

University of Bahrain

College of Arts



Department of English

Language and Literature

In the name of Allah, the Most-Gracious, the Most-Merciful

The use of English Refusal and Request Strategies by Native Speakers and Bahrainis in the Workplace

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MA in Applied English Studies

Submitted by

Husain Ali Akbar

Academic Number: 20176666

Supervised by

Dr. Nuri Rahuma Ageli

Associate professor of Linguistics

University of Bahrain

Kingdom of Bahrain

2023



University of Bahrain

College of Arts

Department of English Language and Literature

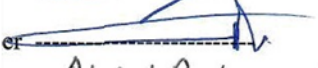
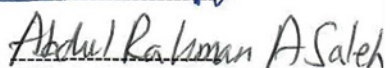
M.A Program in English Language Applied Studies

Defense Committee's Approval

Student Husain Ali Akbar ID number 20176666 defended his/her thesis by which he/she fulfilled the requirements for the degree of M.A in English Language Applied Studies, entitled (The Use of English Refusal and Request Strategies by Native Speakers and Bahraini Workforce) on this day of 29 February 2024

The committee recommends awarding of M.A Degree with the grades of: Pass.

(Defense Committee)

Name	Signature
Dr. Nuri Ageli	Supervisor 
Dr. Madani Othman	Internal Examiner 
Dr. Abdelrahmari Abdalla Salih	External Examiner 

Abstract:

This study aimed to investigate and compare the use of refusal and request strategies by native speakers and Bahraini employees. Politeness in the request and refusal speech acts was identified in reference to the research works by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Matsumoto (1989), whereas formality was determined through the findings of the research works by Li et al. (2015), Ernestus et al. (2015) and Jassim and Nimehchisalem (2016). The respondents were 13 Bahrainis and 11 native speakers, who all were employees. The methodology of the research was a Discourse Completion Test, in which the request DCT was adopted from Merve and Deniz (2019) and the refusal DCT was adopted from Rahma and Khalsa (2016). Changes and modifications were made to fit the objectives of the study. The DCT included 2 sections, which are the request and refusal sections. Respondents of the study interacted with four different work status situations in each of the two parts of the DCT. The four situations were: Equal, Higher, Lower and Strange work status. The findings of the study indicated that native English speakers used more directness and politeness in their requests when in a higher work status than the interlocutors, while Bahrainis used more directness and lesser formality and politeness with strangers in the workplace. The findings of the study further showed that native speakers use more directness, politeness and formality in their refusals in the equal, higher and lower situations. The conclusion of the study is that there are major differences between native speakers and Bahrainis regarding the use of requests and refusals. This is regarding the emphasis on hierarchy by native speakers, which is not applied by the Bahraini respondents. The research recommends that more English courses are directed toward Bahrainis focus on the usage of speech acts in general and the refusal and request in particular.

Key words: Speech acts, politeness, formality, directness, indirectness

Dedication

To my mother, the person that was there with me through thick and thin. To my stepfather, who helped me become who I am today, and to my father. Finally, to those who believed in me when I did not have faith in myself, *I dedicate this research to you*’.

Acknowledgements

‘All praise be to the Almighty’. My Master dissertation would not have been accomplished without the help of Allah and His Guidance.

I would like to thank my mother, who was there to assist me and boost my confidence throughout the years. I would also like to utilize this opportunity to thank my stepfather, brother, sisters and father, who led me to cherish education and always seek to become the best and improve the community.

I further express my gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Nuri Ageli, who supported me with this topic and offered great assistance to finish my dissertation. I further thank all my MA professors, as no words could ever express my sincerest gratitude for their help.

Finally, I would like to thank those who kept motivating me on social media and showed their support throughout the Masters program. I also extend my appreciation to my friends, especially Mohammed Younis.

Table of Contents:

Topic	Page
Defense Committee's Approval	B
Abstract	C
Dedication	D
Acknowledgements	E
Table of Contents	F
CHAPTER ONE	
Introduction	
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background Information	1
1.2 Research Problem	3
1.3 Purpose of the Research	4
1.4 Research Questions	5
1.5 Methodology	5
1.6 Significance of the Research	7
1.7 Limitations and Delimitations	7
CHAPTER TWO	
Literature Review & Theoretical Framework	
2.1.1 Speech Acts	9
2.1.2 Refusal Strategies	13
2.1.3 Formality in Conversations	14
2.1.4 Politeness in Conversations	15
2.2 Literature Review	16
2.2.1 Speech Acts	16

2.2.2 Speech Acts in the Workplace	20
2.2.3 Request Speech Acts	24
2.2.4 Refusal Speech Acts	34
2.2.5 Indirectness, Politeness and Formality in Conversations	43
2.2.5.1 Indirectness in Conversations:	43
2.2.5.2 Politeness in Conversations	45
2.2.5.3 Formality in Conversations	46
2.2.6 Impact of Culture on Language	49
CHAPTER THREE Methodology	
3 Methodology	50
CHAPTER FOUR Findings and Discussion	
4 Findings and Discussion	53
4.1 Findings	53
4.1.1 Discourse Completion Test (DCT)	54
4.2 Discussion	108
4.2.1 Discourse Completion Test (DCT)	108
5 Conclusion	119
6 References	123
CHAPTER SEVEN APPENDICES	
7 Appendices	131
7.1 Appendix 'A'	131
7.2 Appendix 'B'	133

List of Tables:

Topic	Page
Table 1	53
Table 2	54
Table 3	57
Table 4	57
Table 5	68
Table 6	70
Table 7	71
Table 8	72
Table 9	76
Table 10	77
Table 11	78
Table 12	84
Table 13	117
Table 14	118

Chapter one

Introduction

This chapter discusses the topic of speech acts, specifically the refusal and request speech acts. They are relatively considered to be used differently by individuals across the world, particularly within the native English speakers and Bahrainis in the workforce.

1.1 Background Information:

In a book titled *Speech Acts*, Searle (1975) illustrates that speech acts can either be direct or indirect, depending on the context and the intended meaning by the speaker. One instance where the speaker produces the indirect speech act is when saying “*I want you to do it*”, which can be a direct order. It can also be an indirect request where the speaker means more than what the actual sentence refers to. In other words, the quoted sentence above can be a direct speech act, where the speaker and the hearer recognise “I want you to do it” as a statement, or it can also be an indirect speech act where it is not directly recognised that the speaker is requesting the hearer to “do it”.

Speech acts are any form of utterance that adds meaning to the communication, whether it is a greeting, apology, refusal or request (The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA): Pragmatics and Speech Acts, 2021). Within the same speech acts criteria is the division of whether that speech act being uttered is direct or indirect, and that is with putting in mind as well the diverse types of speech acts in the English language, which were mentioned above.

Speech acts are complex when performed in a second language, and that is because of the minimum to null recognition of the culture and the idiomatic expressions recognised in a language when those speech acts are attempted to be used by the second language user. To further explain, speech acts are naturally used with reference to one's mother tongue, precisely due to being exposed to that language since birth. For instance, in case an Arab tries to perform the apology speech act through the English language, which is presumably the speaker's second language, then it would be likely that the speaker would refer to the Arabic culture, which can be to simply say 'Sorry. I did not mean to do that'.

It can therefore be noted, through what has already been mentioned, that speech acts depend on the nativity and proficiency of individuals, when trying to perform them. It would be unlikely for a person unaware of the English language and culture to understand the speech acts when uttered in English. That is the major reason why this research was done: in order to investigate Bahrainis in the workplace and whether or not their English proficiency level leads them to express requests and refusals like the native English.

Regarding the perspectives of both native English and Bahrainis in the workplace, Almutairi (2019) studied the model proposed by Kachru in the mid-1980s regarding the presence of English in three circles: The Inner Circle, The Outer and The Expanding Circles. While the Inner Circle is where English is used as a native language, the study of Almutairi (2019) claims that the Outer Circle is inclusive of the countries that have been

colonialized by Britain and where English is commonly used by people. One of these countries in the Outer Circle is Bahrain. Therefore, this study is associated with a country in the Inner and a country in the Outer Circles.

1.2 Research Problem:

Overall, speech acts are regarded to be important because they entail how direct or indirect someone's speech or conversation is. When seeking to identify whether a particular speech community performs specific speech acts accurately, those acts must be compared with those performed by the native speakers of that language.

With the above paragraph in mind, Clark (1979) says that there are two types of performing acts in general, and precisely with regard to request speech acts. The two types are direct and indirect speech acts, in which according to the research, they both have a literal meaning. For instance, in "Do you know the time", the literal meaning that can be applied to the request speech act is that the speaker asks the hearer whether he or she knows the time or not, whereas the indirect meaning is that the speaker is requesting from the hearer to inform him or her about the time. Based on the research, the response to the direct speech act would be "Yes, I do. It is six", while for the indirect speech act, the researcher says that the hearer would simply respond by saying "It's six". Thus, this paves the way for knowing and apprehending the basis of the request speech acts and its direct and indirect types, which make a difference in the hearer's response, as already noted.

There are many ways of refusing and requesting things from individuals in the English language. That is dependent on the nativity and the proficiency that user is involved with in terms of the language he or she is intending to perform those speech acts through. As per Almutairi (2019), Bahrainis are in the Outer Circle, meaning that they are expected to be close in the use of the English language to the natives due to being exposed to their colonialism in the past.

Having said that, this research work compares and investigates the frequency of the English refusal and request speech acts used by both Bahrainis in the workplace and native English speakers. That is in order to be capable of concluding toward the end of the study whether Bahrainis in the workplace perform similar speech refusal and request speech acts as those native English speakers.

1.3 Purpose of the Research:

This study was conducted to explore the usage of the English request and refusal speech acts by native English speakers and Bahrainis in the workplace. The major purpose behind researching the refusal and request speech acts is to denote and observe the use of the two types of speech acts by the two groups, and whether there are any similarities or differences between Bahrainis and native English speakers.

The next sub-section illustrates the three questions that this study aims to address in order to provide a conclusion to the topic of refusal and request speech acts used.

1.4 Research Questions:

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1- What refusal and request strategies are used by native speakers and Bahrainis in the workplace?
- 2- What is the frequency of the use of each request and refusal strategies by the two groups?
- 3- How do Bahrainis and native English speakers differ in the use of refusals and requests in the workplace?

1.5 Methodology:

1.5.1 Data Collection Tool & Procedure:

For the researcher to answer the previously mentioned questions, one method was used in the research. This comprised applying the qualitative methodology, which was the Discourse Completion Test (DCT). This was chosen instead of the quantitative methodology to apprehend the differences, if found, between the native English and the Bahrainis in the workplace. The application of the qualitative methodology helped the researcher locate the frequency of using the direct, polite and formal request and refusal strategies. This also assisted with the process of collecting data and answering the research questions effectively.

For the DCT, both native English and Bahrainis in the workplace were provided scenarios to compare the use of the request and refusal speech acts. The respondents were given four situations to interact with in order to find the refusal and request strategies used, the frequency of the use of the two types of speech acts and to investigate whether there are any differences in the use of the speech acts by the experimental and controlled groups. The

four situations were: equal, higher, lower and strange work status, as can be noted in the Appendices section (Appendices A & B).

1.5.2 Subjects:

A number of 15 Bahraini and 11 native English respondents participated in the study, totalling 26 respondents. Regarding the Bahrainis, the researcher ensured that all the subjects are in the workplace, and that is through sending the DCT to specific known individuals to control the widespread of the instrument used.

As for the native English speakers, the researcher communicated with native educators teaching at different schools and universities across the Kingdom. In addition to this, different other native English speakers were communicated with through the LinkedIn platform to have them participate in the methodology of the research.

1.5.3 Data Analysis:

The qualitative content analysis was used in this research, and that is to systematically analyze the findings of the research. The content analysis was a process that helped with the data analysis, especially concerning the speech acts produced in text (DCT) by the respondents of the study.

Hassan (2023) states that content analysis is a systematic analysis of content to identify patterns or themes from specific findings. According to the article, content analysis used to analyze and interpret text, images and audio.

As well as that, the article posits that there are different types of content analysis, one of which is the qualitative content analysis.

This type concerns itself with understanding the meaning and the context of the content.

Additional information concerning the methodology part can be read in Chapter three, in which more information is added regarding the methods followed in this research.

1.6 Significance of the Research:

The current overview of Bahraini workers is that they are proficient English users, based on the observations conducted in online platforms, and that they are capable of communicating with the native English speakers through those online platforms.

This study is considered significant because of its exploration of the request and refusal strategies among the two groups, as well as its comparison between the use of those speech acts in terms of Bahrainis in the workforce and native English speakers.

There are hardly any studies concerning the use of request and refusal strategies by Bahrainis in the workforce, which is another reason why this research is significant. The research work can add more literature to the field of speech acts, precisely in relation to Bahrainis in the workforce.

1.7 Limitations and Delimitations:

This section discusses the limitations and the delimitations of the research.

The limitations of this research include not having enough native English speakers for both the Discourse Completion Test

(DCT) and the interview methods. This limitation restricted the researcher from conducting a more comprehensive research through collecting data and investigating more into the refusal and request speech acts being used by those native speakers.

On the other hand, the delimitations of the research were reliant on the Bahraini workforce and the fact that, due to the researcher being a part of the workforce, many Bahraini employees were available to be part of the methodology of this research. This helped the researcher conduct the research in a more effective manner regardless of the troublesome limitations that are assumed to have slightly affected the quality of the paper.

Chapter two:

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Speech Acts:

Moreover, Kissine (2008) refers back to the introduction of speech acts originated by Austin (1962) and developed by Searle (1969). In this research by Kissine (2008), the researcher reflects on the speech act theory by Austin (1962), which comprises of the illocutionary, locutionary and perlocutionary acts. While the locutionary act is the force and utterance that represent the speaker's intent toward something, the illocutionary act can be defined as the physical manifestation of an utterance. However, the perlocutionary act is the effect of the speech acts being performed on the feelings and actions of either the speaker or the hearer. This is also reflected by Hasegawa (2014) in a research titled "*Speech Acts*". The researcher claims that sentences like "You don't have friends, do you?" can be understandable from the literal perspective, but the interlocutor, according to the research, should be able to apprehend and identify the reason why the speaker asked the question. With reference to the similarity between Hasegawa (2014) and Austin (1962), Hasegawa reveals that there are three fields in the speech acts, which are locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts, as seen in the articles by Austin (1962) and Searle (1975).

