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by 1. Yahya Mohammed Ali Al-Marrani & 2. Azimah Binti Sazalie**

## **Polite Request strategies by Yemeni Females: A socio-pragmatic study**

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### **Abstract**

The focus of language studies in first language teaching and learning of Arabic language, for a long while, was on grammatical competence of the language learners at the level of phonology, morphology and syntax. However, then this focus has shifted from looking at the grammatical competence of the learners to looking at their pragmatic competence through their use of communication strategies. According to Johnson and Johnson (1999), pragmatic competence is an aspect of communicative competence and refers to the ability to communicate appropriately in a particular context of use. And this is in contrast with linguistics competence which refers to the mastery of the general rules of language abstracted from its use. This change in focus is reflected in the growing literature on communication strategies associated with a considerable number of empirical studies (Atawneh, 1991; Al-Khatib, 2006; Nureddeen, 2007) on speech act behaviour. Interestingly, this shift of emphasis from grammatical competence to communicative competence also pushes researchers who work on the inter-language of Arab learners of English to follow the same direction (Al-zumor, 2003; Al-Kahtani, 2005). The study presented in this paper looks at the use of communication strategies of Yemeni Arabic female speaker, specifically, in their choice of request strategies in the same gender and cross gender.



### **Theoretical background of the study**

The primary theoretical framework of this study is based on Scollon and Scollon's model of politeness or politeness systems (1995). According to the politeness model proposed by Scollon and Scollon, face relationship is divided into three politeness systems (deference politeness system, solidarity politeness system and hierarchical politeness system). In a deference politeness system, the speaker and hearer see themselves at the same social level with no interlocutor exerting power over the other (-Power), but with a distant relationship (+Distance). As a result, according to Scollon and Scollon (ibid), both interlocutors may use independence strategies, including expressions that minimize threat to avoid the risk of losing face. Also, the choice of strategies used by the interlocutors in this system depends on the culture that the interlocutors belong to and they are different from culture to another. In a solidarity politeness system, interlocutors see themselves as being of equal social position (-Power) and with a close relationship (-Distance). In this system, the interlocutors use involvement strategies to assume or express reciprocity or to claim a common point of view. Finally, in a hierarchical politeness system, one participant is in a superordinate position (+Power) and the other is in a subordinate position (-Power). However, in this asymmetrical system, the relationship between both interlocutors may be close or distant (-Distance or +Distance). According to Scollon and Scollon, the interlocutor with power may choose to use the involvement strategies in an interaction while the interlocutor in a lower position may employ independence strategies in order to minimize threat or to show respect to the other interlocutor.

In addition, the current study uses Watts' (2003) concept of linguistic politeness as realized by means of formulaic, ritualized utterances and semi-formulaic utterances. According to Watts (2003) formulaic utterances are linguistic expressions that are used in ritualized forms of verbal interaction which comprise forms of address, expressions commonly used in specific speech acts



such as thanking, apologizing, or refusing, and ritualized expressions of leave-taking. On the other hand, semi-formulaic expressions are conventionalized forms that “carry out indirect speech acts appropriate to the politic behavior of a social situation.” (ibid: 169) and may include linguistic forms that internally modify a speech act to soften the illocutionary force. Watts states that formulaic, ritualized utterances and semi-formulaic utterances are part of the politic behavior of different forms of linguistic practice. He states that “when they are missing, their absence is easily interpretable as impoliteness<sup>1</sup>, and when they are in excess of what is required by the situation, they are easily interpretable as politeness<sup>1</sup>”.

### **Literature Review**

Several research and many different kinds of studies have been conducted in the area of speech act in Arab world. One of the earliest studies in Arab world was conducted by Scarcella and Brunk (1981) as cited in Atawneh (1991) looked at how English directives produced by Arab learners of English don not match the English norms of various degrees of politeness. Subjects were of two level, beginners and advanced. Data were collected by devising role playing situations where one wants to invite one’s superior, one’s equal, one’s subordinate to the party. This experimental study was designed to test the rules of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) positive politeness and negative politeness. The findings of the study show that bilingual Arabs used different politeness expressions from those used by Americans for the same positive politeness strategies in a situation of inviting a friend to a party. For example, Arabs used words like ‘Hello, Welcome’ in response to ‘Hello’ which is equivalent to the Arabic typical response ‘marhaba, ʔahala wasahla’. Also the findings of the study show that Americans used negative politeness strategies than Arabs whereas Arabs were more direct than American with superior, and Arabs were used ‘please’ more than Americans. The findings of the study seem to indicate influence of Arabic on the English performance of the bilingual Arabs.

Atawneh’s (1991) study deals in some detail with politeness strategies of Arabic in the performance of the request speech act contrasting them with those in English. The study also



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aims at testing the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1978) with Arabic – English bilinguals and Arabic monolinguals. Moreover, their research explores the cultural determination of pragmatic norms in language. The analysis of results shows a strong support for the politeness theory with regards to requests. Further, descriptive analysis suggests that Arabic has fewer modals than English and therefore, different politeness strategies are used to make up for the politeness function of modals in English. The applied part of the study shows that the culture in which a second or foreign language is learned shapes the pragmatic norms of the language

El-Shazly (1993) as cited in Umar (2004) studied the request strategies in American English, Egyptian Arabic, and English as spoken by Egyptian second language learners. The results of her study have indicated that there are differences in the requesting strategies used by these groups. The Arab speakers of English demonstrate a high tendency towards using conventional indirectness which depends on the use of interrogatives. Modifiers are also examined among the groups. No differences are found with respect to use of “upgraders”. “Downgraders”, however, are found to be more frequently used by native Arabic speakers. They display a noticeable tendency to use more than one downgrader in a single utterance. This group is also found to be unique in using religious expressions as downgraders.

Abdullah Al-Hamzi’s thesis (1999) is mainly concerned with pragmatic transfer and pragmatic development in the inter-language of Yemeni learners of English at both higher and lower proficiency levels are found to rely heavily L1 pragmatics features. The result of the study further imply that explicit instruction on English pragmatics can help to develop pragmatic awareness in English foreign language learners According to Al-Hamzi “ the findings of this research do not yield any support to the notion of universality of politeness as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978). Politeness is a culture specific convention. What is perceived as polite in Arabic may not be considered so in English and vice versa. The learners in the entire



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situation did not mean to be rude by resorting to their native style of being polite and thus resembling to their Arabic counterparts in being more direct in their request than their native English counterparts. They were not violating their socio-cultural rules. However, when evaluated by someone standing outside their differences in the socio-cultural parameters from one culture to another.

Another study in the area of speech act is conducted by Abdul-Wahid Al-Zumor (2003) which is concerned with investigating how Arabs using English perform in these four types of speech acts: requests, invitations, apologies and corrections. Another major focus this study deals with is relating the various realization patterns of these speech acts to the politeness strategies as proposed by Brown and Levinson. The last main linguistic phenomenon desired to be explored is pragmatic transfer. The findings of the study include (1) learners of a second language should be made aware of the appropriate strategies while correcting factual errors made by different types of addressees. (2) Learners of English need to know how to use hedges properly in English. It has been observed that they overuse the softener “I think” indiscriminately in a formulaic manner, where as, the English native speakers seem creative in using them.(3) Variation in the use of appropriate hedges makes the style very effective and even helps in enhancing politeness with the interlocutor. Arab learners of English do not possess the appropriate pragmatic competence that enables them to use the interrogative form of correction. The study suggests that syllabus designers and material prepares and teachers have to put more emphasis on how languages differ in terms of directness. Learners should be acquainted with the fact that indirectness is highly valued with Anglo- Saxon societies, hence being direct in most of interpersonal communication with the native speakers of English may cause communication breakdowns and misunderstanding. Mechanical training without making second language learners aware of cultural dimensions of language use may not be helpful in second language learning.

