of strategies.

Qari (2017) studied requests and apologies of Saudi Arabic native speakers and learners of English as foreign language, and British native speakers. The researcher collected the data using a DCT from 160 university students. The study utilized the Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory and used the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Research Project (CCSARP) request and apology coding systems to treat its data. The study showed that the Saudi students preferred to use direct request strategies, while EFL and British students used indirect strategies more.

Al-Ageel (2016) studied the Saudi female Arabic requests and the impact of contextual constraints on its choice. She also examined the forms of address. The study used role plays to collect its data. The results showed that the Saudis prefer to utilize direct strategies and that the social variables and the gender of the hearer had a significant impact on the requesting behaviour and choice of address forms.

Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily (2012) compared the (in)directness in Saudi and American speakers’ requests. Their study utilized a twelve items DCT to collect its data from thirty Saudi and American undergraduate students. The results of the study showed that American students resorted to conventionally indirect requests and Saudi students preferred to use the direct ones. It also demonstrated that the different social factors had an impact on the choice of request formulas.

Aribi (2012) investigated the requests performed by Tunisian EFL learners. The study used a six items DCT to collect its data from 67 university students. The study classified the subjects’ requests with regard to its directness level. The study found that the social factors had an impact on the choice of directness level of requests. The subjects used direct requests with those of low power, and conventionally indirect requests with peers, relatives, and people with high power.

Ghazzoul (2019) probed Arab learners’ ability to produce polite requests and invitations and tested the universality of the speech act and politeness theories. The study subjects were 16 participants. The study showed that the Arab subjects preferred direct strategies, while UK citizens of Arab origin used more indirect strategies. It also highlighted that Arab students associate directness with hospitality and politeness, and that politeness strategies vary according to the socio-cultural norms.

Tarawneh and Hussein (2019) compared the request strategies of Jordanian and American students. The researchers used a DCT to collect the study data from 30 subjects. The study classified the (in)directness levels of the subjects' responses. The study showed that the subjects used different levels of (in)directness, and that the '*Reference to Preparatory*'

Condition' strategy was used more than the others, while the use of '*Locution Deliverable*' was the lowest among the female participants.

Abuarrah et al. (2013) examined the level of directness and strategies in the requests of speakers of Palestinian Arabic (PA) and British English (BE), and the impact of social factors on their strategy choice. The results of the study showed that the speakers of the two languages preferred different directness levels. The social factors influenced the request strategy choice. BE speakers' choice of strategies reflects the values of individualism, negative politeness, while the performance of PA speakers demonstrated an inclination towards collectivism and positive politeness.

Megaiah et al. (2019) studied the polite request strategies produced by Libyan lecturers and students and the factors that influence its choice. The sample of the study were 20 lectures and 20 university students, and the data was collected using audio recorders. The results of the study showed that the subjects used conventionally indirect strategies more than the direct and non-conventionally indirect ones and that the social factors of degree of power and social distance influenced the participants' choice of strategies.

Al-Natour et al. (2015) investigated Jordanian students request strategies. The subjects of the study were 50 university students, and it used a 14 items discourse completion test to collect its data. The results of the study displayed that the subjects preferred to use indirect strategies especially 'query preparatory' more than the others and that the social distance and power had an impact on the strategies' choice.

3. Methods:

The sample of the current study were 120 male and female students enrolled in the English bachelor's degree program at College of Science and Humanities in Afif, Shaqra University in the academic year 2024. The data of the study were collected using an Arabic and an English Discourse Completion Tasks. Each version is made up of the same nine situations (Appendix 1).

The Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) are one of the most important data collection instruments in the field of cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics (Ogiermann, 2018; Aufa, 2013). A DCT is commonly made of descriptions of situations that require the responders to produce specific speech act as answers (Labben, 2016). The DCTs are popular among researchers that seek to study 'culture-specific patterns in speech acts' because they gather large amount of data in a short period of time (Ogiermann, 2018; Johnston et al., 1998). Another advantage of DCTs is that the tests can be constructed to collect different occurrences of any speech act (Barron, 2003, p. 84).