Another article by Green (2017) puts into effect that speech acts are the central units of communication that involve

phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic aspects of an utterance. These aspects indicate to the hearer whether the audience is promising, predicting or stating something in the conversation. It is also stated in the research that speech acts are analysed in two ways: a content dimension, where what is being said is the only part analyzed, and a force dimension, which deals with how the speaker is expressing what he or she wants to say. This infers that speech acts interact with different fields of language, as they must be interrelated to what the speaker says and how that thing being said is expressed to the audience.

Harris et al. (2018) posit that speech acts are what has already been said and reviewed in terms of works and articles by Austin and Paul Grice. The article revisits the definitions given by the two scholars, claiming that while Austin said that any speech act is performed due to convention, Grice says otherwise, inferring that a speech act relates to the intention of the speaker. This means that speech acts, according to the two researchers, can either be performed due to belonging to a certain community or through the intention of the speaker. This notion said by the two researchers is further explained in the following subheadings. Not only this, but Harris et al. (2018) claims that the significance of speech acts lies in the function, the expression and also the norms of the speech communities those speech acts are performed in.

The type of speech acts was also studied by Hanks (2018), in which the works of Austin and Searle were referred to in the abstract of the research. The researcher states that the classical speech act theory defined by both Austin and Searle is reliant on propositional content. Hanks (2018) mentioned that there is a

relationship between content and force in relation to how speech acts are performed. The researcher further defines propositions as types of speech acts that inherit the truth through either the verbal or non-verbal communication.

Fultner (2019) states that speech acts are the basic units of analysis in the pragmatic field. The study further cited the work of Austin (1962) by saying that the production of speech acts is reliant on the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Another claim in the research is that any speech act performed comes under the “ F_p ”, in which the “F” refers to the force of the speech act produced, whereas the “p” stands for the propositional content.

For the speech act theory developed by Paul Grice under the term “the cooperative principle”, Betti (2021) takes into account the four maxims, which clarify the difference between Paul Grice and Austin’s theory of speech acts. The four maxims are the maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner, which are distinct from Austin’s locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts, as discussed in the former paragraph. While the maxim of quantity in Grice’s maxims is about talking sufficiently without any addition or omission of information, the maxim of quality associates itself with whether the information being addressed is true or false. The maxim of relation concerns itself with the speaker being relevant in terms of answers with what he or she was asked. This maxim can be violated if the speaker answers “He sang horribly” to the question “What did you do today?”. The final maxim in Grice’s cooperative principle is the maxim of manner, in which the speakers must avoid ambiguity and obscurity, in addition to being as brief and orderly as they can to not violate this maxim.

Caponetto (2023) conducted a study to theorize the refusal speech act with reference to different definitions, such as Austin (1962). The research, titled as *The Pragmatic Structure of Refusal* points out that refusals are examples of illocutionary acts. The reason why the study claims so goes back to the verb '*refuse*' being performative, as in the idea of using the verb solely to show the act of refusal. Another factor to why refusals are illocutionary acts is that speakers can say "*I refuse to do so*", which this meets the criterion of illocutionary acts designed and developed by Austin (1962). Considering this, the research by Caponetto (2023) says that something similar to '*I hereby refuse to authorize release of my latest book*' would be relevant to the criteria set by Austin (1962), and thus would be regarded a refusal speech act. In contrary to this relevant refusal speech act, the study claims that something that would be wrong to perform as a refusal speech act is "*I hereby persuade you that the killer is the butler*". That is because in the first sentence, the speaker can refuse in the case that the utterance is ignored by the speaker, and that is in the sense that even though the hearer ignored it, he or she can yet refuse to authorize release of the latest book. However, the second sentence is semantically incorrect, based on the researcher and the criteria set by Austin (1962) due to the inability of persuading people in believing or saying that someone performed a particular act. In other words, according to the article, it is impossible that the speaker persuades the hearer that the butler is the killer in case the hearer does not believe it. This, therefore, confirms the theory of refusal speech act stated in the beginning of the paragraph that the act of refusing is illocutionary in terms of character.

Sbisà (2023b) argued for the definition provided by Austin (1962), which stated that speech acts are context-changing actions. That is because, according to the research, speech acts depend on the context in which it is produced. The research even mentioned that other speech theorists, like Searle for instance, provided an incorrect definition of speech acts due to their statement that speech acts depend on some particular intentions. The research further puts into effect the ideology that speech acts need to be looked at as constructive to conversations, as well as reckoning them as limited and objective. Not only did the research theorize the differences between the illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts, it also mentioned that the production of speech acts is dependent on the context in which it is used.

2.1.2 Refusal Strategies:

Wang (2019) conducted a comparative study to investigate the gender differences in using the refusal strategies. The sample of the study was English major male and female students. The research work cited different theoretical works on the refusal strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Fraser, 1990; Smith, 1998; Beebe et. al, 1990). These citations will be detailed in the following paragraphs.

According to the study by Wang (2019), Brown and Levinson (1987) claims that the refusal speech act can break a conversation through the FTAs, or what can also be termed as the Face Threatening Acts. This means that there is a risk of the communication collapsing with formulating a refusal expression.

As for Fraser (1990) and Smith (1998), the research work states that the findings of the two studies indicated that refusals are impacted by multiple factors. Some of these are age, background of education and power, to name a few. The two studies further convey that multiple refusal strategies are used at a single refusal to help with the reduction of the hurt in the speaker's face. Some instances for the different strategies to be adopted include being direct, polite and formal, for example.

The last citation in the article by Wang (2019) is Beebe et al. (1990), who divided the refusal speech act into three parts: direct, indirect and adjuncts. This study excludes the adjuncts, and is concerned with the direct and indirect refusals in conversations.

2.1.3 Formality in Conversations:

In a research concerning the formality of language, Heylighen and Dewaele (1999) conducted a study to investigate what formality means and the behavioural determinants of having a formal language. The article posits that the formality of a language is divided into either deep or surface formality. Deep formality is the avoidance of using ambiguity in speeches, which can be identified through the usage of word classes in the sentences, such as nouns, pronouns, adverbs and many others. However, according to the research, surface formality can be viewed through the senses of having a more flexible and direct style of conversation. This puts forward the idea that using a direct language is regarded to be less formal than the indirect language, which is also discussed in relation to the findings and discussion chapter in this research (Chapter 4).

In a research on the advantages and limitations of formal expression, Heylighen (1999) states that formal speech is different from one person to another. This means that the formal speech that some individuals believe in is mainly reliant on the culture they were exposed to. According to the research, the most important part of the formal conversation is its context, which is impossible to eliminate. Another theory in the research is that expressions that are dependent on contexts are flexible and direct, which means that they are more understandable in conversations.

2.1.4 Politeness in Conversations:

To start off with the theoretical framework of this research, Goffman (1967) theorized that there are some face-threatening acts (FTAs) that can be shown by speakers in diverse contextual conversations, which demand the usage of convenient forms of politeness. The major purpose behind this goes back to that face, which can be divided into two parts, represents the self-esteem and the confidence of people. The two types of face, according to the author, are positive, which is the need of approval from other people, and negative face that is about the need to not offend people. The researcher also stated that the face of individuals is continuously put at stake through the face-threatening acts that can deteriorate the politeness in conversations.

Brown (2015) defined politeness as a linguistic feature that reveals the nature of humans in speeches. It is the idea of realizing the feelings of individuals and interacting with them accordingly, and that is in order to show empathy to their emotions. As per the

article, politeness involves taking into consideration the social status of the interlocutors or interactors and their social relationships with regard to the conversation. The research further states that sociability is a factor of conversational politeness, meaning that being polite in conversations highly depends on the manner in which the speaker is sociable with the interlocutor.

2.2 Literature Review:

2.2.1 Speech Acts:

Bayat (2013) conducted a study to determine which strategy out of apology, complaint, refusal and thanking is mostly used from the 150 participants in the Preschool Teacher Education Program. The data of the research was collected through the content analysis method, in which the respondents produced short memories. Results of the research show that ten apology, six refusal and six thanking strategies were used. As well as that, the researcher analysed that the participants used the acts of thanking, apology and refusal explicitly, while the complaint speech act was mostly performed implicitly. The recommendation of the study is that there should be more studies on speech acts in order to identify which act is used mostly by the communities.

Kohandani et al. (2014) published a journal on a critical analysis of the usage of speech acts and the functions of the English language in Top Notch 1 textbook, and that analysis was from a pragmatic point of view. The methodology of the research was based on content analysis, as ten conversations were chosen throughout ten units of the book, and those conversations were

studied with reference to Searle's (1976) speech act theory and Halliday's (1975) language functions. Findings of the research showed that, in regards of both the linguistic functions and the use of speech acts, the pragmatic viewpoint appeared to be inappropriate in the conversations analysed. The research recommends that teachers and material developers work on improving the textbook to meet the appropriate use of linguistic functions and speech acts.

Hiani (2015) conducted a study to explore the use of fifteen speech acts by Moroccan EFL learners. The methodology of the research was asking the Moroccan university learners to respond to a discourse completion tasks (DCTs), and then having their responses compared to twelve American native speakers. The objective of the methodology was to assess the usage of speech acts by Moroccan EFL learners and identify their strengths and weaknesses. The results of the study indicate that the Moroccan respondents undergo different difficulties in the usage of speech acts with the different functions. Findings of the study showed that there was a lack of communicative competence in knowing how to use the different sets of speech acts, for instance complaints, refusals and requests. The research states that more emphasis needs to be put among the Moroccan EFL learners in general to improve their performance of speech acts and how they use them in their daily conversations.

Holtgraves (2021) conducted a research on how face-threat speech acts ($n = 32$) impact their recognition by interlocutors, in addition to investigating the confidence of the senders when sending those speech acts to the recipients. Through having two

experiments to collect the data, the speech acts were scaled in terms of the threat degree. Findings of the research indicate that the recipients faced more difficulties in anticipating the more threatening speech acts than the less threatening ones. It was also denoted that the more threatening speech acts were longer than the less threatening performative acts. Another finding of the research showed that the confidence of the senders was higher than that of the receivers, portraying that, with regard to the success in communication, sending the messages was overall easier than analysing or receiving them.

Another discussion of speech acts and how different they can be in terms of usage is discussed in this paragraph. Monika et al. (2021) conducted a study, in which a part of it is titled *Speech Acts Addressed to Hadza Infants in Tanzania*. The research dealt with speech acts being addressed to Hadza infants in Tanzania, who spent their major parts of their lives hunting. The objectives of the research were to entail whether or not there are differences between children and adult speakers with regard to producing speech acts. According to Monika et al. (2021), speech acts are part of language socialization, which also comprises cultural values. The study is relevant to this research because it deals with showcasing how different the usage of speech acts can be from one societal group to another. The findings of the study indicate that there are many differences between children and adults in the production of speech acts, such as adults using requests for action and information with children, while infants use more assertive words in their speeches. This shows that there is a hierarchal difference between children and adults in the use of speech acts.

The reason why the human language is unordinary goes back to the capability of people to understand the verbal and the non-verbal part of the daily communication (Tomasello, 2022). This means that speech acts are part of our daily lives in the sense that they are included in whatever we do of verbal and non-verbal communication. According to the research, linguistic theories related to pragmatics refer to the communicative functions of any language as speech acts. Another matter the research discusses is that the apprehension of speech acts does not only depend on the speaker to make sense when applying them in his or her speech, rather Tomasello (2022) states that understanding the speech act performed relies on both the speaker and the hearer, as the knowledge of such produced acts is reflected in both the mind and the brain of the speaker and the hearer.

Another study by Oo et al. (2023) explored the manner by which businessmen use different speech acts to succeed in their work. In the study, the research defined speech acts as actions performed by people, such as making assertions and expressing feelings, for instance. Through using 28,000 crowdfunding campaigns and a machine-learning approach, the major finding of the study indicated that entrepreneurs who use various speech acts are more likely to become successful in their businesses than those who do not apply diverse speech acts in their communication. This shows that using different sets of speech acts can help speakers become successful and influential overall in their work.

Sbisà (2023) conducted a study on the individual speech acts and conversational sequences under the title “*Speech Acts, Effects, and Responses*”. The argument presented is that the background of

speech acts provides some reference to conversational sequences, which deals with the organisational sequence in a conversation. The reason why the research argues for this matter is related to the hearer's uptake, which, according to the study, requires the presence of an illocutionary act. That is why the research claims that the success of illocutionary acts and thus the overall production of speech acts depends on what the hearer acknowledges from what was indicated by the speaker. The purpose behind this research being relevant to the topic of this study is that Sbisà (2023) breaks down the effects of speech acts and how the presence of the illocutionary act can make a difference in a conversation.

2.2.2 Speech Acts in the Workplace:

In addition to discussing the topic of speech acts, this section reviews literature addressing the use of speech acts in the workplace.

Pearson (1989) analysed the usage of speech acts at church meetings in the United States, and that is to denote how ministers, chairs and normal people at the church use directives and convey disagreements. Findings of the research show that the linguistic choices when using speech acts is dependent on the role of the speakers. The ministers, for example, use language differently from other individuals because they have more institutional status than other speakers in the church workplace. The findings of the research also showed that those ministers use assertive and non-assertive speech acts to show power and accommodation in their speech.

Bilbow (1997) investigated the spoken discourse of Chinese and Western staff members in cross-cultural meetings at an airline in Hong Kong. The content analysis method was conducted, in which audio and video-recorded meetings were analysed with regard to the usage of requests, commands and suggestions. Using the Cross-Cultural Impression Management (CCIM) discourse model, the findings of the research indicated that the cultural backgrounds of the speakers and hearers affected the conversations in the meetings, and that led to having a high chance of a distorted conversation. The research recommends delivering trainings that deal with cross-cultural awareness, which is to boost the knowledge of speakers and hearers in the sense of understanding the different speech acts used in cross-cultural speeches and meetings.

Koester (2002) studied the performance of speech acts in the workplace and argued for the teaching of communicative linguistic functions in spoken English contexts. The methodology of the research was based on content analysis, as the transcripts of two workplace conversations were examined with regard to the use of advice and directive speech acts. The findings of the study showed that the two types of speech acts were not used directly in the workplace, and that the indirect speech act was more common in the workplace context. Another finding of the research revealed that hearers had to understand what is more than the individual utterance to know what the speakers meant.