Al-Ammar (2000) as cited in Umar (2004) has studied the linguistic strategies and realizations of request behavior in spoken English and Arabic among a number of Saudi female English majors



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at Riyadh College of Arts. The subjects used in this study are forty-five Saudi female students enrolled in the English department at the faculty of Arts. The instrument used for data collection is the "Discourse- Completion-Test". The result reveals that the subjects vary their requestive behavior according to the social situations. Directness increases with decreases in social distance and power.

Umar (2004) conducted a socio-linguistic study to investigate the request strategies used by advanced Arab learners of English as compared to those strategies used by native speakers of English. The sample involves 20 Arab students enrolled in graduate English courses in four Arabic universities and 20 British students perusing graduate programs in three British universities. A Discourse-Completion-Test is used to generate data related to the request strategies used by each group. The result of the study reveals that the two groups adopt similar strategies when addressing their request to equals or people in higher positions. In such cases, the subjects rely heavily on conventionally indirect strategies. However, when requests are addressed to people in lower positions the Arabic sample shows a marked tendency towards using more direct request strategies in performing their request than the British sample. A further test of the data reveals some significant differences between the two groups in the way they modify their request strategies. It is found that the native speakers of English use more semantic and syntactic modifiers than their Arabic counterparts and hence their requests sound more polite and tactful. The investigator attributes this to the linguistic superiority of the native speakers group. The study ends up with some theoretical and pedagogical implications. It is demonstrated that Arab students of English, even at advanced levels, may fall back on their cultural background when formulating their request strategies. On the pedagogical level, it is suggested that Arab learners of English should always be made aware of the pragmatic differences between Arabic and English and that an appropriate Arabic request scheme in a given situation might not be appropriate in English in the same situation

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Al-Kahtani (2005) conducted a study to investigate refusals realizations in three different cultures. The researcher divided the subjects of the study into three groups Americans, Arabs, Japanese to compare the ways they perform refusals with respect to three dimensions of semantic formulas: order, frequency and content of semantic formulas. The subjects are given different status in which the refuser is equal, higher, or lower to the refuse. The findings of the study show that three groups employ different ways and different semantic strategies in realizing the speech act of refusals with respect to the three dimensions of semantic formulas. However, they are not different cross all situations. There were circumstances in which they tended to react to the same way (e.g. the request situation).

AL-Khatib (2006) conducted study about the pragmatics of invitation making and acceptance in Jordanian society. This study aims to explore the nature of invitation making and acceptance in Jordanian society from a pragmatic point of view. It attempts to systemize the various strategies used for the purpose of inviting in Jordanian society; and to highlight the socio-pragmatic constraints governing their use. The study based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. The findings of the study support Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. AL-Khatib (2006:268) claims that "the degree of social distance or solidarity between the interactants in relation to other social factors such as relative age, sex, social roles, whether people work together, or are of the same family were found to be of great effect on the type of strategy being used by the individual speaker upon inviting, accepting an invitation or declining it." All informants of the study, men and women, demonstrate preference for performing the (FTA) (refusing an invitation) on-record with a lot of redressive action (bald-on-record). This happens, as seen above, by using several apologetic expressions that may be prefaced to the face-threatening act to tone down the illocutionary force of the utterance of refusal on the inviter.

Nureddeen (2007) conducted a cross cultural pragmatics: apology strategies in Sudanese Arabic study based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. Her study is an attempt to investigate the use of apology strategies in Sudanese Arabic and shed light on the socio-cultural attitudes and



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values of community. She used discourse completion test (DCT) to collect data for her study. The results of the study support the universality of apology strategies and the selection of apology strategies in this study reinforces the culture specific aspect of language use.

## **Method**

### **Subjects**

The data were collected from a group of Yemeni students from various disciplines at Sana'a University, Yemen. The sample included 168 males and 168 females (mean age: 19-25). The respondents are relatively homogeneous in terms of their cultural background and academic/linguistic experiences.

### **Instrumentation and procedures**

All respondents were asked to fill out a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). This test was originally designed by Blum-Kulka (1982) and has been widely used in collecting data on speech act realizations both within and across language groups. The DCT outlines six written situations that the respondents may encounter. They were asked to read a short description for each situation carefully and then write their responses (request in Yemeni Arabic) in the space provided on DCT. They were instructed to respond as much as possible as they would have done in actual situation.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected were coded using Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) CCSARP (Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project) coding scheme. The coding scheme classifies request into three levels of directness: direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect. Through this scale, the researcher is able to identify request strategies types as produced by female native



speakers of Yemeni Arabic in female-female interaction and female-male interaction. The data were then analyzed according to Scollon and Scollon's and Watts' theory.

### **Result and Discussion**

For the purpose of discussion the instructions given to description of situations will be translated into English and the actual instruction in Arabic can be found in appendix (1).

#### **Request strategies used by female-female and female-male interactions**

The data analysis involves presenting the distribution of request strategies type in Yemeni Arabic across six situations in female-female interactions and female-male interactions.

#### **Situation 1 and 2**

**Situation 1:** You have a delicious meal in a restaurant and now it is time to ask the waiter to prepare your bill. What would you say?

As shown in table 1, the overall use of direct strategies by means of mood derivable is 77.4% and want statements is 10.7% in female-female interactions and the overall use of conventionally indirect by means of query preparatory is 11.9%. In female-male interactions, the overall use of direct strategies by means of mood drivable is 67.3% and want statement is 7.1% and the overall use of conventionally indirect strategies by means of query preparatory is 25.6%.

**Situation 2:** You are a manager and you want a cleaner to clean your office. What would you say?

As shown in table 1, In female-female interactions, the overall use of direct strategies by means of mood derivable is 78.6% and want statements is 8.9% and the overall use of conventionally indirect strategies by means of query preparatory is 12.5%. On the other hand, the overall use of direct strategies by means of mood derivable in female-male interactions is 66.7% and want

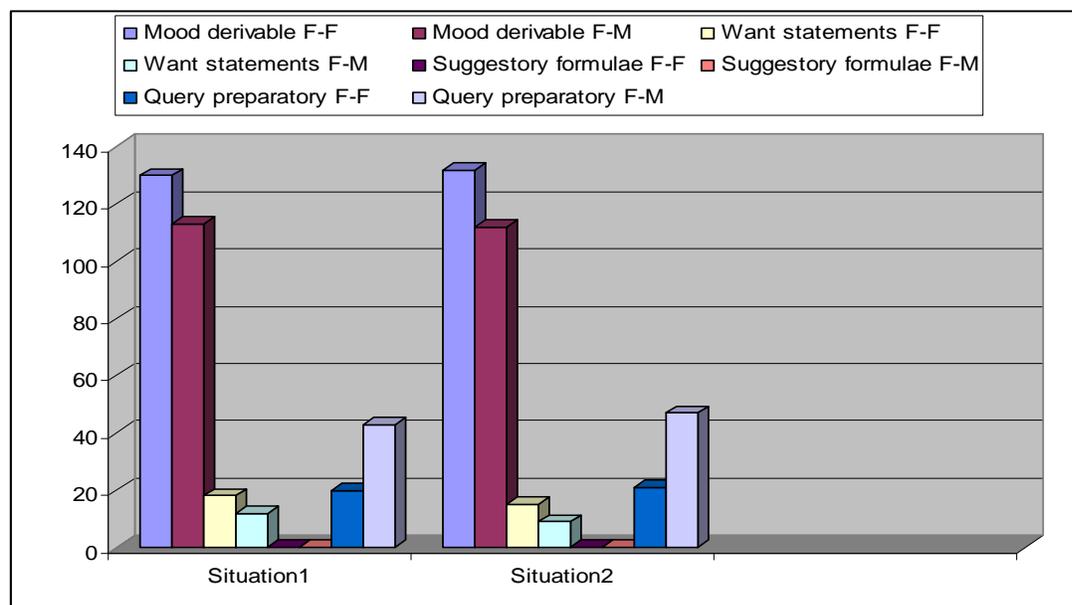


statements is 5.4% and the overall use of conventionally indirect strategies by means of query preparatory is 28.0%.