The two tasks employed in the study used varied power (i.e., hearer-dominant, status-equals, and speaker-dominant) and social distance (i.e., close, distant) relations as well as different degrees of request imposition (i.e., small, large) to ensure the collection of all the possible instances of requests and to probe the contextual constraints impact on the choice of requests. Table number (1) shows the distribution of the three contextual factors in the two DCTs.

Table 1: The Distribution of the Contextual Factors Governing the DCTs.

Situation No.	Social Distance	Power Relation	Level of Imposition
1	Close	Hearer-dominant	Small
2	Close	Status-equals	Large
3	Close	Speaker-dominant	Large
4	Distant	Hearer-dominant	Small
5	Distant	Status-equals	Small
6	Distant	Speaker-dominant	Small
7	Distant	Hearer-dominant	Large
8	Close	Status-equals	Large
9	Distant	Speaker-dominant	Small

The data collected by the two DCTs is classified along the three levels of (in)directness and underwent statistical analysis. The percentages and the t-values of the gathered data are calculated. The t- test values are used to calculate the possible statistical differences between request strategy choice as well as the differences in the responses to the two DCTs. It is also used to determine the impact of the different contextual factors on the request strategy choice. The decisions are taken based on the value of the t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

4. Results and Discussion:

4.1. The Subjects' Strategy Choice:

The results of the study showed that the subjects used the three request strategies i.e., direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect (hints) in their responses to the two DCTs. It demonstrated that the distribution of strategies is varied. Table number (2) shows the distribution of the use of the different strategies in the results of the Arabic DCT.

Table 2: Distribution of strategies in responses to the Arabic DCT.

Request Strategy	Situation no.																		Total	%
	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9			
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%		
Direct requests	54	90	52	86.6	60	100	30	50	42	70	50	83.3	50	83.3	44	73.3	58	96.7	440	81.4
Conventionally indirect requests	0	0	8	13.4	0	0	16	26.7	12	20	10	16.7	10	16.7	16	26.7	2	3.3	74	13.7
Non-conventionally indirect requests	6	10	0	0	0	0	14	23.3	6	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	4.8

The respondents used the direct request strategy more than the other routines. They opted for the direct strategy in 100% of their answers to situation number (3) "asking a young relative to bring a book". In this situation the relation between the interactant and addressee is close, and the imposition of request is small. As response to situation number (9), the subjects made direct requests 96.7% when they were "asking a student to shut down a mobile phone". The respondent in this situation has power over the listener and using a mobile phone during classes is a violation of school regulations. The direct requests were used in 90% of the subjects' replies to situation number (1), where they were "asking a dean for a recommendation letter". The addressee in this situation is the dean of the subjects' college and the imposition of the request is small. The subjects used direct strategies in 86.6% of their responses to situation number (2), where they were expected to "ask to use a friend's mobile phone". The social distance between the two is close and the degree of imposition is close. The students' use of the strategy amounted to 83.3% in situations number (6) and (7), where they were "asking a boy to bring a test result" and "asking the governor to move his car" respectively. The addressee in situation number (6) is a boy who has less power than the speaker, while the requester in situation number (7) has more power as an organizer of a public event. The subjects resorted to direct requests 73.3% in their answers to situation number (8), where they were "borrowing a notebook from a colleague.". The social distance between the interlocutors in this situation is close and the degree of the request imposition is small. The respondents resorted to direct requests 50% as response to situation number (4), where they wanted to "ask a new professor to raise his voice". The requestee has more power than the requester and the social distance between the two is far.