A study by Vine (2009) explored the complexity of directive speech acts at work, claiming that context is vital for people to apprehend the diverse speech acts produced in multiple contexts.

The methodology of the research included content analysis, in which the directives of three managers in New Zealand government departments were looked into. With regard to the discussion of the findings, the study argued that the purpose of interaction and the status of the participants impacted the use of the directive speech acts. What is more, according to the research, the male manager used more imperatives in his directive speech act than the other two female managers, illustrating that there are gender differences in the production of speech acts. On the same token, the study concludes that the male manager was more direct in his use of the directive speech act in the workplace than the two female managers, and this shows that there can be some major differences in the production of speech acts overall in the workplace.

Yates (2010) explored how the performance of speech acts can lead to teach language for communicative purposes at the workplace. The argument of the study was that learning the production of different speech acts in the workplace can assist second language learners with learning about the cultural values of the language they intend to improve in. With the use of directives and disagreements, the findings of the research stated that since speech acts are introductory to the language functions and patterns, learners need to be provided with lessons and programs that deal with the use of diverse forms of speech acts in the workplace, and that is in order for those speakers to negotiate their identities and communicate effectively at work.

Newton and Kusmierczyk (2011) state that the culture of workplaces is improving to the sense of adapting to globalization

and the fast technological development. That is the reason why, in the researchers' perception, the workplace language is changing nowadays to fit the multicultural workplaces in the world overall. The research further claims that interaction in different workplaces is seen as socially fitting into that community and doing work through talking and conversing with the individuals in that society.

Lisa (2015) conducted a study to examine the refusal strategies used by native English-speaking employees working at different businesses in the United States. The content analysis methodology was applied to study the responses of 450 respondents. The findings of the study showed that the direct request was more dominant in its usage than the indirect request. Another finding of the study claimed that there were differences in the production of the refusal speech act by the respondents, and that is with regard to factors like gender, status and social distance. According to the study, this indicates that there is a preference in the use of either the direct or indirect speech acts when being used with certain individuals. As well as that, the overall implications of the study state that the request strategy chosen by people does not determine the level of politeness.

In another study that dealt with the production of speech acts in the workplace, Moody (2017) analysed the manner in which American interns in Japanese companies use Japanese speech acts to show their adaptation to the community. The data of this research was collected through recorded interactions with the interns and their overall work during the day, alongside having conducted interviews with them. Findings of the research state that the American interns intended to use honorifics to adapt to the

Japanese ideological beliefs through the aspects of politeness and formality in companies. In simpler terms, the overall conclusion of the research is that foreigners like the American interns, for instance, show their belonging to international jobs through performing the speech acts followed in those particular locations.

Pang (2018) conducted a study titled “*Directives in Professional Kitchens..*”, which investigated interactions between co-workers in the setting of working-class professional kitchens. The methodology of the research was based on content analysis through studying the interactions between newcomer trainees and the cooks those trainees worked under, and how the two groups use directive speech acts in their interactions. Findings of the study revealed that trainees used the directive speech act for instructional purposes majorly, however the research recommends that more training needs to be given to those assigned to teach trainees in order for them to help those newcomer cooks in adjusting to their new environments.

2.2.3 Request Speech Acts:

In a study that researched polite responses to polite requests, Clark and Schunk (1980) claimed that indirectness in requests differs in the degree of politeness, inferring that there are many different methods to make one’s requests polite and to also respond politely to that particular polite request. An example given in the abstract of the research includes the following indirect request: “*Can you tell me where Jordan Hall is?*”, in which the researcher states that this indirect request is more polite than: “*Shouldn’t you tell me where Jordan Hall is?*”. Therefore, based on experiment 1

done in the study, the more attentive the answer is to the meaning of the request, the more polite the request is. Another instance given in the research to confirm this finding is the response: “*Yes, I can – it’s up the street*”, which, based on the research, is more polite than: “*It’s up the street*”. This was further confirmed in the study in experiments 2, 3 and 4.

Another article by Gibbs (1986) investigated what makes some indirect request speech acts conventional. The research claimed that there are different varieties of sentences that could be used to perform request speech acts, such as “*I would like, Can you, Would you be able to*” and different other forms. According to the research, despite the many forms of request speech acts, they are not relevant to every social context. The reason why this research by Gibbs (1986) is overall suitable for the study is that it stipulates that there are different request speech acts used by diverse groups of people according to specific social contexts.

Blum-Kulka (1987) conducted a study to examine whether the aspects of indirectness and politeness are equivalent to one another in the request speech acts or not. The research claims that indirectness is not similar to politeness in any sense. For the methodology of the study, the researcher looked at the relationship between politeness and indirectness through different experiments to reckon the perceptions of native speakers regarding the two notions in both Hebrew and English. Findings of the research show that indirectness is distinct from politeness in request speech acts, and that is through recognising that the most indirect request speech acts were not seen as the most polite, meaning that indirectness does not entail politeness.

Biesenbach-Lucas (2006) studied whether cyber-consultations show directness or not, and that is through examining email messages sent by native and non-native English students to university faculty. The emails were sent by the students requesting feedback from their professors. This study is similar to that of Tanju and Ikhlas Ben (2017), which is based in the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.). Findings of the study convey a wide variety of the use of the request speech act, ranging from quite informal to highly formal. Some examples provided by the researcher on the usage of the request speech act by students include “*Pls advise, Any comments?, I would appreciate your feedback*” and “*I’d like now to request your approval to do a research paper..*”. This sustains with the idea that there is a difference in the application of the request speech act by native and non-native English speakers.

Additionally, Curl and Drew (2008) conducted a study to explore the syntactic forms used by speakers when performing the request speech act. The methodology of the research was based on investigating calls between family and friends, and when making out-of-hour calls to the doctor. The results of the research showcased a syntactic difference in the use of modals when calling family and friends than when performing the request speech act with the doctor. As per the study, modals were commonly used between family and friends in ordinary conversation, such as for example: ‘*Can I visit you today?*’, in which the researcher emphasised on the use of “can”, while with the doctor, it was noticed that the respondents mostly used “*I wonder if*” in request conversations. The reason why there is a difference in the requests made to the two groups, according to the research, goes back to the

ability of the hearer to grant the request or not. In other words, “can” was used with family and friends because of the knowledge of the respondents that they would grant them their request, whereas “I wonder if” was used with the doctor when not in duty because of the uncertainty of the speaker as to whether the doctor would grant the request or not.

Al-Gahtani and Roever (2011) studied the proficiency of the use of request speech acts by second language (L2) students. A cross-sectional design methodology was conducted through collecting role play data from second language learners of four proficiency levels. The findings of the research portray that the low-proficiency learners could not produce the request speech act in accordance with the required proficiency and sequence, hence mainly relying on the hearer to assist with knowing the request details and information that those low-level learners were expected to provide. One example to this can be that the learners could not produce a complete request speech act to ask the professor to give them the marks, and so that educator was expected to elicit the information.

Rauniomaa and Keisanen (2012) conducted a study to research two multimodal formats to respond to request speech acts. The data of the study was a total of sixteen hours of video recordings of English conversations, which was the methodology used in the research. For the first multimodal format the study addresses, it only involves requests that are answered by fulfilment, for instance giving a sweet to one person. As for the second multimodal format the research talks about, it deals with responses that consist of acceptance and fulfilment as a response to the

request speech act, for example giving a sweet and saying '*Here you go*', as this comprises both voicing and an affirmative response. The research claims that the request speech acts are linked to concrete objects and actions that take place in the environment the hearer and the speaker are associated with.

Al-Gahtani and Roever (2013) emphasized on low-proficiency learners and how they managed to extend their request-based conversations with their professors. Role plays was the method procured in the study, as the low-proficiency students were compared in terms of their usage of request speech acts to intermediate and advanced learners. Findings of the research imply that low-proficiency learners are less likely to support their request conversations with explanations, as another finding revealed that those learners needed possible explanations from the interlocutor to confirm whether that was the explanation they wanted to support their requests or not. These findings are similar to the findings of the research by Al-Gahtani and Roever (2011), which stated that low-level learners lack sequencing request speech acts with the required proficiency level. This shows that the use of the request speech act, particularly the different strategies involving direct and indirect requests, is related to the language proficiency of the speaker and the hearer overall.

Chen et al. (2013) studied the Chinese requests speech acts using Hill et al's. (1986) methodology. Findings of the study indicate that the performed Chinese request speech acts are performed in accordance with power and distance. This, based on the research, is similar to the Japanese and American English request speech acts, however the Chinese request speech acts are

noted to be slightly more indirect than the other two languages. With this in mind, the research disputes the claim that the East and West are different from one another in the politeness use of request speech acts, and puts into notion that the Chinese, Japanese and American request speech acts can be close to one another in terms of the politeness system.

In an article that researched the effect of video games on EFL Learners' acquisition of apology and request speech acts, Shirazi et al. (2016) cites Searle's (1969) speech act theory by claiming that another term for speech acts is performing acts. The research further recognises Searle's five categories of speech acts, which are assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declaration speech acts. The findings of the research conducted by Shirazi et al. (2016) revealed that video game-based EFL classrooms enhanced for positive development of the respondents in their usage of the apology and request speech acts.

Tanju and Ikhlas Ben (2017) researched the request speech act in emails by Arab university students in the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.). The primary objective of the study was to investigate the way by which the request speech act is used and applied by English natives and Arab university students in an English-based university in the U.A.E., and that is through the discourse completion task where the respondents were asked to request feedback from their professors. Results of the study showed that there were major differences between the use of the request speech act between the two groups, and that is in the sense of structuring the messages to the professors, type of request strategy used and the modifiers the respondents applied in their messages.

Another finding from the research is that teaching the conventions of writing emails improves the pragmatic competence of non-native English speakers.

Merve and Deniz (2019) conducted a case study on Turkish EFL learners' use of request speech acts, and then comparing their usage with that of the native speakers of English, meaning that the English native speakers were the baseline of the study, which is the similar case in this research. The methods of the case study were role plays and a written discourse completion task (DCT) on request scenarios in both Turkish and English. The criteria of the responses of the participants was based on the formality level, politeness and appropriateness in the usage of the request speech act, and the baseline of this criteria was the native English group. Findings of the research indicate that the Turkish EFL learners had major difficulties in levelling the appropriateness of the native speakers. The study further points out to the idea that a better usage of the request speech act would be noted in the case the Turkish EFL learners were exposed to more L1 socialisation.

Murphy and De Felice (2019) researched the use and non-use of please in the requests of British and American English. 675 requests were extracted from two email corpora, as the data of the study was analysed from the factors of imposition level, sentence mood and the type of modal verb used. Findings of the study reveal that there is a major difference between the use and non-use of please in British and American English. According to the research, the major purpose behind this difference goes back to looking at the usage of please as a conventional politeness in British English,

while it is viewed as a sign of relationship asymmetry in American English.

Another article by Nugroho and Rekha (2020) researched the use of speech acts by Indonesian EFL learners through the DCT questionnaires, role-plays and Focus Group Discussions as methods to obtain data. The respondents of the research were forty English learners of a university at Surakarta. Findings of the research show that the Indonesian EFL learners of the study mostly used the indirect request speech acts, such as “Why don’t you open your book”, which the researchers consider a conventionally indirect request speech act of the direct speech act ‘Open your book’. Another instance of using the indirect request speech act by the participants of the research is “Your book is close”, in which the speaker intended to ask the hearer to open the book and perhaps to focus instead of leaving it closed. With this being said, the researchers concluded the article by claiming that the choices of the request strategies of the Indonesian EFL learners are impacted by the cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, Abudalslam and Behbood (2021) researched the use of request, suggestion and apology speech acts by Libyan EFL learners. The respondents were Libyan Arab and Amazigh EFL undergraduates from the universities of Sebha and Zwara in Libya. A number of 50 Libyan and 37 Amazigh EFL students were selected in the methodology. The methods of the research were a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) questionnaire and a rating scale. Findings of the research posit that there are multiple similarities between the Libyan Arab and the Amazigh respondents, and that is in terms of performing all the speech acts the research dealt with,

particularly the request speech act that is emphasized on in this study. The overall conclusion of the research conducted by Abudalslam and Behbood (2021) is that both the Libyan and the Amazigh EFL students were more competent in functioning the three speech acts than structuring them.

Akmal et al. (2022) conducted a study to investigate the differences in the use of the request speech acts between the Indonesian English Learners (IEL) and the Australian English-Native Speakers (AES). Two methods were applied in the article, which were the descriptive-qualitative method and the discourse completion task (DCT). Findings of the methods revealed that there were three factors to the differences between the two groups when using the request speech acts. First, the form of speech was different in terms of the superiority of the AES in their speech, and that is through the observation of the use of main and supporting actions. The second factor goes back to the usage of different speech strategies by the respondents of the research, for the IEL used interrogative sentences mostly, while the AES included declarative sentences in their speeches when wanting to seek permission from their superiors at work. As for the third factor regarding the difference between the two groups, it is that the IEL used more attracters and honorifics in their speech than the AES. In general, the study showed that there are linguistic and non-linguistic factors that impact the use of the request speech acts.

Deveci and Abbas (2023) conducted a study to investigate the request behaviour of 96-Emirati students in the emails sent to their professors. The data of the study was collected using a DCT (discourse completion test) and an evaluation form filled by two

judges. Findings of the research showed that the direct request speech act was the most common strategy used by the respondents, whereas another finding of the study implied that most respondents either did not greet their professors in the emails sent, or that they did not follow the correct format of the email. Additionally, it was also noted that some respondents had issues in their use of language while using the request speech act, and that is through the aspect of having grammatical errors throughout the created emails. The research recommended that the community needs to be aware of how to use the request speech act, and that is with regard to having diverse related activities.

Naoko et al. (2023) studied the relationship between metapragmatic knowledge and the use of speech acts. The methodology of the research included a sample of 105 Chinese learners of English who received implicit instructions on how to apply the request speech act when communicating with a person of a higher social status. After receiving the implicit instructions, the sample conveyed what they learned, and that was done to explore the metapragmatic knowledge of the 105 Chinese learners of English. After speaking about what they learned, the respondents were asked to complete two tests: one was a delayed post-test and the other was an immediate post-test to evaluate the use of the request speech act. Findings of the research showed that the respondents improved in their usage of the request speech act due to the help of the metapragmatic knowledge they gained through the implicit instructions given.