It can be observed that in situation one and two, the findings reveal that there is a great tendency in both female-female interactions and female-male interactions to use direct head strategies more than indirect ones. Moreover, the findings reveal that in female-female interactions, the respondents have a great tendency to use direct head act strategies more than indirect ones, whereas, in female-male interactions, also there is a great tendency to use direct head strategies more than indirect ones but, the number of respondents who chose to use indirect head act strategies are more than in the female-female interactions.

**Table 1: Distribution of Frequency and Percentage of the Requests Strategies in Female-Female Interaction and Female- Male Interaction across Situation 1 and 2**

Situation		direct strategies		Conventionally Indirect strategies		Non-conventionally indirect strategies		Total
		Mood derivable	Want statements	Suggestory formulae	Query preparatory	Strong hints	Mild hints	
S1	F-F	130 77.4%	18 10.7%	0	20 11.9%	0	0	168 100%
	F-M	113 67.3%	12 7.1%	0	43 25.6%	0	0	168 100%
S2	F-F	132 78.6%	15 8.9%	0	21 12.5%	0	0	168 100%
	F-M	112 66.7%	9 5.4%	0	47 28.0%	0	0	168 100%



**Figure1: Distribution of Request Strategies in Yemeni Arabic across Situation 1 and 2**

According to Scollon and Scollon's (1995) politeness system, the findings of situation one and two come under hierarchical politeness system. In a hierarchical politeness system, interlocutors see themselves as being of unequal social position. One participant is in a higher position (+Power) and the other is in a lower position (-Power). In this system, the participant with power may use direct strategies (involvement strategies). Involvement strategies "are concerned with the person's right and need to be considered a normal, contributing, or supporting member of society" (Scollon and Scollon, 1995: 36). The participant in a lower position may employ indirect strategies (independence strategies) to minimize threat or to show respect to the interlocutor. Independence strategies are "emphasized the individuality of the participant. It emphasizes their right not to be completely dominated by group or social values, and to be free from the impositions of others." (Scollon and Scollon, 1995: 37)

In a hierarchical politeness system, the respondents in female-female interactions and female-male interactions recognized and respected the power difference (+P) between the interlocutors. It was found that the respondents in female-female interactions and female-male interactions who participated in the current study used various kinds of formulaic, ritualized utterances when





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On the other hand, the respondents employed some other formulaic, ritualized utterances to mitigate the direct request such as apologizing ‘Law samaht’ (excuse me) for male or ‘Law samahti’ (excuse me) for female, ‘min faḍlak’ (please) for male, or ‘min faḍlik’ (please) for female and ‘ʔiḍa ma:fi: ʔizɫɫ’ (if there is no bother) to express involvement or camaraderie. For example:

- |     |                           |            |          |           |            |
|-----|---------------------------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| (5) | <b>min faḍlik</b>         | ja:ʔ ʊɫt-i | ʔdi-li   | ʔlfaturah |            |
| *   | <b>out of your bounty</b> | sister-my  | give- me | bill      |            |
|     | <b>Please</b>             | my sister, | give me  | the bill. |            |
| (6) | <b>Law samaht</b>         | ja:ħa:ɫɫ   | mʊmkin   | tnaḍif    | maktab-i   |
| *   | <b>If you allowed</b>     | hey hajji  | can      | clean     | office-my  |
|     | <b>Excuse me</b>          | hajji,     | can you  | clean     | my office? |

Also some Islamic utterances displayed in a hierarchical situations such as ‘ʔallah jaħfḍak’ (Allah preserves you) for male and ‘ʔallah jʊba:rik fi:ki’ (Allah blesses you) for female. The speaker used them in order to show his respectable and also to make his request more polite. For example:

- |     |                              |            |            |          |            |
|-----|------------------------------|------------|------------|----------|------------|
| (7) | <b>ʔallah jʊba:rik fi:ki</b> | ja:ħa:ɫɫah | ʔaʃti-ki   | tnaḍifi  | maktab-i   |
| *   | <b>Allah bless you</b>       | hey hajji  | want-you   | clean    | office-my  |
|     | <b>Allah blesses you</b>     | hajji,     | I want you | to clean | my office. |
| (8) | <b>ʔallah jaħfḍik</b>        | ja:ħa:ɫɫah | naḍifi     |          | maktab-i   |
| *   | <b>Allah preserve you</b>    | hey hajji  | clean      |          | office-my  |
|     | <b>Allah preserves you</b>   | hajji,     | clean      |          | my office. |

Furthermore, in a hierarchical politeness system, it can be observed that the respondents used semi-formulaic utterances such as ‘mʊmkin’, (can) ‘bʔammkanak’ and ‘tiqdar-i’ (to be able to),



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all these expressions in Yemeni Arabic used to produce indirect request. The semi-formulaic utterances in Yemeni Arabic work as a marker of independence politeness strategies which help the speaker to protect his face and the hearer's face when the ranking of imposition is very high.

For example:

- |     |                |            |                        |           |
|-----|----------------|------------|------------------------|-----------|
| (9) | Law samaḥti    | ja:ʔuχt-i  | <b>mʊmkin</b>          | ʔlfaturah |
| *   | If you allowed | sister-my  | <b>can</b>             | bill      |
|     | Excuse me      | my sister, | <b>Can you</b> give me | the bill. |
- 
- |      |                    |                   |            |           |
|------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|
| (10) | min faḍlak         | <b>bʔammkanak</b> | tidi-li    | ʔlfaturah |
| *    | out of your bounty | <b>can</b>        | give-to me | bill      |
|      | Please,            | <b>can you</b>    | give me    | the bill. |
- 
- |      |                    |            |                |        |           |
|------|--------------------|------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| (11) | min faḍlak         | ja:ħa:dʒah | <b>tiqdari</b> | tnaḍif | maktab-i  |
| *    | out of your bounty | hey hajji  | <b>able to</b> | clean  | office-my |
|      | Please             | hajji,     | <b>can you</b> | clean  | my office |
- 
- |          |      |         |
|----------|------|---------|
| bsʊrʔah  | ʔana | maʃbu:l |
| quickly  | I    | busy    |
| quickly? | I am | busy.   |

As shown in table 1 and figures 1, the respondents have a great tendency to use direct head act request in female-female interactions and female-male-interactions across the two situations in a hierarchical politeness system. The findings of the current study reveal that the person in the position of higher status employed direct strategies (involvement politeness strategies) to show that being direct in these situations expresses camaraderie and is consistent with cultural norms when the speaker has a high position. The respondents employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing 'face' because it is the expected behavior in such situations in a hierarchical politeness system.