With regard to the use of the conventionally indirect strategy, the subjects utilized it 26.7% in their responses to situations (4) and (8), when "asking a new professor to raise his voice" and when "borrowing a notebook from a colleague". The informants opted for the strategy in 20% of their replies to situation number (5), when they were "asking dorm mates to stop playing loud music". They used the strategy 16.7% in their answers to situations number (6) and (7), where they tried "asking a boy to bring a test result" and "asking the governor to move his car" respectively. The subjects opted for the indirect requests in 13.4% of their responses to situation number (2), when they attempted "asking to use a friend's mobile phone". They used the strategy in 3.3% of their replies to situation number (9), where they asked "a student to shut down a mobile phone" during a class. The students did not use the strategy in their responses to situations number (1) and (3), when they "asking a dean for a recommendation letter" and when they asked "a young relative to bring a book" respectively.

The non-conventionally indirect strategy or hints was the least used strategy. It was used 23.3% as response to situation number (4), and 10% in the answers to situations number (1) and (5).

The distribution of request strategies used as response for the English DCT is different from the responses collected using the Arabic version. Table number (3) shows the distribution of strategies in the English DCT.

Table 3: Distribution of strategies in the responses to the English DCT.

Request Strategy	Situation no.																		Total	%
	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9			
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%		
Direct requests	35	58.3	22	36.7	32	53.3	21	35	23	38.3	24	40	21	35	27	45	45	75	250	46.2
Conventionally indirect requests	24	40	36	60	28	46.7	36	60	35	58.3	36	60	39	65	33	55	15	25	282	52.2
Non-conventionally indirect requests	1	1.7	2	3.3	0	0	3	5	2	3.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	1.4

The subjects used the direct requests as response to situation number (9) "asking a student to shut down a mobile phone" 75%. They resorted to the strategy 58.3% as answers to situation number (1), when they asked, "a dean for a recommendation letter". The subjects used the direct requests in 53.3% of their responses to item number (3), "asking a young relative to bring a book". They used the strategy in 45% of the replies to situation number (8), "borrowing a notebook from a colleague". They used it in 40% of their answers to question number (6), when they were "asking a boy to bring a test result". The strategy was used 38.3% in the responses to item number (5), "asking dorm mates to stop playing loud music". The routine was used 36.7% as response for situation number (2), "asking to use a friend's mobile phone.", and 35% as response to items number (4) and (7), "asking a new professor to raise his voice" and "asking the governor to move his car" respectively.

The gathered data showed that the subjects used the conventionally indirect requests more than the direct ones. They used the strategy in 65% of their answers to item number (7), "asking the governor to move his car", and 60% in the responses to items (2), (4) and (6), "asking to use a friend's mobile phone", "asking a new professor to raise his voice" and "asking a boy to bring a test result". They also used it in 58.3% of their responses to situation number (5), "asking dorm mates to stop playing loud music" and 55% in their answers to question number (8), where they were "borrowing a notebook from a colleague". The respondents used the strategy 46.7% as a reply to item number (3), "asking a young relative to bring a book". They used it in 40% of the answers to situation number (1), "asking a dean for a recommendation letter" and in 25% of the replies to situation number (9), "asking a student to shut down a mobile phone".

The non-conventionally indirect request was used sparsely. The subject used it in 5% of their responses to item number (4), "asking a new professor to raise his voice", 3.3% in the replies to situations number (2) and (5), "asking to use a friend's mobile phone" and "asking dorm mates to stop playing loud music" respectively. The subjects resorted to the strategy 1.7% in their answers to question (1), when they wanted to ask, "a dean for a recommendation letter".

4.2. Difference between the Strategies in the Responses to the Arabic and English DCTs:

The results of the study demonstrated that there is difference between the subjects' performance in the two languages with regard to the choice of the direct and conventionally indirect strategies (Table number 4). The results of the statistical analysis showed that the calculated (t) values for the direct request strategy items in the Arabic and English versions of the DCT are statistically significant. The calculated t-value is 5.166 which means that there is difference between the two with the Arabic answers containing more direct strategies than the English ones. It also showed that the conventional indirect strategies were used more in the English DCT. The t-value for the use of strategy was 6.98 which is statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance.

The results showed that there was no difference in the performance of the subjects with regard to the non-conventionally indirect requests. The calculated t-value of the two versions was 1.18 which is not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 4: Comparison of the subjects' performance in the Arabic and English DCTs.