2.2.4 Refusal Speech Acts:

Wannaruk (2008) conducted a study to investigate the similarities and differences in the use of refusal speech acts between American, Thai and other EFL graduates. The methodology of the research included a discourse completion test (DCT) and interviews. The findings of the research indicate that all groups use many refusal strategies when refusing requests. Another finding is that being aware of the status of the person made responding to the requests with refusals much easier on the respondents, and that is due to being aware of what refusal strategy to use to accommodate that particular status. What is more, based on the research, language proficiency was seen as crucial in order to know what refusal strategy to use, and that is because those who had a low proficiency level in English were noticed to translate what they wanted to say from their mother tongue to the English language (L2), and that is to respond to the requests in both the DCT and interviews.

Through looking at the frequency and shift used by respondents when speaking to people of lower, equal and higher statuses, Allami and Naeimi (2011) conducted a study to examine the usage of refusal speech acts by Iranian EFL learners. A number of thirty Persian learners of English were asked to respond to a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) which contained 12 refusal situations. Also, in addition to 31 Persian speakers filling the same DCT translated into Persian for comparative reasons, 37 responses by American natives to a DCT conducted by Kwon (2004) were reviewed to compare whether the Iranian speakers use the same refusal strategies as the American speakers or not. The data of the

research was analysed using the refusal taxonomy designed and developed by Beebe et al. (1990). The results of the study indicate that there were differences in the frequency, shift and the semantic formula between Iranian English learners and the American natives. This difference is in terms of responding to people of different statuses, as another finding was on the basis of the excuses to the refusal scenarios used by American natives being more precise than the Iranian English learners and the Persian natives.

Mohammad (2013) conducted a study to investigate the refusal speech act between Persian and English speakers with regard to linguistics. Gender differences and semantic formulas were taken into account when analysing the data of the study, which involved 50 Persian and 50 English movies used as instruments. Findings of the research showed that Persian speakers used more excuses in their production of the refusal speech act than the English respondents, and this was in respect of regret and lack of enthusiasm. Another finding of the study represented the existence of major differences between the Persian and the English language in the sense of refusal and gender utterances. This means that the purpose behind the difference in the performance of refusal speech acts between the two groups is due to that the two languages and their cultures were contrastive to one another in the first place.

Morkus (2014) investigated how Egyptian Arabic and American native speakers use the refusal speech act with people of equal and unequal status. The methodology of the study was reliant on content role plays that involved six refusal situations. The

respondents of the study were 10 Egyptian Arabic and 10 American native speakers. The findings of the study showed that there is a difference in the realisation of the refusal speech act between the two groups, precisely with regard to Egyptians using more words than the Americans. Another finding of the research showed that Egyptians were indirect when refusing the offer of someone in a higher status, as well as preferring refusals related to family reasons. On the other hand, the study shows that Americans preferred using personal reasons. Additionally, the study states that the American respondents used the refusal speech act with the expression of regret throughout the conversation, whereas Egyptians invoked religious expressions in their refusals, such as mentioning the name of God.

Since many English educators emphasise more on lexical and syntactic parts of the language than the pragmatics, Lingyun (2015) conducted a study to investigate the pragmatic aspect in terms of the usage of the refusal speech act by Chinese high school English learners. The methodology of the research included a written discourse completion test (DCT), and the respondents of the research were grouped into three parts: native Chinese respondents, Chinese English learners, and native English speakers. The three groups were compared to one another to explore the refusal speech act used by the Chinese and American respondents. The findings of the study posit that American speakers were more direct in the usage of the refusal speech act than the Chinese respondents. Another finding in the study is that the native Chinese (Chinese respondents) used the same excuse in their refusal speech act as the Chinese English learners.

Shishavan and Sharifian (2016) researched the refusal strategies used by Iranian learners of English and Australian students in order to explore the potential existence of a cross-cultural miscommunication. The data of the research was collected by conducting a discourse completion test (DCT), in addition to having focus group interviews (FGIs) to denote the sociocultural norms associated with the Iranian respondents. One of the research findings is that both the Iranians and Australians employed indirect refusal strategies when communicating with people of higher statuses. When communicating with individuals of the same status, it was seen in the research that the two groups differed in terms of the usage of refusal speech acts, and that is concerning that the Iranians used some sort of ritual politeness in their speech. That is the reason why the findings of the research indicate that the different in culture between the two groups led the Iranians to take a different shift in the refusal speech acts. This infers that culture is related to the idea of performing speech acts.

Al-Shboul and Huwari (2016) conducted a similar study as Shishavan and Sharifian (2016) by investigating the usage of the refusal speech act between two groups, which are the Jordanian Arabic and American English respondents. The research adopted the discourse completion test version of Al-Issa (1998) and analysed the data of the respondents through semantic formulaic sequences. Findings of the research showed that both groups used the same refusal strategy by employing indirect refusal speech acts when responding to the DCT, and that adjunct strategies were also used by the respondents. Another finding of the study is that the Jordanian respondents used more indirect strategies than the

American respondents, who leaned more to the usage of direct refusal speech acts.

The primary objective behind the research conducted by Rahma and Khalsa (2016) was to investigate the use of refusal speech act performed by Omani EFL learners, and whether their refusals were supportive of the culture and language or not. The methodology of the research involved 41 Omani EFL learners responding to the discourse completion test (DCT). The responses were evaluated by a native English professor and a non-native professor. Findings of the research showed that the responses to the DCT were inaccurate in terms of the English language and culture. In simpler terms, the refusal responses to the DCT were more in Omani Arabic than in English. Another finding of the research revealed that some DCT responses were quite direct, as it was mentioned in the research that this was due to the lack of knowledge with regard to performing refusals to people of higher status. The research even conveys having language mistakes in the sets of refusals issued by the Omani respondents, clarifying that one way to improve the production of speech acts among the group is to teach them the commonly used speech acts.

Tuba (2019) conducted a study under the title “*Refusal Production via DCTs and Role-Plays*” to investigate the usage of refusal speech by Turkish EFL learners, as it used DCT and role-plays as methods. The results of the study show that the Turkish EFL learners employed different strategies when using the refusal speech act. This indicates that the Turkish EFL learners showed compatibility in their production of the refusal speech acts.

In a research conducted to study the use of refusal speech acts by native American and Saudi females, Al-Ghamdi and Alqarni (2019) introduced the abstract by saying that the refusal speech act varies from one individual to another. The methodology of the research was based on investigating the content and the frequency of the speech acts produced by the Saudi and American females when interacting with diverse interlocutors of different ranks. The hypothesis of the research was that the production of speech acts, generally, is dependent on the culture of the speaker and the norms by which he or she attends to. The analysis of the study unveiled that Saudi females use speech acts differently than how American natives use the refusal speech act. The finding of the study states that the sample of Saudi females use the refusal speech act the way they assume the native English speakers produce them. The article recommends that updated information must be addressed on how native speakers produce the English speech acts and particularly the refusal acts.

Yusop and Eric A. (2019) conducted a study to investigate and explore the English refusal speech act used by university students in South Thailand. Similar to the formerly-cited studies, the article used the oral discourse completion test (DCT) through transcribing the data according to the scheme of refusal designed by Beebe et al. (1990). The research mentioned that there are two types of refusing a request, which are the direct and indirect refusal strategies. The findings of the research reveal that not many respondents used the indirect strategy when refusing a request, whereas giving advice or explaining the reason for refusing the request were noted as the most commonly used by the respondents.

Furthermore, the researcher states that there was a lack of empathy seen in the refusal responses of the respondents, which indicates that, overall, individuals in the Southern part of Thailand need to become aware of the correct pragmatic usage of the refusal strategies with taking into account the aspect of empathy.

Another study was conducted by Imed and Tahar (2019) to investigate the use of the refusal speech act on the phone, where British respondents would refuse a salesperson's offer. A number of 109 conversations between the salesperson and the respondents was recorded, as the data was analysed qualitatively and quantitatively with the objective exploring the most commonly used refusal strategy by the English native speakers. Findings illustrate that brief refusals were mostly used by the British respondents to indicate their annoyance with the salesperson. Not only was the data of the research collected through calls, but two questionnaires were also conducted in Britain to denote the diverse refusal expressions used by the native English speakers. The finding of the questionnaires show that verbal refusal expressions were common among the British people in order to avoid talking to the salesperson. The research presents that the English native respondents use direct and indirect refusal strategies to refuse the offers of the salesperson.

In a study meant to examine the realisation of refusal strategies and the usage of refusal speech acts with people of higher, lower and equal social status, Alrefaee (2020) researched the refusal strategies used by Yemeni EFL learners. The data of the Yemeni EFL learners was then compared with the refusal strategies used by both Arab and English native speakers. For the

methodology of the study, 20 native Arabs, 20 native English and 40 Yemeni EFL learners were chosen as participants. The data of the research was collected through the Discourse Completion Task (DCT). The findings of the study show that the Yemeni EFL learners and the native Americans used the refusal sets of speech acts contrastively from one another. Considering the Arab native speakers, findings indicate that they included the name of God (Allah) in their refusal strategies, which was seen in the research as a strategy to support their excuses when refusing the offers in the DCT. This is similar in the data of the Yemeni EFL learners, as according to the research, they referred back to their L1 norms by saying the name of God when refusing the offers. This is similar to the finding of Morkus (2014), which stated that, when performing the refusal speech act, the Egyptian respondents were more likely to include religion through mentioning the name of God, for instance. Findings of the research further show the Yemeni EFL learners using direct strategies when refusing someone equal or lower in terms of status.

Ahmed Hatim (2021) investigated the use of refusal speech acts among Saudi EFL students enrolled at the Bachelor of Science program at Moon University in Saudi Arabia. The methodology of the study was conducted through a convenient sampling that involved the selection of 20 students, in addition to asking those respondents to fill a discourse completion test (DCT). The test included 12 situations where the respondents were asked to refuse suggestions, offers, requests and invitations. The DCT responses were analysed using the content analysis method and descriptive statistics. As for the results of the study, they showed that the Saudi

EFL learners used the indirect refusal strategy more than the direct strategy. Another finding further demonstrated that the Saudi EFL respondents lacked the pragma-linguistic competence when responding to the DCT scenarios, and that affected the clarity of the meaning when intending to use the refusal strategies. The journal recommends that, for the sake of overall improvement in the use of English, more focus needs to be put towards the pragmatics and the socio-pragmatic competence in the language, particularly among the EFL students.

Attapol (2022) conducted a study to research the refusal speech acts through collecting evidence from L2 Thai learners. The methodology of the research was based on asking 157 Thai university students to answer 12 Oral Discourse Completion Test (ODCT) scenarios. Through having them systematically collected and transcribed, the scenarios were comprised of three requests, three invitations, three suggestions and three offers. Findings of the research showed some differences in the frequency and content of how the respondents applied their understanding of the refusal speech act. To elaborate, indirect responses that included a mixture of direct and indirect strategies was reported. Most of the respondents responded to the refusal scenarios with excuses, reasons and explanations, which the researcher analysed by claiming that refusals should not be seen as mere speech acts, but as speech act sets in the sense of containing more than one element. As well as that, the study states that socio-cultural factors pave the way for successful communication with regard to the use of the refusal strategies by the L2 learners. This enhances the idea aforementioned that, for a beneficial comprehension of speech acts

and in order to use them prominently, individuals should be well-aware of the context, the society and the culture in which the performing act, the refusal act in this case, is to be used and applied.

In a study that investigated the refusal responses to requests in Cameroon French, Farenkia (2023) conveys that there may be pragmatic distinctions across varieties of the same language. The data of the study was collected in Yaoundé and Douala in Cameroon. Findings of the study show that the respondents used many different direct and indirect refusal strategies when responding to requests, as there were different supportive acts and diverse address strategies in the refusal utterances of the respondents. It was also shown in the research that the refusal utterances to request speech acts are impacted by numeric factors, such as the formality level of the conversation, the social relationships of both the speaker and the hearer, as well as the sociocultural constraints that were present between the respondents of the study.

2.2.5 Indirectness, Politeness and Formality in Conversations:

2.2.5.1 Indirectness in Conversations:

Coulson and Lovett (2010) conducted a study to investigate the event-related brain potentials (ERPs) of 20 healthy adults involved in creating indirect requests which convey indirectness in speeches. The methodology of the article was based on reading short stories as either direct statements or indirect requests. Findings of the research state that indirectness in conversations and speeches is reliant on the context basically, and that is because, as

per the article, “My soup is too cold to eat” is a literal statement when a woman addresses her husband. In contrast, the same sentence was seen as an indirect request when the woman said it to the waiter because of wanting another soup. This indicates that there are differences in the ERPs of individuals, which were mainly in accordance with the context of the conversation.

Basnakova et al. (2015) researched the manner in which indirectness in conversations affects addressees and overhearers. The respondents were supposed to either formulate questions or answers to a fictional job interview context. Findings of the research convey the need to be more attentive to indirect face-saving language in terms of cognition. Another finding states that the indirectness in conversations are focused more by addressees than overhearers, meaning that in response to the research question of the article, indirect face-saving replies affect addressees more than overhearers. The research concludes by saying that face-saving indirectness is noted and seen in the daily communication of humans.

Boux et al. (2022) conducted a research to look at the concept of indirectness in conversations, and that is through investigating the cognitive features of the indirect speech acts produced by the respondents in the study, who rated direct and indirect speech acts. The findings of the study posit that indirectness in the conversations were less predictable, less coherent and of not much relation to the question asked. Overall, the article claims that indirectness in speeches and conversations are linked to cognitive features and the unpredictability of the utterances made in those speeches.

2.2.5.2 Politeness in Conversations:

Brown and Levinson (1987) conducted research to investigate the concept of politeness in conversations. As per the article, politeness is reflected in the use of language overall, and that politeness principles are talked about in linguistic universals discussed by grammarians. Another idea stated in the research is that what is polite may differ from one group to another, as people have different ideologies that they take into account and consider. This means that saying 'Excuse me' to someone might be polite as per one group, whereas another may consider it an impolite speech act. Saying 'Please' can also be realised as a polite speech act in one instance and an impolite act in another. For instance, saying 'Please! This is none of your business' does not express politeness because of the context of the conversation.

Matsumoto (1989) conducted a study to investigate the politeness and conversational universals in accordance with the Japanese context. Findings of the study show that politeness in the Japanese context is noted in the use of honorifics in the use of language. The article posits that in the Japanese language, the social context plays a major role in the use of politeness in conversations. This means that the use of politeness depends on whether individuals communicate with their friends or formal people. Another analysis of the findings of the research indicates that the use of politeness depends on the context of the speech. This demonstrates the idea that politeness in conversations relies on contexts mainly.