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Direct strategies were employed using a verb in the imperative (mood derivable) in female-female interactions and female-male interactions in a hierarchical politeness system. These can be observed in following examples below

(12) min faðlik                      ja:ʔ ʊχt-i      ʔdi-li      ʔlfaturah  
\* out of your bounty      sister-my      **give- me**      **bill**  
Please                      my sister,      **give me**      **the bill.**

(13) ʔafwan                      ja:ʔaχ-i      ʔdi-li      ʔlfaturah  
\* sorry                      brother-my      **give- me**      **bill**  
I am sorry      my brother,      **give me**      **the bill.**

(14) ʔallah jahfðak                      ja:ħa:ɖʒ      tnaðifi      maktab-i  
\* Allah preserve you      hey hajji      **clean**      **office-my**  
Allah preserves you      hajji,      **clean**      **my office.**

Also it can be observed that direct strategies were employed by respondents by means of utterances stating the speaker's desire that the hearer perform the act (want statements). For example:

(15) Law samaħt                      ja:ʔaχ-i      ʔft-i      ʔlfaturah  
\* If you allowed      brother-my      **want-I**      **bill**  
Excuse me                      my brother,      **I want**      **the bill.**

(16) ʔallah jʊba:rik fi:ki                      ja:ħa:ɖʒah      ʔafti-ki      tnaðifi      maktab-i  
\* Allah bless you                      hey hajji      **want-you**      **clean**      **office-my**  
Allah blesses you                      hajji,      **I want you**      **to clean**      **my office.**

Furthermore, It can be observed that direct request were always modified and accompanied with formulaic utterances such as in-group identity markers which expressed involvement or camaraderie between interlocutors such as 'ja:ʔaχ-i' (my brother) for male, (my sister) for female.

Also terms of address such as 'ja:ħa:ɖʒah' (hajji) for female, 'ja:ħa:ɖʒ' (hajji) for male. Also the



respondents used formulaic utterances such as apologizing ‘ʕafwan’ (I am sorry) for male or female, ‘Law samaħt’ (excuse me) for male, ‘min faðlik’ (please) for female, ‘min faðlak’ (please) for male,. Also Islamic utterances such as ‘ʔallah jUba:rik fi:ki’ (Allah blesses you) for female and ‘ʔallah jahfðak’ for male to soften a direct request and make it more polite.

On the other hand, the respondents employed conventionally indirect strategies in female-female interactions and female-male interactions with different frequencies. Also it should be noted that in female-male interactions, the respondents employed conventionally indirect strategies more than in the female-female interactions.

Overall, conventionally indirect strategies were conveyed by query preparatory containing reference to preparatory conditions (e.g., ability and willingness),. In a hierarchical politeness system, indirect request in Yemeni Arabic by means of query preparatory expressed using different semi-formulaic utterances. The respondents employed indirect request strategies to express deferential politeness when addressing a person of distant relationship. For example:

(17)	Law samaħti	ja:ʔuħt-i	<b>mUmkIn</b>	<b>ʔlfaturah</b>
*	If you allowed	sister-my	<b>can</b>	<b>bill</b>
	Excuse me	my sister,	<b>Can you give me</b>	<b>the bill.</b>

(18)	Law samaħt	ja:ħa:ɖʒ	<b>tiqdar</b>	<b>tnaðif</b>	<b>maktab-i</b>
*	If you allowed	hey hajji	<b>can</b>	<b>clean</b>	<b>office-my</b>
	Excuse me	hajji,	<b>can you</b>	<b>clean</b>	<b>my office</b>

<b>bsUrħah</b>	ʔana	maʃbu:l
<b>quickly</b>	I	busy
<b>auickly?</b>	I am	busy.

It should be noted that conventionally indirect request in Yemeni Arabic were always modified and accompanied with formulaic utterances such as ‘min faðlak’ (please) for male, ‘Law samaħt’ (excuse me) for male, ‘Law samaħti’ (excuse me) for female and conditional clause ‘ʔiða ma:fi:



maniŕ' for male and female. This kind of formulaic utterances may serve to express deferential politeness.

As shown in the table 1 and 1 in written DCT, differences were observed with respect to the use of direct and indirect strategies in a hierarchical politeness system. Within this politeness system, a relatively higher degree of directness by means of mood derivable and want statements with formulaic, ritualized expressions were observed in female-female interactions more than in the female-male interactions. On the other hand, in female-male interactions, respondents prefer to use conventionally indirect strategies by means of query preparatory with various semi-formulaic expressions more than in the female-female interactions. The preference for direct request in these situations seems to be an instance of solidarity politeness strategies or involvement politeness strategies and shows that being direct in these situations expresses camaraderie and is consistent with cultural norms when the speaker is in a high position. The native speakers of Yemeni Arabic in female-female interactions employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing 'face' because the fact that it is the expected behavior in such situations. In female-male interactions, the speakers preferred to use indirect strategies because in Yemeni society and culture, women have special circumstances because of cultural and religious values and the men have to take care for their words. Buda et al. (1998) have pointed out that there are special linguistic utterances that men use when addressing women, and vice versa in Arabic, because of cultural and religious values.

**Situation 3:** You are working in a company as deputy manager .You want to request the manager of your company to let you leave work early because you have an appointment with dentist. What would you say?

In this situation as shown in table 2, it can be observed that respondents in female-female interactions prefer to employ indirect head act strategies by means of query preparatory more than direct strategies by means of mood derivable and want statements. Similarly, in female-male



interactions, there is a great tendency to employ conventionally indirect strategies by means of query preparatory more than in the direct strategies.

**Situation 4:** You are working in a company as deputy manager. Your car has broken down and you want to collect your brother from bus station. You want to ask your manager with whom you get on well for his car. What would you say?

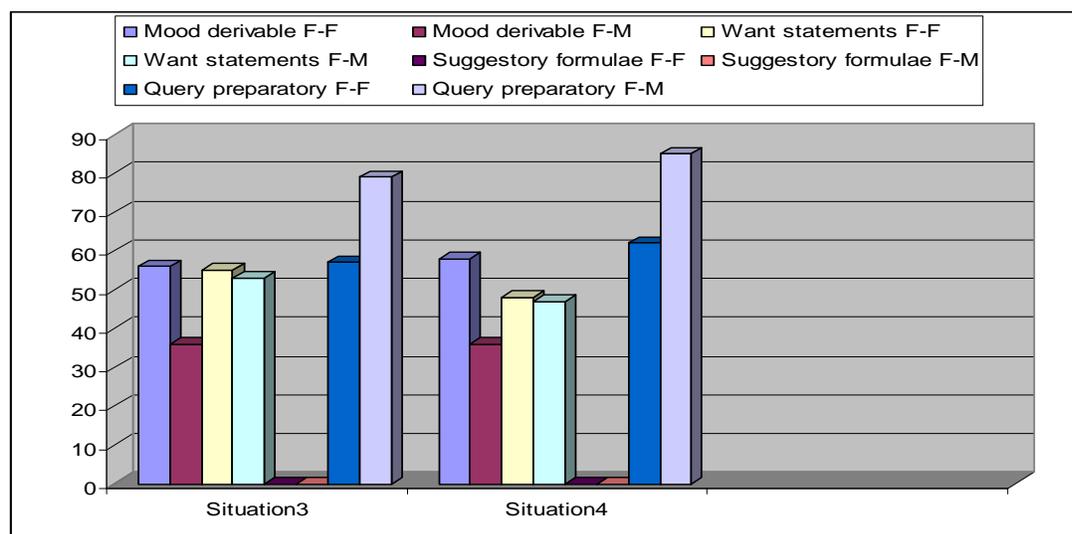
As shown in table 2, the overall use of direct head act strategies in female-female interactions by means of mood derivable is 34.5%, want statements strategy is 28.6% and the overall use of conventionally indirect strategy by means of query preparatory is 36.9%. On the other hand, the overall use of direct strategies by female-male interactions by means of mood derivable is 21.4%, want statements is 28.0% and the overall use of conventionally indirect strategy by means of query preparatory 50.6%. It can be observed in situation four that respondents in female-female interactions and female-male interactions have a great preference to employ indirect head act strategies by means of query preparatory more than in the female-male interactions. The explanation for this preference is that the ranking of imposition or the impact of request is very high. Therefore, the requester preferred to employ indirect request to protect his face and requestee's face

The findings of situation three and four reveal that there is a great tendency in both female-female interactions and female-male interactions to use indirect strategies more than direct ones. Particularly, the findings reveal that in female-female interactions in written DCT data, the number of who employ direct head act strategies is higher than in female-male interactions. On the other hand, in female-male interactions, there is a great tendency to employ indirect strategies more than direct ones and more than in female-female interactions.