Strategy	DCT	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Direct	Arabic	48.8889	9.17121	3.05707
	English	27.7778	8.13600	2.71200
Conventionally indirect	Arabic	8.2222	6.28048	2.09349
	English	31.3333	7.68115	2.56038
Non-conventionally indirect	Arabic	2.8889	4.91031	1.63677
	English	.8889	1.16667	.38889

The statistical results show that the respondents used more direct requests in their responses to the Arabic DCT than in their replies to the English version. Table number (5) shows the distribution of the three strategies in the two DCTs.

Table 5: Distribution of the three strategies in the two DCTs

DCT	Direct requests		Conventionally indirect requests		Non-conventionally indirect requests	
	total	%	total	%	total	%
Arabic	440	81.4	74	13.7	26	4.8
English	250	46.2	282	52.2	8	1.4

The results show that the subjects used the direct strategy 81.4% in the Arabic DCT compared to 46.2% in the English version. It also shows that the respondents used more conventionally indirect request strategies in their responses to the English DCT than in their replies to the Arabic version. The respondents used the strategy 52.2% in the English data and 13.7% in the Arabic one.

The results show that there is no difference between the use of the non-conventionally indirect strategies in the results of the two DCTs. The subjects used it in 4.8% of their answers to the Arabic test and 1.4% in their replies to the English task.

The subjects' tendency to use direct strategies in their answers to the Arabic version could be attributed to the collectivist nature of the Saudi society. In a collectivist culture, the individual is seen as a part of a group (Hofstede, 2001; Thomas & Inkson, 2004). Social dependence is a prominent feature of collectivist cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010). Such cultures prioritize the interests and needs of the group over those of its individual members (Samovar et al., 2013, p. 79). This result is congruent with the findings of studies conducted in other Arab and Islamic societies that share the same values of the respondents (Al-Natour et al., 2015; Aribi, 2012; Abuarrah et al., 2013; Ghazzoul, 2019; Tarawneh & Hussein, 2019; Megaiab et al., 2019; Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily, 2012).

The preference of the respondents to use conventionally indirect formulas more than the other strategies in their responses to the English DCT could be attributed to the nature of the English language itself. English language speakers tend to use indirect speech acts more than the direct ones (Mey, 1993, p. 143; Ghazzoul, 2019; Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily, 2012). Western pragmatists associate indirectness with politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Wierzbicka, 2003; Félix-Brasdefer, 2005; Cheng, 2009) because indirect speech acts keep addressees free from imposition, do not interfere with their freedom of action, and give them options (Yu, 2011). Saudi students are introduced to the speech act of requesting early in their study of the English language. The local schools' curriculum is rich in teaching the different speech acts.

The results of this study substantiate the results of other studies that explored the speech act of requesting in different cultures and languages using different methods. The subjects of the study used the three request strategies that are assumed to be universal, because speech acts are similar across cultures. Salgado (2011, 28) claims that "the strategies for performing speech acts are essentially identical across different cultures and languages..." Several studies found that speakers of Saudi Arabic use the three levels of directness when making requests (Alfaleh, 2019; Alqahtani, 2015; Qari, 2017; Al-Ageel, 2016). Other studies of the requestive behaviour of Arabic speakers around the world demonstrated similar results (Aribi, 2012; Ghazzoul, 2019; Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily, 2012; Tarawneh & Hussein, 2019; Abuarrah et al., 2013; Megaiab et al., 2019; Al-Natour et al., 2015). Speakers of other languages around the globe showed same tendency to use the three levels of directness in their requestive behaviour (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Tannen, 1981; Grainger & Mills, 2016; González-Cruz, 2014; Trosborg, 1995).

The differences in the subjects' choice of strategies in the two DCTs supports the view that the realization of speech acts is culture specific. Many studies claim that different cultures and languages realize speech acts following different patterns (Kachru, 1998; Gass & Neu, 1996; García-Santillán, 2021; Krulatz, 2016; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Gass & Selinker, 2008).