Fraser (1990) reviewed four approaches regarding politeness in conversations, which are the social norm, conversational-maxim,

the face-saving and the conversational-contract views. Findings of the research convey that the face-saving view is the clearest view to incorporate politeness. That is why, according to the research, the face-saving view provides the most relevant polite conversations that individuals need to know about in their daily speeches.

In a research conducted by Locher and Watts (2005), the main aim was to investigate the theory of politeness and relational work through revisiting Brown and Levinson (1987) politeness theory. The research argues that politeness is a discursive concept and cannot thus be linked to face-threatening acts or FTAs, which means that the concept of politeness can be found in online messages or emails, for example. This also means that what is polite or impolite needs to be decided through looking at the context of the speech rather than to be predicted by analysts.

2.2.5.3 Formality in Conversations:

Furthermore, Li et al. (2015) analysed a discourse to look at the text formality, and that is through viewing a sample of 1,158 samples comprising of conversations, speeches, letters, official documents, among other materials. Findings of the article indicate that the concept of formality is taken into account by individuals when looking at the genres of the discourses, the words used in the topic, and the words associated with emotion. This means that determining whether a conversation or a discourse is formal or informal depends on the use of language and the context of the speech. In case the context of the conversation was with a stranger

and included different formal words, then that conversation would be recognised as formal.

Ernestus et al. (2015) investigated the manner in which speech situations and contexts affect the way words are uttered. Two studies were conducted. The first study was based on the Spoken Dutch Corpus, while the second study looked at how words are spoken in careful and articulated speeches. Findings of the research state that the context and situation of speeches tend to have an impact on how words are uttered, and the style followed by speakers differs in the informal context than in the formal one. This shows that there is a difference in terms of utterance in the formal and informal speech contexts.

Jassim and Nimehchisalem (2016) conducted a study to investigate the apology strategies used by EFL Arab students in formal and informal situations. The reason why this article relates to the topic of this research is that it determines whether or not speech acts differ in terms of the degree of formality in different social contexts. Findings of the article, through having a DCT and an estimation questionnaire as instruments, demonstrate that the use of the apology speech act was affected by the social context, whether formal or informal. For example, the use of the apology speech act had two scenarios where the respondents had to apologize for stepping on a student's foot in the first scenario, and apologize for a two-day delay to a university staff member in the second. The overall finding of the research is that despite the respondents denoting that an apology is required for all situations, the amount of apologizing techniques and strategies mainly relied on the social contexts the respondents were subjected to.

Köppen et al. (2019) conducted a research work to investigate the linguistic variation with regard to the formality of twenty-five native Dutch speakers who either retold stories informally or formally. Findings of the research revealed that diverse versions of the retold stories were used by the respondents, as the formal interlocutors displayed lower articulation rates and used more nouns and prepositions in the stories they retold. This agrees with the finding of Heylighen and Dewaele (1999), who found that formal conversations include the usage of different word classes. However, respondents addressing informal hearers provided explicit information when retelling the stories. In those informal contexts, one finding is that the respondents used many conjunctions, such as “and”, for example, as well as containing first-person pronouns, such as “I”. This explains the notion that formality in speeches, overall, includes the usage of more word classes, while informal speeches have more subjectivity, directness and empathy.

2.2.6 Impact of Culture on the use of Language:

Karlık (2023) claims that, despite language and culture being related to each other in terms of shaping one's realization of the world, cultural contexts and beliefs can play a vital role in the use of a language. This infers that Arab native speakers may apply their cultural understanding of the world when using the English language.

Lun (2020) conducted a study titled "The Relationship between Language and Culture". The article claims that the use of the cultural beliefs in a specific language is easier than in both second and foreign languages. However, the research states that it is easy to separate language and culture when communicating in a second or a foreign language. That is the objective of this study: to investigate whether or not Bahrainis in the workplace are capable of separating their Arabic culture from the English language while performing requests and refusals.

Chapter three

Methodology

3.5.1 Data Collection Tool & Procedure:

One method was applied in this study. A discourse completion test (DCT) that included refusal and request scenarios was given to native English speakers and Bahrainis in the workforce. The discourse completion test was given to 26 respondents (15 Bahraini employees and 11 British native speakers). The request DCT was adopted from Merve and Deniz (2019), while the refusal DCT was taken from Rahma and Khalsa (2016). Changes and modifications to the DCT in terms of situations and work statuses were made to fit the topic of the dissertation. This method was conducted to understand whether Bahrainis in the workforce use refusal and request strategies as the native English speakers do.

The first DCT contained four types of request situations where the respondents were asked to request, using the scenarios, from people they encounter with equal, lower, higher and strange statuses with regard to their work environments. The second DCT was similar to the first in terms of the social status, however the respondents were asked to refuse workplace request scenarios. The data of the two groups was then compared to view the similarities and differences between their usage of the two types of speech acts. This targeted the manner in which the respondents of the study request and refuse in their communication with people in the workplace they are involved in.

The application of the qualitative methodology helped the researcher answer the three research questions (Section 1.4) through denoting the strategies, frequency and the differences in the use of the requests and refusals by the controlled (Native English speakers) and experimental (Bahrainis in the workplace) groups.

3.5.2 Participants:

A number of 15 Bahrainis in the workplace and 11 native English respondents participated in the study, totalling 26 respondents. Regarding the Bahrainis, the researcher ensured that all the subjects are in the workplace, and that is through sending the DCT to specific known individuals to control the widespread of the instrument used.

Concerning the linguistic level of the experimental group (Bahrainis in the workplace), the general expectation is that they use the English language on a daily basis, and that is as per the citation of Almutairi (2019) to Kachru's model, as already detailed. Not only this, all the Bahraini respondents attended university and were exposed to academic English, meaning that they were at least expected to make effective request and refusal expressions.

As for the native English speakers, the researcher communicated with native educators teaching at different schools and universities across the Kingdom. In addition to this, different other native English speakers were communicated with through the LinkedIn platform to have them participate in the methodology of the research.

3.5.3 Data Analysis:

The qualitative content analysis was used in this research, and that is to systematically analyze the findings of the research. The content analysis was a process that helped with the data analysis, especially concerning the speech acts produced in text (DCT) by the respondents of the study.

The content analysis method was used in different research works (Pearson, 1989; Bilbow, 1997; Moody; 2017; Pang, 2018).

Chapter 4:

Findings and Discussion

The data of the findings and discussion part comprised two research instruments, which are the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and interviews.

4.1 Findings:

This section reports the data collected from the respondents.

Table 1 below presents the frequency and percentage of directness, formal and polite request strategies used by the Bahrainis and native speakers in their formulated requests to the situations provided.

Table (1): Request Strategies (Bahrainis = 15 & Natives = 11)

Equal Work Status	Frequency of Bahrainis		Percentage (%)	Frequency of Native English		Percentage (%)
	Direct (14)		93.3% direct	11 direct		100% direct
	13 formal		86.6% formal	10 formal		90.9% formal
	10 polite		66.6% polite	10 polite		90.9% polite
Lower Work Status	12 direct		80% direct	7 direct	4	63.6% direct
	13 formal		86.6% formal	10 formal	indirect	90.9% formal
	11 polite		73.3% polite	8 polite		72.7% polite
Higher Work Status	12 direct		80% direct	11 direct		100% direct
	13 formal		86.6% formal	10 formal		90.9% formal
	12 polite		80% polite	10 polite		90.9% polite
Strangers	13 direct		86.6% direct	9 direct	2	81.8% direct
	8 formal		53.3% formal	9 formal	indirect	81.8% formal
	6 polite		40% polite	8 polite		72.7% polite

The table below shows the frequency and percentage of the refusal direct, formal and polite strategies used by the Bahrainis and native speakers in their refusal expressions.

Table (2): Refusal Strategies (Bahrainis = 15 & Natives = 11)

Equal Work Status	Bahrainis		Rate (%)	Native English		Rate (%)
	12 direct 9 formal 12 polite		80% direct 60% formal 80% polite	11 direct 9 formal 10 polite		100% direct 81.8% formal 90.9% polite
Higher Work Status	8 Direct 12 Formal 11 Polite	4 Indirect	53.3% direct 80% formal 73.3% polite	9 direct 10 formal 10 polite	(1 did not answer accurately) 1 indirect	81.8% direct 90.9% formal 90.9% polite
Lower Work Status	4 Direct 9 Formal 9 Polite	7 Indirect	26.6% direct 60% formal 60% polite	7 direct 9 formal 7 polite	4 Indirect	63.6% direct 81.8% formal 63.6% polite
Strangers	12 Direct 3 Formal 5 polite		80% direct 20% formal 33.3% polite	7 direct 5 formal 5 polite	4 Indirect	63.6% direct 45.4% formal 45.4% polite

4.1.1 Discourse Completion Test (DCT):

The DCT contained three content sets, including demographic information, English request speech acts and English refusal speech acts. The objective of the sets was to view how similar or different the Bahraini employees produce the refusal and request speech acts when compared to the speech acts produced by native English speakers.

Table 1 and 2 illustrate an evident difference in the use of requests and refusals between Bahrainis in the workplace and native English speakers. The percentages shown in the two tables are similar to the

results of different research papers cited in Chapter 2 (Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Mohammed, 2013; Merve & Deniz, 2019; Attapol, 2022).

Bahrainis:

First Respondent:

The first respondent to the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) is a Bahraini male individual who works in the field of education.

Request Speech Act:

The first question in the DCT asked about the manner in which the respondent would formulate a request to ask his coworker of an equal work status for coffee, in which the request was as follows: “While you’re at it, how about you get me a cup of coffee too?”. In this case, a relatively direct request was formulated by the speaker, as he started the request by using the phrase “While you’re at it”, and then saying “how about”, which further makes the question slightly indirect. Also, the request is formal, and that is because, according to Heylighen and Dewaele (1999), the use of many words makes the conversation more formal. This means that the above request by the respondent is much more formal than saying: ‘Coffee please?’.

In the second situation, where the speaker had a lower work status than the hearer, the respondent was asked to formulate a request to ask his boss to leave early from work. The question the respondent created was: “May I leave early today due to some issues I’m facing?”, which portrays a reason in the question by the speaker. This indicates that the respondent explains himself when speaking with those higher in status than him. As for the third question, the speaker had a higher work status and is the

head of department who asks one of those who work under him for a napkin. The response by the speaker was: “Can you get me a napkin?”. This shows directness in the question by the respondent, as he simply asked the one under him in terms of work status for a napkin without adding any indirect phrases or giving reasons to needing a napkin. One analysis to this is that, when having a higher status than the hearer, the questions formulated by the respondent are always direct, and that can be due to not requiring to use any level of indirectness in the speech. This level of directness is further denoted in the final request speech act in this DCT, where the respondent was asked to ask a stranger at work about the time. The request of the respondent was: “Can you tell me the time?”, in which, similar to the former request, the topic of the conversation was involved directly without adding any phrases whatsoever.

In all of the requests created by the first respondent, it is evident that there is some sort of politeness involved in the questions, such as the usage of the modal ‘Can’ in “Can you tell me the time?”, for instance.

Refusal Speech Act:

For the first situation of refusal speech acts used by the first respondent, the speaker and the interlocutor both had an equal work status. The interlocutor (respondent) was asked to refuse the following request “Can you give me some money please?”. In the second scenario, the respondent had to refuse teaching someone, as the request formulated by the speaker to the respondent was “Excuse me, can you teach me this? I cannot understand it.”. The refusals to both requests can be seen in table 3 below.

Table (3)

<i>First Situation (Equal Status)</i>	<i>Second Situation (Respondent with a higher status)</i>
Refusal: “Sorry, I don’t have any”	Refusal: “Sorry, I’m busy

In both the first and the second scenarios, it is shown that the respondent started with an apology to refuse the request from the speaker before giving a reason to the refusal. This shows that the respondent (interlocutor) observes the aspects a level of formality and indirectness when wanting to refuse the request. In other words, he did not refuse by replying with a direct ‘no’.

This instance is even the same in the third scenario, in which the hearer (respondent) had to refuse the following request: “How about you explain this to the student? She really does not know it” from a person with a higher work status. The last request that had to be refused by the respondent from a stranger at work was: “Can I ask if your home is close to your work?”. Table 4 exhibits the refusals by the hearer and discusses them.

Table (4)

<i>Third Scenario (Respondent with a lower status)</i>	<i>Fourth Scenario (Asking a stranger)</i>
Refusal: “Sorry, I’m occupied, maybe later”	Refusal: “I can’t answer this question”

It is understood that the third refusal formulated by the respondent differed in style, when compared to the first and the second scenarios. The hearer, in addition to apologizing and justifying by not being able to help the student, offers a probable solution to the matter by saying

“maybe later” to the person with a higher work status. As for the fourth scenario, the respondent considered the politeness strategy by not replying with a ‘no’, yet the refusal strategy by the Bahraini speaker is direct.

Second Respondent:

The second respondent in the DCT is a Bahraini female respondent who works in the field of education.

Request Speech Act:

For the first scenario, where the respondent formulated a request to ask a coworker of the same work status for coffee, the respondent said the following: “Could you bring me a cup of coffee”, which is noted as the direct request strategy. This shows that, when communicating with coworkers of the same status, the respondent intends to use the direct request strategy. When requesting to leave work early from a person of higher status, the respondent said “May I be excused early today please?”, which involves politeness and formality, in addition to a direct request. The reason this is a direct request goes back to asking to be excused, which corresponds to leaving work early. This level of formality and politeness is noted in the third situation, where the respondent was asked to request a napkin as the head of the department. The respondent said “Could you pass me that napkin please”, in which again, a modal verb was used in the request. The final scenario shows the level of politeness and formality of the respondent, in which the request “Excuse me, could you tell me what time it is?”, and this leads to the realisation that, when communicating with strangers, the Bahraini respondent tends to use direct phrases like “Excuse me”.

The responses of the second respondent show that there is an overall polite use of language in terms of the request speech act, however the data show that there is a more formal and an indirect use of the request speech act when communicating with strangers.