**Table 2: Distribution of Frequency and Percentage of the Requests Strategies in Female-Female Interaction and Female- Male Interaction across Situation 3 and 4**

Situation		direct strategies		Conventionally Indirect strategies		Non-conventionally indirect strategies		Total
		Mood derivable	Want statements	Suggestory formulae	Query preparatory	Strong hints	Mild hints	
S3	F-F	56 33.3%	55 32.7%	0	57 33.9%	0	0	168 100%
	F-M	36 21.4%	53 31.5%	0	79 47.0%	0	0	168 100%
S4	F-F	58 34.5%	48 28.6%	0	62 36.9%	0	0	168 100%
	F-M	36 21.8%	47 28.0%	0	85 50.6%	0	0	168 100%





**Figure2: Distribution of Request Strategies in Yemeni Arabic across Situation 3 and 4**

The findings of situation three and four come under Scollon and Scollon's (1995) deference politeness system. In a deference politeness, the speaker and hearer see themselves at the same social level with no interlocutor exerting power over the other (-Power), but with a distant relationship (+Distance). As a result, both interlocutors may use independence strategies, including expressions that minimize threat to avoid the risk of losing face. Also the choice of request strategies in deference politeness system depends on the culture of society and they are different from culture to another.

In a deference politeness system, respondents in female-female interactions and female-male interactions recognized and respect a distance (+D) between interlocutors. It was found that respondents in female-female interactions and female-male interactions who participated in the current study used various kinds of formulaic, ritualized utterances with direct head act request and semi- formulaic utterances as a marker of indirect request when addressing a person in a high position.

As shown in the table 2 and figure 2, in a deference politeness system, the respondents in both female-female interactions and female-male interactions have a great preference to use conventionally indirect head act request by means of query preparatory more than direct strategies across the two situations. Particularly, in this system in female-female interactions polite request strategies were mostly accomplished by direct head act strategies by means of mood derivable and want statements more than female-male interactions. The findings of the current study reveal that in female-female interactions, the respondents prefer to use direct strategies (involvement politeness strategies) because the relation between females is very flexible in Yemeni culture and it is acceptable to make direct request with softeners to show solidarity and strong relationship between them. The direct head act strategies in female-female



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interactions act as a marker of solidarity in Yemeni Arabic and also being direct in these situations expresses camaraderie between interlocutors and is consistent with Yemeni cultural customs the speaker and hearer are equals or near equals. The respondents of the current study in female-female interactions employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing 'face' because it is the expected behavior in such situations in a deference politeness system in Yemeni Arabic.

It can be observed that in Yemeni Arabic direct strategies were employed using a verb in the imperative (mood derivable) in female-female interactions and female-male interactions in a deference politeness system. These can be observed in the examples below:

- (19)   ʔallah jaħfðik           ja:mʊdirah           ʔssmahi-li           ʔrwih badri  
\*       Allah preserve you   hey manager       **allow-me**       **leave early**  
       Allah preserves you   my manager,       **allow me**       **to leave early**

**ʔljaʊm**   maħ-i   mawħid           mħa   tabib ʔlasnan  
**today**   have-I   appointment   with   dentist  
**today?**   I have   an appointment   with   dentist.

- (20)   ʔiða ma:fi: ʔizħðʒ           ja:mʊdirah           ħirini           sja:ra:t-ik  
\*       If no bother           hey manager       **lend- me**       **car-your**  
       If there is no bother   manager,       **lend me**       **your car**

ʔwasil       ʔaħ-i       min   ʔlmaħtah  
lift       brother-my   from   station  
to lift   my brother   from   station?

Furthermore, in Yemeni Arabic direct request conveyed also by means of utterances stating the speaker's desire that the hearer perform the act (want statements). For example:



- (21)    ʔiða ma:fi: ʔizʔɔʔ    ja:mʊdir    ʔʃti    ʔmʃi    badri  
\*    If no bother    hey manager    **want**    **leave**    **early**  
      If there is no bother    my manager,    **I want**    **to leave**    **early**

**ʔljaʊm**    maʃ-i    mawʃid    mʃa    ʔabib ʔlasnan  
**today**    have-I    appointment    with    dentist  
**today,**    I have    an appointment    with    dentist.

- (22)    ʔallah jʊba:rik fi:k    ja:mʊdir    ʔana    mʊhtadʒ    sja:ra:t-ak  
\*    Allah bless you    hey manager    **I**    **need**    **car- your**  
      Allah blesses you    manager,    **I**    **need**    **your car**

ʔwasil    ʔaχ-i    min    ʔlmaħtah  
lift    brother-my    from    station  
to lift    my brother    from    station?

From the examples above, it can be observed that direct request were always modified and accompanied with formulaic utterances in Yemeni Arabic such as terms of address which expressed involvement or camaraderie between interlocutors such as ‘ja:ʔʊstʔaðaħ’ (my teacher) for female, ‘ja:mʊdirah’ (manager) for female or ‘ja:mʊdir’ (manager) for male. Moreover, the respondents employed another kind of formulaic utterances such as ‘ʔiða ma:fi:ʔizʔɔʔ’ (If there is no bother) for male or. Also Islamic expressions displayed in these situations which act as formulaic utterances such as ‘ʔallah jaħfðik’ (Allah be preserves you) for female and ‘ʔallah jʊba:rik fi:k’ (Allah blesses you) for male. The respondents employed formulaic utterances to soften and mitigate a direct request and make it more polite.

On the other hand, in a deference politeness system, the respondents in female-male interactions have a great tendency to employ conventionally indirect head act strategies by means of query



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preparatory more than in female-female interactions across the two situations. Conventionally request strategies in this system, in female-male interactions were mostly accomplished by means of query preparatory. Also it can be observed that the findings of the current study reveal that in female-male interactions that the more distant the relationship between the interlocutors, the more likely to employ a request indirectly to smooth the conversational interaction and also the speaker try to show his respect and deference by making indirect request.