The preference of Saudi subjects to use more direct strategies than the indirect ones is in line with a huge body of international research (Economidou-kogetsidis, 2002; Mir, 1993; Geis & Harlow, 1996; Parent, 2002; Cenoz & Valencia, 1996).

The low frequency of non-conventionally indirect requests by the subjects in the two DCTs is consistent with the results of other studies. The results of the CCSARP conducted by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) showed that the hints were the least used strategy by the speakers of Australian English, Canadian French, German, Argentinean Spanish, and Hebrew. The study of Mohamed (2019) showed that speakers of Moroccan Arabic and American English used the strategy the least. Examples of other studies that resonate the same finding are (Schauer, 2009, 159; Abuarrah et al., 2013; Wang, 2011; Kılıçkaya, 2010; Al Farisi, 2021; Yang, 2009; Megaiab et al., 2019).

The low frequency of the use of the hints could be attributed to a number of reasons. First, the subjects' avoidance of the strategy could be ascribed to its ambiguity because it 'contains partial reference' to the requested service or item (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, 202).

Secondly, the strategy requires a high inferential level and background knowledge about the listeners. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989, pp. 46-47) noted that in order to perform a hint, the requester needs to "realize the act by reference to object or element needed for the implementation of the act". The researchers believed that "Non-conventionally indirect requests require the addressee to compute the illocution from the interaction of the locution with its context." (ibid). The DCT may not provide comprehensive contextual information to the subjects and as a result the production of non-conventionally indirect requests was low.

Thirdly, the production of hints requires mastery of language that is close to that of native speakers (Parent, 2002). The low language proficiency level was found to be a probable cause behind the low percentage of hints. It is possible

that the subjects did not gain an adequate sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic competence and as a result they failed to produce the strategy (Jalilifar, 2009; Yang, 2009; Yu, 1999; Parent, 2002). It could also be attributed to the complex linguistic structures needed to form such requests in comparison to the simple forms that the subjects are familiar with in their daily life and during their study.

Finally, there is another justification that is embedded in the nature of the DCT itself. The DCT questions ask the subjects to write straightforward requests. Its situations included a description of a situation and the desired speech act, and this may push the subjects to opt for more direct strategies.

4.3. The Impact of Contextual Factors:

The study results showed that the contextual constraints of power, social distance, and level of request imposition had no impact on the subjects' strategy choice. The results of the statistical analysis (Table number 6) showed that the calculated (t-test) values for the items of the two versions of the test, are statistically insignificant as all the values are more than 0.05 level of significance. This result could be attributed to the impact of the Saudi collectivist culture that prioritizes the needs of the group over those of its individual members and the Islamic culture that obligates one to help others who are in need.

Table 6: The results of one sample (t) test concerning the impact of the contextual constraints on strategy choice

Variables	(t) test	significance
Social distance	0.09-	0.928
Power	1.26	0.225
Request imposition	- 0.03	0.970

5. Conclusions:

This study investigated the Arabic and English direct and indirect requests used by the Saudi university students and compared their performance in the two languages. It also tried to evaluate the impact of the contextual factors of power, social distance, and level of request imposition on the subjects' choice of request strategies.

The results of the study showed that the subjects used the three request types i.e., direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect (hints) in their responses to the two DCTs. It also demonstrated that the performance of the subject was different in the two languages regarding their choice of the direct and conventionally indirect strategies. The data collected by the Arabic DCT contained more direct strategies than the English data, and the latter contained more conventional indirect strategies than the former. It also showed that the subjects used the non-conventionally indirect requests (hints) less than the other two strategies in their response to the two DCTs.

The results of the study revealed that the contextual constraints of power, social distance, and level of request imposition had no impact on the subjects' strategy choice.

Requests and other speech acts used by Saudis in different regions of the Kingdom using their distinctive dialects is a rich area of research. More studies are needed to compare the request strategies of males and females, as well as junior and senior members of the Saudi society. The area of request modifications and perspectives could be investigated as well.

6. References:

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