Refusal Speech Act:

The first situation had the speaker ask ‘Can you give me some money please?’, in which the refusal speech act formulated by the hearer was “Sorry, I can’t”, without giving any reasons to the incapability of doing so. The second scenario asked the respondent to refuse the request of teaching something, as the refusal technique followed was based on reasoning “Sorry, it’s not my responsibility to do that”. As per the analysis of these two refusal speech acts, a reason was given in the second situation and not the first because, in the second scenario, the respondent was refusing something requested by a person of a higher work status. The refusal strategy in the second scenario is similar to that in the third, except that the third scenario includes refusing a request made by a lower-status individual. The refusal formulated by the respondent was: “I’m sorry, I wish I could but I can’t right now”, involving the use of politeness, formality and expressing the wish to help. The last scenario asked the respondent to refuse ‘Can I ask if your home is close to your work?’, a request from a stranger. The respondent used the direct strategy with the use of politeness by saying “Sorry, but no”, indicating that she could not respond to the question.

Generally, it is seen that politeness was used in all the situations, as the difference only lied in whether those refusals were direct or indirect.

Third Respondent:

The third respondent is a Bahraini male speaker who works in the field of activity management.

Request Speech Act:

When given the DCT scenarios, the responses of the Bahraini speaker show more politeness than the other respondents. To illustrate, his request was “Could you please bring me a cup of coffee?” when communicating with someone of an equal work status, which shows some sort of formality. However, the level of formality arises in the second situation, where the respondent was asked to formulate a request by asking his boss to leave work early, saying “Sir, I have something to do if possible. May I leave before time?”. This further enhances the idea that the respondent uses a quite formal language when talking to his superiors at work. Through words and phrases used in the request, such as “Sir” and reasons to the request, it is evident that the request strategy used with superiors is formal and indirect, which can also be portrayed to show work hierarchy in the sense of higher and social statuses. When switching roles to make the respondent become the superior that asks for a napkin from an employee, a less level of formality is noted, as seen in the third situation. The respondent requests a napkin from the employee by saying: “Could you please pass me a piece of napkin?”, which also shows some level of formality through the words “Could” and “please”, but this formality is far lesser than the one seen when requesting something from a superior at work. Finally, the respondent was asked to ask a stranger about the time, through which he said: “If you don’t mind, what time is it?”. The phrase “If you don’t mind” shows that, when requesting something from a stranger, the respondent prefers using phrases that

promote the formality of the conversation. Not only is the request appropriate to the stranger in terms of content, but the usage of “If you don’t mind” makes it formal and polite as well.

Therefore, it is understood that the third respondent uses formal and polite language in every situation, whether in a higher, equal or a lower work status. However, when talking to strangers, the respondent has the tendency to use indirect language, such as “If you don’t mind”, for example.

Refusal Speech Act:

It is noted that the respondent did not respond to the refusal questions, indicating that he did not apprehend and understand how to respond to the scenarios.

Fourth Respondent:

The fourth respondent is a male Bahraini speaker that also works in the field of education.

Request Speech Act:

It is apprehended, through the request to the first situation, that the respondent includes politeness in his language when talking to a coworker of the same work status: “May you bring me a cup of coffee?”. For the second situation, where the respondent was supposed to ask his boss to leave work early, “I would like you to allow me to leave earlier” was formulated. This shows that the respondent might not deal with work superiors well, and that analysis is made through the observation of not making a request, but rather expressing his thoughts on wanting to leave

work early. This is the opposite when it comes to the third situation, as the respondent played the role of a head of the department who asks one of the employees for a napkin, as the request is: “Will you give me a napkin, please?”. The reason why this is quite dissimilar to the second situation is that, in the third, the respondent used the modal verb “Will”, which indicates the conventional indirectness of the request. Not only that, but the respondent even used the word “please” after making the request, and this combines both politeness and indirectness.

Overall, it is noticed that the respondent uses indirectness, formality and politeness in all of his requests, yet formality and indirectness are not noted in his request to the boss when expressing the need to leave early from work.

Refusal Speech Acts:

For the refusal speech act, the refusal to the first request from the coworker with equal work status was “I am sorry. I have some financial problems”. This response had the politeness, formality and justifications all intermixed to justify not being able to give the speaker some money. The refusal to the second scenario was “I am sorry I am busy right now”, demonstrating the use of justification in “I am busy” and politeness. However, the refusal strategy employed by the respondent to refuse the third scenario as a person with a lower work status than the speaker was “Do it yourself”, leading to a controversial idea in terms of using a polite, indirect and a formal refusal strategy when being equal or of a higher status, and using a direct imperative language when communicating with a person of a higher work status.

Fifth Respondent:

Moving on to the fifth respondent, he is a Bahraini speaker who works in the legal and industrial fields.

Request Speech Act:

In the first request to ask a coworker of the same status for coffee, the respondent said: “Can you bring me a coffee, please?”, in which the use of modal verb to indicate directness and the use of “please” to express politeness are existent. Concerning the second situation, the respondent’s request to ask his boss to leave work early is: “I ask your permission to leave work due to emergency circumstances”. This request expresses much of the respondent’s loyalty and belief of work superiority. In other words, the respondent started the request by saying “I ask” instead of using modal verbs, as noted in the cases above, in addition to the usage of the phrase “your permission”, which was used to show the boss at work that he has the right to accept or refuse the request. This request is different from the one formulated by the respondent in the fourth situation, which is: “Please can you help me bring a napkin please?”, which was addressed as the head of department to someone who works under him. The realisation of saying “please” twice shows the respect the respondent has to those who work under him, not wanting to show any form of superiority. However, this sequence of addressing superiors with loyalty and respect, yet request from their subordinates with much politeness and directness needs to be looked at. For the final situation, the respondent was asked to formulate a request to a stranger and ask about the time. The request made was: “Excuse me, can I ask you what time it is?”. Here, the usage of the phrases “Excuse me” and “can” both express politeness, directness and formality.

To sum up, the fourth respondent used diverse request strategies when communicating with coworkers of the same, higher and lower work statuses. Those request techniques varied from indirect to polite questions, depending on the context and the status of the coworker.

Refusal Speech Act:

The fifth respondent was only able to refuse the first scenario clearly, as despite being asked to refuse the requests, the respondent replied positively to the remaining scenarios, with responses like “Of course, I would be glad to teach you”, for instance. This shows that the respondent was unable to comprehend the instructions clearly.

Sixth Respondent:

As for the sixth respondent, she is a Bahraini speaker who works in the field of education.

Request Speech Act:

In the first situation, the request formulated by the respondent was: “Could you bring me a cup of coffee please?”, which entails the directness of the speaker when communicating with individuals of the same work status in the workplace. There is also politeness in the request, which is embodied in the word “please” at the end.

The second situation includes the respondent being in a lower work status scenario, requesting from her boss to leave work early. The request made to this situation is: “Would it be possible for me to leave work early today?”, Although it is viewed that the respondent did not use the word

“please” to increase the level of politeness in the speech, she used an direct phrase to show it to the work status in the conversation, and this is seen in “Would it be possible for me”, indicating that the superiority of accepting or rejecting the request goes back to the boss.

The third situation asked the respondent – as the head of department – to request a napkin from an employee who works under her. In response to this scenario, the respondent said: “Could you pass me a napkin please?”, which comprises formality in the use of the modal verb “Could”, and politeness in the use of “please” at the end of the sentence. The request is also direct because of asking for a napkin directly.

Regarding the final situation, the respondent had to ask a stranger at work about the time, showing that there is no work status in this case whatsoever. The request made by the sixth respondent was: “What time is it?”, showing directness and portraying no formality or politeness in the request. This is quite different from the data gathered regarding the other Bahraini respondents.

Refusal Speech Act:

For the refusal strategies used by the sixth respondent, the response to the first request was: “I am sorry but I don’t have any to spare right now”, demonstrating the strategies of politeness and providing reasons to not being able to help.

When asked by a person of a higher status to explain something to a student, the interlocutor said: “Please go through the topic and research about it. If you don’t understand it, then you can come by my office and I’ll try to explain it better”. This indicates that there is a difference in the refusal strategies used by the respondent when refusing something from a

person of an equal and a higher work status. To further explain, with the higher work status individual, the respondent used the techniques of indirectness, politeness and formality. This is in the sense of using words like “Please”, in addition to providing solutions to the problem and offering an alternative solution as well in case the student did not understand.

The second situation shows the usage of the indirect, formal and polite strategies when refusing a request from a higher perspective. The refusal of the respondent was: “Could you please educate me about this? I dont understand it well”.

Regarding the interaction with a stranger at work, the respondent further used the strategies employed in the first scenario, which are politeness and reasoning through saying: “I’m sorry but this is a bit of a personal question”.

Seventh Respondent:

The seventh respondent is a Bahraini male speaker who is in the teaching field.

Request Speech Act:

For the request speech acts, the respondent was asked to formulate a request coffee from a coworker of the same work status. The request created by the respondent was “Can you bring a coffee, please?”, which shows the use of both the notions of politeness and formality in the modal verb “Can” and “please”.

In the second situation where the respondent was asked to formulate a request to ask his boss to leave work early, the request was

“May I please be excused from work early”. This request shows the use of language when communicating with a person of higher status. The use of language here shows formality and politeness when requesting something from a person of higher status, exemplifying the dominance of the higher work status in the conversation.

In the third situation, the respondent needed to formulate a request as a head of department to ask one of those who work under him for a napkin. The request made was “Can you grab me a napkin with you, if you don’t mind?”. This request is noted as fully formal and polite, which also proves that the request is quite direct through the use of “Can” and the polite expression “if you don’t mind”. With this in mind, it is clear that the higher and lower work statuses imply to the respondent to use a formal and a polite language.

The same analysis noted above is further based on the last situation, which asked for a request to a stranger to inquire about the time. Since the interlocutor is unknown, the respondent did not use politeness or formality in the request, which was “What’s the time?”.

Refusal Speech Act:

The refusal speech acts formulated show that the respondent did not comprehend what to do with the scenarios. The applicant asked questions instead of refusing the requests in the scenarios. This case is considered similar to the fifth respondent.

Eighth Respondent:

In contrast to the seventh respondent, the eighth respondent is a female Bahraini that works in the education field.

Request Speech Act:

In the first request, the respondent was requesting from a coworker with the same status, and said: “Hey, would you mind grabbing us both some coffee?”. Here, the major purpose behind the usage of the phrase “us both” can be that the hearer and her are of the same status, and she cannot use the language of superiority in this case. This request even portrays formality in the words: “would you mind”.

The same formality and some sort of directness to ask the boss to leave work early in the second situation are unnoticed in the third situation, where the speaker was the head of the department and asked someone for a napkin. Table 5 below illustrates this difference.

Table (5)

<i>Second Scenario (Respondent with a lower status)</i>	<i>Third Scenario (Respondent with a higher status than the hearer)</i>
“Is there any possibility for me to leave work a bit earlier today?”	“Could you please pass me a napkin?”

In the third scenario, it is evident that though there is some sort of politeness in the formulated request, a lower level of formality is seen than in the second scenario.

As for the fourth situation where the respondent asked a stranger about the time, it is apprehended that formality, politeness and directness

were all noticed. The request made was: “Excuse me, could you let me know what the time is?”.

Refusal Speech Act:

The refusal strategies used by the eighth respondent in the first situation are politeness, directness and expressing incapability through that indirect technique. The refusal was: “I’m really sorry. I wish I can help but I am unable to provide you with money at the moment”.

The refusal strategies in the second and third situations, which can be seen in table 6, convey how different the respondent refuses a request from individuals with higher and lower status. Though both situations include a high level of indirectness, the major difference between them is that, in the second scenario, there is more superiority and dominance in the language of the respondent. The excuse provided for the second scenario is indirect, with no clear examples of what obstructs the respondent from fulfilling the request. Nevertheless, in the third scenario, the reason is made clear to the speaker, which is not having the knowledge to explain the lesson. The respondent also provided a conditional and a better solution by saying “It might be more beneficial if someone with a deeper ...” . This means that if a person who can explain the lesson better was not found, then she would try her best to “provide an explanation”, which was not given as a solution in the second scenario.

The refusal strategies followed by the respondent when talking to a work stranger were reliant on politeness and indirectness by expressing the need to keep her information private.

Table (6)

<i>Second Scenario (Respondent with a higher status)</i>	<i>Third Scenario (Respondent with a lower status than the hearer)</i>
“Though I admire your desire to learn, my current obligations make it challenging for me to provide the necessary time and attention to teaching. There may be sources or people who can help you understand the subject better”.	“I recognize how crucial it is to assist you, yet I could lack the knowledge or the right context to effectively express the concept. It might be more beneficial if someone with a deeper understanding of the topic could provide an explanation”.

The final refusal speech act also expressed the use of directness, politeness and formality. The respondent said: “I’m sorry, but I’d prefer to keep my personal information private”.

Ninth Respondent:

The ninth respondent is a Bahraini female speaker that works in the field of translation, unlike most of the formerly discussed respondents that work in the educational sector.

Request Speech Act:

In consideration with the first situation, the request formulated by the respondent to ask her coworker of the same status for coffee was: “Could you please bring me coffee if it’s no trouble?”, which portrays the usage of formality and directness through the modal verb “Could”, and

the use of politeness in the request through the phrases “please” and “if it’s no trouble”.

The second scenario is noted the same as the first, yet it includes the usage of reasoning in the request made by the speaker with a lower status (the respondent) when asking something from a person with a higher status. The reasoning request was: “I have an important matter to attend to today, could I please leave work a bit earlier?”, which is an indirect request. Table 7 below demonstrates the first two requests created by the respondent, and that is in order to manifest the differences clearly.

Table (7)

<i>First Scenario (Equal status)</i>	<i>Second Scenario (Respondent with a lower status than the hearer)</i>
“Could you please bring me coffee if it’s no trouble?”	“I have an important matter to attend to today, could I please leave work a bit earlier?”

Moving on to the third situation, the respondent was asked to formulate a request to ask – as the Head of Department – for a napkin, while the fourth situation asks the respondent to inquire about the time from a stranger in the workplace. The results of the two situations can be viewed in table 8 below.

Table (8)

<i>Third Scenario (Respondent with a higher status)</i>	<i>Fourth Scenario (Asking a stranger)</i>
“Do you have a napkin I can use please?”	“Sorry to bother you, can I please know what time it is?”