In a deference politeness system, overall conventionally indirect strategies were conveyed in Yemeni Arabic by query preparatory containing reference to preparatory conditions (e.g., ability and willingness) in female-male interactions and female-female interactions. In a deference politeness system, indirect requests in Yemeni Arabic were conveyed by means of query preparatory expressed using different semi-formulaic expression such as ‘mUmkin’ (can) for male or female, , ‘ʔqdar’ (to be able to) for male or female, ‘bʔammkanak-i’ (can you) for female. The speaker used semi-formulaic expressions as a marker of indirect request or as independence politeness strategies to express deferential politeness when addressing a person of distant relationship. These can be observed in the examples below:

(23)	Law samaḥti	ja:ʔUsta:ðah	fatima	<b>ʔqdar</b>	<b>ʔrwih</b>
*	If you allowed me	teacher	fatima	<b>can</b>	<b>go</b>
	Excuse me	teacher	Fatima,	<b>can I</b>	<b>leave work</b>

<b>badri ʔljaUm</b>	maḥ-i	mawḥid	mḥa	ṭabib ʔlasnan
<b>early today</b>	have-I	appointment	with	dentist
<b>early today?</b>	I have	an appointment	with	dentist.

(24)	ʔiða ma:fi: ʔizḥḍ	ja:mUdirah	<b>baʔimmkaniki</b>	<b>taḥirini</b>
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\* If no bother hey manager **can you** **lend-me**  
If there is no bother my manager, **can you** **lend me**

**sja:ra:t-ik** ʔwasil ʔax-i min ʔlmaħtah  
**car-your** lift brother-my from station  
**your car?** to lift my brother from station?

(25) ʔiða takarramt ja:mUdir **mUmkin** ʔstaʕir  
\* If you be generous enough hey manager **can** **borrow**  
Please my manager, **can I** **borrow**

**sja:ra:t-ak** ʔwasil ʔax-i min ʔlmaħtah  
**car-you** lift brother-my from station  
**your car?** to lift my brother from station?

It can be observed that conventionally indirect request in Yemeni Arabic were always modified and accompanied with formulaic utterances such as terms of address which expressed involvement or camaraderie between interlocutors such as ‘ja:ʔustʔað’ (my teacher) for, ‘ja:ʔustʔaðah’ (my teacher) for female, ‘ja:mUdir’ (manager) for and ‘ja:mUdirah’ (manager) for female. Also the respondents employed formulaic utterances such as ‘Law samaħti’ (excuse me) for female, ‘ʔiða takarramt’ (please) for male and conditional clause such as ‘ʔiða ma:fi: maniʕ’ (If there is no objection) for male or female as in example (88) and ‘ʔiða ma:fi: ʔizʕtʕ’ (If there is no bother). Also Islamic utterances occurred in these situations such as ‘ʔallah jUba:rik fi:ki’ (Allah blesses you) for female and ‘ʔallah jUba:rik fi:k’ (Allah blesses you) for male. These kind of formulaic utterances serve to express deferential politeness.

As shown in the table 2 and figure 2 in written DCT, differences were observed with respect to the use of direct and indirect strategies in a hierarchical politeness system. Within this politeness system, a relatively higher degree of directness by means of mood derivable and want statements with formulaic, ritualized expressions were observed in female-female interactions more than in



the female-male interactions. On the other hand, in female-male interactions, respondents prefer to use conventionally indirect strategies by means of query preparatory with various semi-formulaic expressions more than in the female-female interactions. The preference for direct request in these situations seems to be an instance of solidarity politeness strategies or involvement politeness strategies and shows that being direct in these situations expresses camaraderie and is consistent with cultural norms when the speaker is in low position. The native speakers of Yemeni Arabic in female-female interactions employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing 'face' because the fact that it is the expected behavior in such situations. In female-male interactions, the speakers preferred to use indirect strategies because in Yemeni society and culture, women have special circumstances because of cultural and religious values and the men have to take care for their words. Buda et al. (1998) have pointed out that there are special linguistic utterances that men use when addressing women, and vice versa in Arabic, because of cultural and religious values.

From Table 2 and figure 2, in deference situations, it can be observed that the respondents in female-female interactions show a preference for direct request forms in the form of mood derivable and want statements more than in the female-male. On the other hand, in female-male interactions, they show great preference for indirect request in the form of query preparatory more than in the female-female interactions.

**Situation 5:** You have missed an important class and you want to borrow your friend's note. What would you say?

As shown in table 3, it can be observed that in situation five that the respondents in female-female interactions employ direct head act strategies by means of mood derivable with high frequency 46.4% and want statements 20.8% more than in the female-male in their interactions. On the other hand, in female-male interactions, the respondents have a great preference to employ conventionally indirect strategies by means of query preparatory 47.0% more than in the female-female interactions.



**Situation 6:** Your classmate in the college is your best friend and you want to use his computer to type your assignment because yours breaks down. What would you say?

As shown above in table 3, that the most frequently used head act strategy in female-female interactions is direct strategies by means of mood derivable 46.4% and want statements strategy 17.3%. Also the respondents employ conventionally indirect strategy by means of query preparatory 36.3%. On the other hand, that the most frequently used head act strategy in female-male interactions is conventionally indirect strategy by means of query preparatory is 51.2%. Furthermore, direct strategies are employed in female-male interactions by means of mood derivable is 33.3% and want statements strategy is 15.5% but the frequency is lower than in the female-female interactions.

The findings of situation five and six reveal that gender appeared to be an important variable that affect the choice of request head act strategies. The findings reveal that in female-female interactions in written DCT data, the respondents have a great tendency to use direct head act strategies more than indirect ones and more than in the female-male interactions, whereas, in female-male interactions, the respondents prefer to use indirect head act strategies more than direct ones.

**Table 3: Distribution of Frequency and Percentage of the Requests Strategies in Female-Female Interaction and Female- Male Interaction across Situation 5 and 6**

Situation		direct strategies		Conventionally Indirect strategies		Non-conventionally indirect strategies		Total
		Mood derivable	Want statements	Suggestory formulae	Query preparatory	Strong hints	Mild hints	
S5	F-F	78 46.4%	35 20.8%	0	55 32.7%	0	0	168 100%
	F-M	63	26	0	79	0	0	

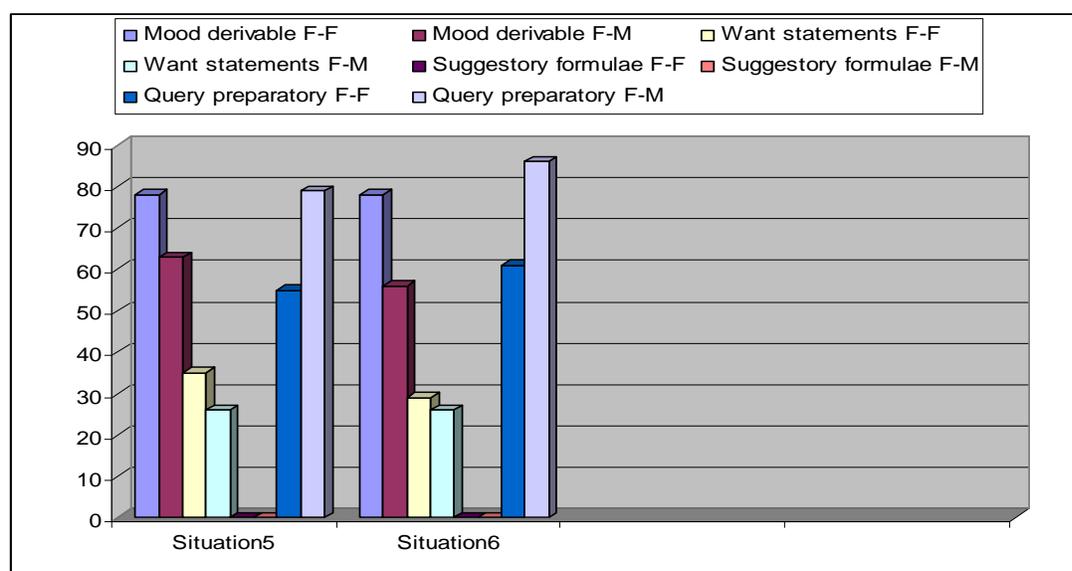


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		37.5%	15.5%		47.0%			100%
S6	F-F	78 46.4%	29 17.3%	0	61 36.3%	0	0	168 100%
	F-M	56 33.3%	26 15.5%	0	86 51.2%	0	0	168 100%



**Figure3: Distribution of Request Strategies in Yemeni Arabic across Situation 5 and 6**

The findings of situation five and six come under Scollon and Scollon's (1995) a solidarity politeness system. In a solidarity politeness system, interlocutors see themselves as being in equal social position and feel or express closeness to each other. In a solidarity politeness system, the participants are close and there is no feelings of either a power difference (-P) or distance (-D) between them. As a result, both interlocutors may use direct strategies (involvement strategies, including expressions that minimize threat to avoid the risk of losing face. Also the choice of request strategies in a solidarity politeness system depends on the culture of society and they are different from culture to another.



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In solidarity politeness system, interlocutors employed involvement strategies more than independence strategies with expressions that minimize threat to avoid the risk of losing face and to show solidarity between interlocutors. The common features characterizing these situations were the use of softeners in order to mitigate and smooth the conversational interactions such as ‘Law samaht’ (excuse me) for male, and ‘min faðlik’ (please) for female. These can be observed in some of the examples below:

(26)	<b>Law samaht</b>	ja:ʔaχ-i	bʔammkan-ak	tʕiran-i	maħmul-ak
*	<b>excuse me</b>	brother-my	able -you	lend-me	laptop-your
	<b>Excuse me</b>	my brother,	can you	lend me	your laptop?

(27)	<b>min faðlik</b>	kʊnt	ʕaijb	ʔmss	waʔʕti
*	<b>out of your bounty</b>	was	absent	yesterday	want
	<b>Please,</b>	I was	absent	yesterday	and I want

ʔstaʕi:r	daftari-k	ʔnqʊl	ʔlmuħaðarat
borrow	notebook-your	copy	lectures
to borrow	your notebook	to copy	the lectures.

Also the respondents in these situations used the Islamic utterances to mitigate and soften direct request such as ‘ʔallah jahfðik’ (Allah preserves you) for female, ‘ʔallah jʊba:rik fi:k’ (Allah blesses you) for male and ‘ʔallah jʊba:rik fi:ki’ (Allah blesses you) for female. Furthermore, the respondents used in group identity markers such as ‘ʔaχ-i’ (my brother), and ‘ʔʊχt-i’ (my sister) to soften direct request and to show camaraderie between interlocutors. These can be observed in the following examples below:

(27)	<b>ʔallah jahfðik</b>	ja:ʔʊχt-i	ʕirin-i	daftari-k	ʔswir
*	<b>Allah preserve you</b>	<b>sister-my</b>	lend-me	notebook-your	copy
	<b>Allah preserves you,</b>	<b>my sister</b>	lend me	your notebook	to copy

ʔlmuħaðarah  
lecture



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the lecture.

(28)	<b>ʔallah jŪba:rik fi:k</b>	ja:ʔaχ-i	ʕiran-i	maħmul-ak	ʔtbʕ
*	<b>Allah blesses you</b>	brother-my	lend-me	laptop-your	type
	<b>Allah blesses you</b>	my brother,	lend me	your laptop	to type

wadʕibi	maħmu:l-i	mŪʕtal
assignment -my	laptop-my	broken
my assignment	my laptop	is broken.

Various formulaic, ritualized utterances were employed in female-female interactions and female-male interactions in Yemeni Arabic to express involvement with an interlocutor by means of in-group identity markers, given names, nicknames and titles. Also various semi-formulaic linguistic expressions were employed in female-male interactions more than female-female interactions in Yemeni Arabic to express higher levels of deferential politeness with males.

As shown in the table 3 and figure 3, in a solidarity politeness system, the respondents in female-female interactions have a great tendency to use direct head act request by means of mood derivable and want statements more than in the female male-interactions across the two situations and the request interactions in this system in female-female interactions were mostly accomplished by direct strategies by means of mood derivable and want statements. The findings of the current study reveal that in female-female interactions, the respondents feel closeness to each other and feel that they are familiar with each other. Therefore, they employed involvement politeness strategies to show that being direct in these situations expresses camaraderie between interlocutors and are consistent with cultural norms when the speaker and hearer in equal social position. The native speakers of Yemeni Arabic in female-female interactions employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing 'face' because it is the expected behavior in such situations in a solidarity politeness system and Also in Yemeni Arabic, imperatives or direct requests are common and favored among close interactants (friends) because using interrogative directives with friends can be offensive (Al-Zumor, 2003).





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Allah blesses you Khadijah, **I want your laptop** to type

wadʒibi  
assignment -my  
my assignment.

It can be observed that direct request were always modified and accompanied with formulaic utterances such as in group identity markers which expressed involvement or camaraderie between interlocutors such as 'ja:ʔax-i' (my brother) for male or 'ja:ʔux-t-i' (my sister) for female. The first names of the persons were used as formulaic utterances such as 'ja:ʔadidʒah' (Khadijah) the names of female persons. Also the respondents employed formulaic utterances such as apology 'ʔafwan' (I am sorry) for male or female. Also respondents used Islamic expressions as formulaic utterances such as 'ʔallah jahfðak' (Allah preserves you) for male and 'allah juba:rik fi:ki' (Allah blesses you) for female .

On the other hand, as shown in table 3 and figure 3, in a solidarity politeness system, the respondents in female-male interactions have a great tendency to employ conventionally indirect head act strategies by means of query preparatory more than in female-female interactions across the two situations and the request interactions in this system in female-male interactions were mostly accomplished by indirect head act strategies by means of query preparatory. Also it can be observed that the findings of the current study reveal that in female-male interactions, the respondents prefer to employ indirect strategies in spite of they feel closeness to each other and feel that they are familiar with each other. Therefore, they employed indirect strategies (independence politeness strategies) to mitigate the negative effects of requests and to smooth the conversational interaction and also the speakers try to show their respect and deference by making indirect request. Various semi-formulaic utterances were employed as a marker of indirect request in a solidarity politeness system.



In Yemeni Arabic, conventionally indirect strategies were conveyed by query preparatory containing reference to preparatory conditions (e.g., ability and willingness), in female-male interactions and female-female interactions in a solidarity politeness system. In a solidarity politeness system, indirect requests in Yemeni Arabic were conveyed by means of query preparatory expressed using different semi-formulaic expression such as 'ʔqdar' (to be able to) for male or female, prefix 'ʕa + verb such as 'ʕa-tʕi:ran-i' (can you lend me?) ʕa + a verb express ability, 'bʔammkanak' (to be able to) for male and 'ʔasttiʕ' (can I able) for male or female. These can be observed in some of the examples below:

- (33) ʔiða takarramti                      ja:ʔuʕt-i      **ʔqdar**      **ʔstaʕi:r**  
 \* If you be generous enough      sister-my      **can**      **lend-me**  
 Please                      my sister,      **can you**      **lend me**

<b>daftari-k</b>	la:ni	kʔnt	ʕaijb	ʔamss
<b>notebook-your</b>	because	was	absent	yesterday
<b>your notebook?</b>	because	I was	absent	yesterday

- (34) ʔiða takarramt                      ja:ʔaʕ-i                      **ʕa-tʕi:ran-i**  
 \* If you be generous enough      brother-my                      **able-lend-me**  
 Please                      my brother,                      **can you lend me**