The findings of the third and fourth scenarios posit the differences between formulating requests from a higher work status and asking a stranger about something. While it is evident that the third request includes a low level of politeness through the use of “please” and indirectness, the request made to the fourth scenario contains formality, directness and politeness through the phrase “Sorry to bother you”, indicating that the level of strangeness between the two can involve the speaker bothering the interlocutor by asking a question. The directness in this request is apprehended by denoting that the speaker did not ask about the time directly, rather initiating the conversation with an apology.

Refusal Speech Act:

With the ninth respondent, the refusal strategies in communicating with a coworker of an equal status are based on indirectness and politeness, as the respondent said: “I’m so sorry but I can’t this month”.

In the second situation, the request that the respondent had to refuse was: “Excuse me, can you teach me this? I cannot understand it”. The response of the hearer was: “Could you please come another time?”, which is the same as the refusal strategy formed in the third situation to reject the request of a person with a higher status. The third response was: “Could you please ask someone else to do it?”. In both refusals, it is

denoted that the respondent employs an indirect strategy by forming a question to show refusal, in addition to the politeness aspect in using “please” throughout the two refusals.

For the final scenario, the respondent was asked to refuse the question “Can I ask if your home is close to your work?” from a work stranger. The refusal strategy in this situation is direct, with following the politeness aspect by saying “No sorry”.

Tenth Respondent:

The tenth respondent is a female working in the business field.

Request Speech Act:

Starting off with the request speech act, the request made to the first situation indicates the application of directness and formality despite the hearer having an equal work status. The request was: “Hi would you mind getting me a cup of coffee on your way?”, in which the phrase “on your way” shows that the speaker would mostly request in case it is relevant to the coworker.

The respondent asked her boss to leave work early in the second situation by saying: “Something came up. Is it possible to leave early just for the day?”. This manifests the idea that the speaker provides justifications when intending to communicate with people of higher status, which is particularly through the use of “Something came up”, and then saying “just for the day” in order for the request to be more contextually appropriate and relevant to the situation. Saying “just for the day” is a phrase that is engraved in some Bahraini conversations when wanting to make requests to people with higher statuses.

In the third situation, directness, politeness and formality are identified, regardless of how the formality level is lesser than in the previous two situations. The request was: “Can someone please hand me a napkin?”.

The last situation includes the least level of formality, alongside the inexistence of politeness, with the speaker responding to a stranger to ask about the time by saying: “May I know what time it is?”, which only portrays the use of a low level of formality and directness.

Refusal Speech Act:

Concerning the refusal speech act, the first refusal by the respondent was: “I apologize I’m in no position to give you money”. This refusal speech act involves politeness and formality through the use of apology to express rejection, in addition to providing a justification for the speaker.

The second situation, where the hearer (respondent) has a higher work status than the speaker, shows the same refusal strategies used in the first scenario, as the response was: “I’m sorry this is beyond my knowledge”, in which both formality and politeness are once again noticed.

Nevertheless, the directness noted in the previous two situations was not viewed when the respondent refused a request from a higher-status person, as she said: “I believe someone else is capable to deliver this piece of information better than I would”. This response does not include a direct rejection as when the respondent said “I’m sorry” or “I apologize”. Also, the hearer did not justify her refusal, since she said that she believes someone else is more capable of doing the request,

indicating to the speaker that she would not be able to perform the request due to the lack of ability.

The refusal response by the hearer in the final situation was: “I’m sorry I’d rather not disclose any personal information about myself”. Unlike the request made to the stranger in the “Request Speech Act” section, the respondent used politeness and formality when addressing a work stranger that asked about whether or not her home is close to work. When analysed, it is evident that the refusal techniques used by the respondent to reject the requests are different from the requests formulated.

Eleventh Respondent:

The eleventh respondent is a female who works in the field of education. This section includes an analysis of the request speech act she uses.

Request Speech Act:

In the first scenario, the respondent was asked to formulate a question her coworker to ask for coffee, as she said: “Could you bring me coffee please?”, which infers the usage of low-level formality and politeness.

The second scenario involves the respondent asking her boss to leave work early, while the third situation asked her to form a question to ask as the head of her department for a napkin from one of her employees. Table 9 below illustrates the findings and analyses them.

Table (9)

<i>Second Scenario (Lower status)</i>	<i>Third Scenario (Respondent with a higher status than the hearer)</i>
"I've got something important to do. Would it be possible to leave early today?"	"Can I have a napkin?"

As noted in the table, there are major differences in the second and third requests formulated by the respondent. The second scenario had her use the reasoning and justification strategies, directness and formality, all in the same request. This is not existent in the third scenario, despite the request being direct as in the second situation. The speaker addressed the interlocutor in a dominant position, as she only used the strategy of formality in the modal "Can". This indicates that work hierarchy and status forces speakers to form questions accordingly, with putting in mind those statuses.

The last scenario asked the respondent to form a question to a stranger at work to ask about the time. The speaker used directness, formality and politeness in the request by saying: "Hi. Sorry to disturb but I need to know what time it is now if possible".

Refusal Speech Act:

This section discusses the refusal speech act used by the eleventh respondent.

The first refusal strategy had the interlocutor (respondent) refuse the request of her coworker who asked for some money. She said: “I’m sorry, but I really can’t”, which comprises of the politeness strategy.

The findings of the second and third situations can be seen in table 10 below, where the interlocutor had to refuse requests while having a higher (second situation) and a lower (third scenario) status than the speaker.

Table (10)

<i>Second Scenario (Higher status)</i>	<i>Third Scenario (Respondent with a lower status than the hearer)</i>
“I don’t have time right now, maybe you can look it up on YouTube I’m sure it will help”.	“I would love to help her, but I’m already preoccupied and got a lot of work to do for the time being”.

The data in the second and third scenarios shows that, although there could be some similarities when refusing a request as a person with a higher and lower work status, there must be some differences in the refusal details. To elaborate, in the second scenario, the interlocutor’s higher status had her refuse the request without involving any reason to why she did not have the time, unlike the third scenario, where she included a reason saying she was preoccupied with much work. This posits that having the higher status in a conversation enhances for the idea of not justifying any rejection.

The refusal made in the last scenario to a stranger who asked if the interlocutor’s home is close to work or not was: “Do I know you? I think I don’t, so excuse me for saying that I can’t answer this question”. This refusal has much directness in portraying to the speaker the idea of not

wanting to answer the question, as the question “Do I know you?” indicates the rejection of the hearer through showing the speaker that he or she is not closely related.

Twelfth Respondent:

The twelfth respondent of the discourse completion test (DCT) is a female working in the field of education.

Request Speech Act:

The first situation asked the respondent to request coffee from a coworker. The response was: “Can you please bring me coffee?”, which has the direct, formal and polite strategies.

For both the second and third situations, the requests formulated are identical in terms of strategies. Table 11 below showcases the requests of the respondent.

Table (11)

<i>Second Scenario (Lower status)</i>	<i>Third Scenario (Respondent with a higher status than the hearer)</i>
“Could I please leave early?”	“Could you please give me the napkin?”

The requests to the second and third scenarios involve the usage of the direct, formal and polite strategies. This is an indication that, as already mentioned, the respondent applied the same request strategies when requesting as a worker with a lower and higher status.

The strategy used when requesting something from a stranger (4th scenario) is the contrary to the strategies noted in the second and third situations. To elaborate, the request formulated by the speaker was: “What’s the time?”, which is direct without using any formal or polite strategies through the use of a modal verb or a polite word.

Refusal Speech Act:

For the refusal speech act, the respondent refused the requests from the speakers in different situations.

The first refusal was: “No I’m sorry” to a coworker of the same status that asked for money, as the strategies noted here are politeness and directness. A more direct refusal strategy is seen when the respondent refused to reply to a stranger who asked the following: “Can I ask if your home is close to your work?”, which is in the last refusal situation. The response of the hearer was a direct “No”. It is worth saying here that the response “No” is more direct with no politeness than when recognizing the refusal “No I’m sorry”.

The second refusal was: “I’m sorry but I do not have time at the moment”, which was a response to wanting to be taught something due to not understanding it. The denoted strategies in this refusal are directness and providing justifications to not being able to perform the request. This response was formulated by the interlocutor (respondent) in response to a person with a lower status at work.

As for the third situation, the respondent used an indirect refusal expression through saying: “Could you do it please” to the work superior who asked to teach something to a student. The strategies used here are indirectness and politeness.

When refusing requests from people with higher statuses at work, the respondent used the aspect of indirectness through asking a question to indicate refusal instead of replying with “No” or “I’m sorry, but I can’t”.

Thirteenth Respondent:

The thirteenth respondent is a Bahraini female that is involved with the medical workplace.

Request Speech Act:

For the first question to formulate a request to ask a coworker for coffee, “Is it possible to bring a coffee” was said. This request includes directness, politeness and formality through the idea of asking the question directly with using different hedges to make the request less direct.

As for the second request made for a person with a higher status at work, the respondent said “Can I leave work early today due to some reasons?”, which entails directness and formality, similar to the first request. However, the difference in the second request lies in justifying the request by saying “due to some reasons”, even though those justifications were not made as clear as possible. Such justification was not given for the first request, and hence this clarifies that social status plays a major role in formulating requests.

Concerning the request made as the Head of Department (the third request), the respondent used a lesser form of formality and directness than in the two previous situations. Here, the request “Can I please have a napkin?” was formulated, without mentioning the reason as in the second or being very indirect as in the first request by saying “Is it possible”. This is an indication, once again, that, as already stated, position and

status play a vital role in using direct, polite or formal language in request and refusal speech acts.

Finally, the direct request speech act was noted in the last situation, where the respondent had to request the time from a stranger. This request was formulated by saying “What’s the time now?”, without mentioning a reason or using an indirect language to communicate.

Refusal Speech Act:

With regard to the refusals expressed by the respondent, the first refusal showed politeness and directness. The respondent said: “Sorry, I can’t”, without providing reasons to the speaker with the same work status. This direct response is also noted in the fourth situation, where the interlocutor (respondent) replied with: “I don’t share private matters” to the question “Can I ask if your home is close to your work?”, which was asked by a stranger. This shows that, despite their similarities in directness, the respondent does not prefer using polite phrases when asked a question by a stranger. This might be because of the realisation that questions by strangers can look like interrogations conducted by the speaker.

The refusal expressed to the second situation was: “I would love to but I don’t understand it well”, in which the respondent was asked to teach something in the workplace while having a higher status than the speaker. A similar response is also recognised in the third situation, where the respondent had a lower status than the speaker, who asked the interlocutor to explain something to a student. The refusal was: “I’m sorry I don’t have enough time. I wish I can help”. This response showcases politeness in the first two words, indirectness and formality

through giving a justification to express the incapability of not doing something.

Fourteenth Respondent:

The fourteenth respondent is a Bahraini female working in the field of marketing.

Request Speech Act:

For the request speech act, it is evident that the respondent was unfamiliar with the responses she was expected to formulate. The respondent replied negatively “No” and “if needed” to the situations, which is quite similar to the quantitative findings collected on the seventh respondent.

Refusal Speech Act:

Concerning the refusal speech act, the first situation (equal status) was responded to by saying: “No sorry I can’t”, which was also applied when wanting to refuse a request from a person with a higher status at work. This indicates the use of the direct, polite and formal refusal strategies.

The second request from a lower status individual was refused by saying: “No sorry I don’t have time”, which again includes direct, polite and the formal strategy due to justifying being unable to perform the request.

Refusing the final request demonstrates that the respondent prefers the usage of the direct refusal strategy when conversing with a stranger at

work. This is because she replied to the request by saying: “No”, without the application of the direct and polite strategies, as noted in the previous refusals.

Fifteenth Respondent:

The fifteenth Bahraini respondent is a female working in the teaching sector.

Request Speech Act:

When wanting to ask her coworker for coffee, the respondent uses the following question: “Could you please bring me coffee?”, which includes the direct, polite and formal strategies. The strategies used in the first request are similar to the ones applied in the third request, while the second request as an employee with a lower status than the speaker involved the direct and formal strategies. The second request was: “Would I be able to leave early?”, whereas the third request was: Can I have a napkin please?”.

The final request to the work stranger also had the direct and formal strategies applied, as the second request. The respondent said: “Do you know what’s the time?”.

Refusal Speech Act:

Moving on to the refusal speech act, the respondent used the direct, polite and formal strategies in the first three situations (equal, higher & lower status). For instance, the refusal to the third situation was: “I’m really sorry but I cannot”.

However, the respondent only used the direct strategy in the final situation, where she had to refuse a request from a stranger. The respondent refused the request by saying: “No”.

Native English Speakers:

First Respondent:

The first respondent is a male native English who is a retired academic.

Request Speech Act:

The first request was: “Can you get me a coffee?”, which was directed to the hearer of the same work status. This request entails directness, without even including politeness as a strategy. This is the complete opposite of what the first Bahraini respondent formulated in his request, saying “While you’re at it, how about you get me a cup of coffee too?”.

In the second request made to a person of a higher status, the respondent asked the following: “Okay if I leave early today?”, which is again a direct request that does not contain modal verbs and without the aspect of politeness. Even in terms of formality, the question does not convey a high level of formality, as the respondent only sought the permission of the boss. Table 12 below represents this information.

Table (12)

<i>First Scenario (Equal status)</i>	<i>Second Scenario (Respondent with a lower status than the hearer)</i>
“Can you get me a coffee?”	“Okay if I leave early today?”

Regarding the third scenario, the respondent was asked to form a request as the head of the department to ask one of the employees for a napkin. The request made by the respondent was: “Go and get me a napkin, please”. The strategy used by the respondent is directness through the imperative request that started with: “Go”, which, when analysed, is seen to have been used because of wanting to show dominance and superiority as the head of the department.

The final situation asked the respondent to ask a stranger about the time. The request made by the respondent was: “Excuse me, do you have the time?”, in which both politeness and directness are existent in “Excuse me” and “do you”.

Refusal Speech Act:

Moving on to the refusal speech act, the respondent used the politeness strategy and provided reasons in: “I’m sorry, but I don’t have any I can spare.”, which was to refuse the request of a coworker with an equal status.

The same refusal strategy in the first situation is seen in the second, with the respondent (hearer) having a higher status in the conversation. The respondent said: “I’m sorry, but I don’t have the time right now”, which is seen to be based on the aspect of politeness and providing a justification. This technique is also noted in the fourth refusal response, as the respondent was asked to refuse the request of stranger to share the location of his house. The response provided by the hearer was: “I’m sorry but I don’t share information about my personal life to strangers”. The strategies adopted here are politeness and providing sensible justifications according to the context.