<b>daftari-k</b>	la:ni	kʔnt	ʕaijb	ʔamss
<b>notebook-your</b>	because	was	absent	yesterday
<b>your notebook?</b>	because	I was	absent	yesterday

- (35) Law samahti                      ja:samira                      **ʔasttiʕ**      **ʔastaydim**      **mahmul-ik**  
 \* If you allowed                      hey Sameera                      **able-I**      **use-I**      **laptop-your**  
 Excuse me                      Sameera,                      **can I**      **use**      **your laptop?**



(36)	min faḍlak	ja:ʔaχ-i	<b>bʔammkan-ak</b>	<b>tʃiran-i</b>
*	out of your bounty	brother-my	<b>able -you</b>	<b>lend-me</b>
	Please	my brother,	<b>can you</b>	<b>lend me</b>

**mahmul-ak**  
**laptop-your**  
**your laptop?**

It can be observed that conventionally indirect request in Yemeni Arabic were always modified and accompanied with formulaic utterances such as name of the person which expressed involvement or camaraderie between interlocutors such as ‘ja: samira’ (Sameera) name of a female. Also used in group identity markers such as ‘ja: ʔUχt-i’ (my sister) or ‘ja: ʔaχ-i’ (my brother). Also the respondents employed formulaic utterances such as ‘ʔiḍa takarramti’ (please) for female and ‘ʔiḍa takarramt’ (please) for male. ‘Law samaḥti’ (excuse me) for female, ‘min faḍlak’ (please) for male.

As shown in the table 3 in written DCT, differences were observed with respect to the use of direct and indirect strategies in a solidarity politeness system. Within this politeness system, a relatively higher degree of directness by means of mood derivable and want statements with formulaic, ritualized expressions were observed in female-female interactions more than in the female-male interactions. On the other hand, in female-male interactions, respondents prefer to use conventionally indirect strategies by means of query preparatory with various semi-formulaic expressions more than in the female-female interactions. The preference for direct request in these situations seems to be an instance of solidarity politeness strategies or involvement politeness strategies and shows that being direct in these situations expresses camaraderie and is consistent with cultural norms. The native speakers of Yemeni Arabic in female-female interactions employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing ‘face’



because the fact that it is the expected behavior in such situations and also the explanation for this is that in Yemeni Arabic, imperatives or direct requests are common and favored among close interactants (friends) because using interrogative directives with friends can be offensive (Al Zumor, 2003). In female-male interactions, the speakers preferred to use indirect strategies because in Yemeni society and culture, women have special circumstances because of cultural and religious values and the women have to take care for their words. Buda et al. (1998) have pointed out that there are special linguistic utterances that men use when addressing women, and vice versa in Arabic, because of cultural and religious values.

In short, from Table 3 and 3, in a solidarity politeness system, it is clear that the native speakers of Yemeni Arabic in female-female interactions show a preference for direct request forms in the form of mood derivable and want statements more than indirect request in the form of query preparatory. On the other hand, in female-male interactions, they show great preference for indirect request in the form of query preparatory more than in the female-female interactions.

### **Conclusion**

In this study the researcher examined the notion of polite request strategies as used by female speakers of Yemeni Arabic in the same gender and cross gender. The analysis examined the request patterns of Yemeni Arabic speakers related to six situations. It attempted to organize the various strategies used for the purpose of making request from the pragmatic point of view. It was found that the directness was realized by means of mood derivable strategy and want statements strategy, conventional indirectness, mostly realized by means of query preparatory.

It can be observed that there is a general trend in a hierarchical politeness system for higher levels of directness in both female-female interactions and female-male interactions. Female speakers of Yemeni Arabic in a hierarchical politeness system employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing 'face'. This is not indicating the appropriateness of directness in 'close' social distance relationships, but probably the fact that it is the expected behavior in such situations.



Also in female-female interactions, the speaker use indirect strategies with low frequent in six situations. The use of direct strategy (imperative) by female speakers of Yemeni Arabic in the same gender could be attributed to the closeness and the solidarity between the interlocutors. Al-Zumor (2003) states that imperatives with softeners are more frequently used by Arab speakers when addressing their juniors as well as their equals provided that the situation is not difficult, when the action desired to be performed by the addressee is a light favor. In short, the preference for direct requests in, female-female interactions seems to be an instance of solidarity or positive politeness between interlocutors

On the other hand, in a deference politeness system, the findings reveal that there is a general trend in both female-female interactions and female-male interactions to employ indirect head act request strategies more than other strategies. The use of indirect strategy by female speakers of Yemeni Arabic cross gender more than in the same gender could be attributed to culture and religious values. Buda et al. (1998) have pointed out that there are special linguistic utterances that men use when addressing women, and vice versa in Arabic, because of cultural and religious values.

Furthermore, in solidarity politeness system, the findings reveal that gender appeared to be an important variable that affect the choice of request head act strategies. The findings reveal that in female-female interactions, the respondents have a great tendency to use direct head act strategies more than indirect ones and more than in the female-male interactions, whereas, in female-male interactions, the respondents prefer to use indirect head act strategies more than direct ones.

Also the findings of the current study reveal that the respondents employed formulaic utterances in all three systems such as in-group identity markers to express involvement or camaraderie between interlocutors and to weaken the illocutionary force of the upcoming direct requests such as 'ja:ʔaxi' (my brother) for male and 'ja:ʔuxt-i' (my sister) for female. Terms of address such as



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'jamŪbafer' (waiter) for male, 'jamŪbaferah' (waitress) for female, 'ja:mŪdir' (manager) for male manager and 'ja:mŪdirah' for female. Also the respondents used formulaic utterances such as 'Lawsama:ht' (excuse me) for male, 'Lawsama:hti' (excuse me) for female and 'min faðlak' (please) for male and 'min faðlik' (please) for female to mitigate and soften upcoming requests. Furthermore, some Islamic expressions were employed In all three systems as formulaic formulaic utterances such as 'ʔallah ja:hfðik ' (Allah preserves you) for female, 'ʔallah jahfðak' (Allah preserves you) for male, 'ʔallah jŪbʔarik fi: k ' (Allah blesses you) for male and 'ʔallah jŪbʔarik fi: ki' for female

In addition, semi-formulaic utterances were employed in all three politeness system such as 'mumkin'(can) for male or female and 'tiqdar' for male and 'tiqdari' (to be able to) for female as a marker of indirect request or independence politeness strategies because in female-male interactions, the speaker preferred to use indirect strategies in Yemeni Arabic for cultural and religious values

The findings show that there is general preference by native speakers of Yemeni Arabic to use conventionally indirectness strategies with high frequency and percentage in situations three and four because the speaker (requester) has lower power and distance than the hearer (requestee) whereas the requester has higher power and distance than requestee the preference strategies are directness. Native speakers of Yemeni Arabic employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing 'face' because the fact that it is the expected behavior in such situations and it refers to establish solidarity between interlocutors. In situations five and six, there is equal power and distance between interlocutors but the ranking of imposition is very high so native speakers of Yemeni Arabic employed indirectness strategies more than direct in order to mitigate and minimize the impact of the request and face threatening act.



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Finally, the current study proves that polite request strategies differ from culture to culture. Native speakers of Yemeni Arabic used direct requests with softeners in a high frequency to mitigate their requests. Also it proves that imperative form is not as impolite in Yemeni Arabic as it is in English or any other language. Direct requests are classified in Yemeni Arabic as solidarity politeness strategies because they imply that the speaker assumes only a small social distance between her/himself and the interlocutor.

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