In contrast to the aforementioned refusal techniques, an opposite strategy is viewed in the third situation, with the respondent having a lower status than the speaker but using a direct response by saying: “Perhaps she’d be better off talking to other students first”. In this context, the hearer did not provide any reason for not being able to help the student, as he simply informed the speaker to have the student go to other pupils. That is why the strategy used here was the indirect refusal strategy, since the respondent did not refuse the request directly.

Second Respondent:

The second respondent is a male native English speaker who works as an academic.

Request Speech Act:

In the first request situation, the respondent formulated a request by saying: “Can you please grab me a coffee?”, which was directed to a coworker. This request has the directness politeness and formality through the usage of “Can” and “please”, and with reference to the context.

In the second situation, where the scenario asked the respondent to seek leaving early from his superior, the respondent started with a sentence, which also is regarded as a justification to wanting to leave early. What is remarkable in the request is that the declarative sentence contains a modal of necessity to show how urgent the matter is. The request was: “I need to leave early. Can I please go?”, as the request entails directness, politeness and formality.

Moving on to the third request, it was to ask as the head of the department for a napkin from one of the employees. The request formulated by the respondent was: “Can you please pass me a napkin?”, which, once again, includes the usage of directness and politeness in “please”.

Lastly, the situation asked to request to a stranger at work to know the time. The request formulated by the respondent is the same as the ones created to people with equal and lower positions, as it was: “Can you please tell me the time?”. The strategies used here are the direct, polite and formal techniques.

Refusal Speech Act:

For the first refusal, the respondent said: “I’m really sorry. I don’t have any cash on me”. This response posits politeness, directness and formality, as the interlocutor started by apologizing, and then moved on to justifying the refusal. The same refusal strategies were used in the second situation, where the respondent had a higher work status than the speaker and was asked to teach something in the workplace. The response was: “Sorry I don’t have time right now”, which had politeness, directness and formality by giving a reason to the refusal.

Concerning the response to the third situation, it asked the interlocutor to explain something as an individual with a lower status. The response was: “You should know this already. I explained it to you before”. The strategy adopted in this refusal is indirectness, as the respondent did not reply by saying ‘I cannot’ or ‘No’, for example.

The final refusal situation was between the interlocutor and a stranger at work, who asked the following: “Can I ask if your home is

close to your work?”, while the refusal of the respondent was: “I don’t need to share my address with you”. In this situation, the direct and formal strategies were exhibited by the respondent, and that is through the refusal context, which is based on maintaining a formal relationship with the worker. This agrees with Li et al. (2015) and Ernestus et al. (2015), who stated that deciding whether or not a request or a refusal is formal depends on the context and the message.

Third Respondent:

The third native respondent is a male working in the contracting sector.

Request Speech Act:

In the first request situation, the respondent formulated a request to ask a coworker of the same status for coffee. The request was: “Please get me cup of coffee”, which is a request with direct, informal and polite strategies. Instead of using a modal verb to express indirectness, such as saying ‘Can you please get me a cup of coffee’, the respondent used a modal verb and then moved on to expressing what is needed.

The second request is quite the opposite than the first, where the respondent had a lower status than the hearer and was supposed to ask for an early leave from work. The request made by the respondent was: “Can I leave work early please?”. The direct, formal and polite strategies were used in the request. The third request by the respondent is also similar to the second, yet he had a higher status than the hearer, unlike the second situation. The request made by the speaker was: “Could you bring me a

napkin please?”, which again has the direct, polite and formal request strategies. The same direct, polite and formal strategies are seen in the fourth situation, where the respondent requests the time from a stranger at work. The request made by the speaker was: “Sorry to bother you, do you have the time?”, which shows that the key to the indirect, polite and formal strategies are reliant on the work status of the speaker.

Refusal Speech Act:

As for the refusal speech act, the first refusal expression was: “Sorry, I don’t have any cash”, which was to refuse giving the coworker of the same status some money. The first refusal contains the strategies of politeness and directness, which were expressed using the word “Sorry” and saying “I don’t have any cash” to show the interlocutor’s inability to do what was asked.

In the next refusal, the respondent was asked by the speaker with a higher status to explain something to another student. The interlocutor expressed refusal here by saying: “Could you please explain that to me again?”, which is another question to express being unable to perform what was asked. The respondent’s question shows that he may have not understood the concept he was asked to explain, which is why he asked the speaker to explain it to him. The strategies in this refusal are indirectness, formality and politeness. To explain the point of indirectness in this refusal, it is what Boux et al. (2022) stated regarding the utterance produced being unrelated to the question asked. In the third situation, the speaker asked the respondent a question, but instead of replying to that question directly, the interlocutor asked a question.

The last refusal was directed toward a stranger at work, in which the respondent said: “I don’t like to discuss this”, in a reply to the question: “Can I ask if your home is close to your work?”. The direct strategy is seen in the refusal expression by the native English speaker. This shows that when the respondent interacts with a work stranger, the direct refusal strategy is applied.

Fourth Respondent:

The fourth native English respondent works in the field of education, similar to the second native respondent.

Request Speech Act:

The formal, direct and polite request strategies are used in the first request made by the respondent. The request was: “Would you mind picking me a coffee, please?”, in which the formal strategy is recognised through the use of the modal verb “Would”, while the polite strategy is seen in the use of “please”. The first request is the same as the third, where the speaker asked her subordinate employee for a napkin through saying: “Would you mind passing me a napkin, please?”. The same strategies of formality, directness and politeness are seen in this request.

In the second situation, the respondent asked her boss at work to leave early. The request made by the speaker was: “If it’s okay with you, can I leave early next Monday as I need to..?”, which shows that the strategies used here are formality, directness and politeness. The difference between the request made in this paragraph and the other two requests in the former paragraph lies in having more formality through mentioning the reason and justifying the need to leave work early. To

further explain, providing justifications was not part of the first and the third request situations.

As for the last situation, more politeness was noted than in the first and third situations. The respondent asked a stranger about the time by saying: “Excuse me, do you have the time, please?”. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the use of ‘please’ or ‘excuse me’, to name a few, is regarded to be polite when looking at the context of the speech.

Therefore, the request made to the stranger is within the polite strategy because of the use of both “Excuse me” and “please” in their appropriate polite contexts.

Refusal Speech Act:

There are the polite and direct strategies in the first refusal produced by the interlocutor by saying: “I’m sorry but I don’t feel comfortable doing that”. The reason why this is a direct refusal goes back to the respondent refusing directly by saying “I’m sorry”. The polite strategy in “I’m sorry” further relates to what Brown and Levinson (1987) produced concerning expressions like ‘I’m sorry’ and ‘excuse me’ being associated with politeness according to the context they are produced in.

The same refusal strategies were used in the third refusal, except that it also comprised the formal strategy. The respondent refused the request of explaining something to a student, which was asked by a person with a higher status. The refusal made by the interlocutor was: “Sorry, I can’t commit to this without being given the time and resources”. The formality in this refusal lies in justifying the reason the interlocutor was unable to do what she was asked. This shows that the

respondent refuses requests from individuals with a higher status at work in a formal way through giving reasons.

A similar form of directness is seen in the fourth refusal situation, as the interlocutor said the following to a stranger who asked about the location of her home: “Sorry, I’m not comfortable answering that question considering I don’t know you”. The respondent here expressed her rejection to the request directly, just like the cases in the first and third situations.

The second refusal shows the use of polite, direct and formal refusal strategies, where the respondent was asked to refuse the request “can you teach me this? I cannot understand it”. The response of the interlocutor was: “I’m sorry but I’m not familiar with that subject, perhaps you could check with X”. The respondent used a lesser direct refusal strategy with the speaker in this situation than in the second refusal expression. This is because of saying “I’m not familiar” in the second refusal, while saying “I can’t” in the third. The reason why the refusal is formal is due to providing a justification and directing the speaker to someone else to help.

Fifth Respondent:

The fifth native respondent is a female who works in the field of education.

Request Speech Act:

In the first situation, the respondent was asked to formulate a request to ask a coworker of the same work status for coffee. The request made by the respondent was: “Do you mind bringing me coffee?”, in which it is seen that there is the usage of directness, a low-level of politeness and formality.

In the third request, the respondent asked the following as the Head of Department to one of the employees: “Would you please hand me a napkin?”, which exhibits a more formal and polite use of request strategies than that applied in the first situation. Whereas in the first request the respondent asked whether the interlocutor minds bringing coffee using the auxiliary verb “Do”, the speaker used the modal verb “Would” to ask the hearer for a napkin, expressing more formality in the request.

The second request situation asked the respondent to request an earlier dismissal from her work superior. The request was: “May I kindly request an earlier dismissal?”, which once again displays formality, directness but with having more politeness in the sense of using “May I kindly”, unlike “Do you mind” used in the first request. The level of formality in the second request further shows that asking as a subordinate needs to be with more use of formal words than asking as a superior in the workplace. This shows that, when communicating with superiors in the workplace, the respondent intends to use more polite language than

when conversing with coworkers of the same status. The level of formality associated with this request is not as the level used by some other natives, who, in this situation, provided justifications for their requests.

The most formal, polite and direct request made is noted in the last situation, where the speaker asked a stranger about the time. The request made was: “Sorry to disturb you, would you mind telling me the time?”. This request includes politeness in the phrase “Sorry to disturb you”, which was not noted in the previous situations, while formality and directness are denoted in the context of the request and the use of the modal verb like “Would”.

Refusal Speech Act:

Concerning the refusals produced by the respondent, the first situation asked the following: “Can you give me some money please?”. The response to the request was: “I’m sorry, but I’m not able to help you out at this time”, which was asked by a coworker of the same status. The refusal strategies used here are politeness, formality and directness. The directness in the refusal lies in the interlocutor directly refusing the request of the speaker by saying “I’m sorry”.

The second situation asked the respondent to refuse the request from someone to teach something in a higher position than the speaker, in which the refusal produced was: “No, sorry I’m unable to teach you now”. The strategies used here are politeness and directness, as the respondent refused the request directly by saying “No” and then moving on to say “sorry”.

The same direct strategy used in the second situation was applied in the refusal of the interlocutor when communicating with a stranger who asked if the respondent's home is near work. The refusal was: "No, I do not share that kind of information". As discussed previously, the directness in this refusal lies in directly answering the question by saying no, unlike the refusal to be talked about in the paragraph below. The strategies of politeness and formality were not used in this refusal due to recognising the context and not finding any polite or formal words.

As for the third refusal, the respondent said: "Sorry, you will have to come back later. I cannot help you now". The strategies used by the native respondent to refuse the request from a higher person at work are politeness, formality and indirectness. The major purpose behind the refusal being indirect is that the interlocutor refused the request indirectly by informing the speaker to come back afterwards, without expressing rejection instantly. This explains that the respondent uses the indirect refusal strategy when communicating with individuals of higher statuses.

Sixth Respondent:

The sixth respondent is a female who works in the field of education.

Request Speech Act:

The first request formulated by the respondent to a coworker of the same status was: "Would you be so kind as to bring me coffee, please?". The polite, direct and formal strategies are used in this request. The reason why this is a direct request is that despite starting with "Would you

be so kind”, the speaker asked for coffee. The formality lies in the context of the request, as already stated.

The second request also used the direct and formal strategies, since it was: “Good day Ms., I need to request to leave early for (mention reason)”. Here, the indirectness is within the indirect request to leave early, as the respondent mentioned the need to request to leave early, and not the need to leave early. While this is the case with the indirectness in the request, the formality is in the justification of the request, where the respondent said “for (mention reason)”.

The third situation asked the respondent to request a napkin as a Head of Department from one of the employees. The request formulated was: “Would you please pass me a napkin?”, which posits the direct, polite and formal request strategies. As researched by Boux et al. (2015), indirect requests are less predictable and of not much relation to the question, which was not seen in the previous paragraph. However, in this request, the speaker directly requested to have a napkin. As for the politeness in the request, it is in saying “please”, in which Matsumoto (1989) and Brown and Levinson (1987) inferred that the aspect of politeness is realized through the context of the speech.

The fourth situation had the respondent ask a stranger at work about the time. The request was: “Good day, apologies for disturbing, can you tell me the time?”, and this reveals the indirect, formal and polite request strategies used by the speaker. To explain the formality of the request, it is as researched by Li et al. (2015) and Ernestus et al. (2015) concerning that the formality in conversations is noted in the style and the context of the speech. One instance for the formality in this request is: “Good day”, in which the style here expresses the formal relationship that the speaker is intending to maintain with the hearer.

Refusal Speech Act:

The refusal strategies used by the respondent are the same with regard to the equal and strange work status (first and last situations). To elaborate, in the first refusal, the respondent said: “I am sorry. Unfortunately I do not have any money to give you”. This is the same as the last situation, where the interlocutor refused to answer a question from a stranger by saying: “I am sorry but I do not share personal information with people I do not know well”. The strategies used in the two situations are directness, politeness and some sort of formality, which is explained in the following paragraph.

On the same note, the second and third refusals are also considered the same because of using the direct, polite and very formal refusals. To explain, the refusal in the second situation was: “Apologies, unfortunately I cannot help you at the moment. Can we schedule another time to discuss it?”, in which the interlocutor was having a conversation with a speaker of a lower work status. In the third situation, the interlocutor refused a request from a speaker with a higher status, who asked to explain something to a student. The refusal expression formulated by the respondent was: “I am sorry. I am unable at the moment, but I am willing to schedule some time to sit down and explain this at a later stage”. The strategies used in these two refusal include directness, politeness and very formal use of language, as noted in the context and use of language in the expressions.

Seventh respondent:

The seventh native respondent is a female working in the field of education.

Request Speech Act:

The first request formulated by the respondent was: “Would you mind making me a coffee?”, which was addressed to a coworker with an equal work status. The request shows the use of formal and direct request strategies.

The second situation asked the respondent to formulate a request to leave work early. The request created was: “I would like to request an early departure for today because I have xxx”. As noted, there is a difference between the first and second requests, and that is because in the second situation, the respondent was addressing a person with a higher status. The strategies used are the indirectness and formality, and that is through looking at the context and style of the request, particularly due to wanting to request an early leave instead of wanting an early leave directly.

In the third request, the respondent said: “Please pass me a napkin”, in which she was the Head of Department. It is lucid that the style and context of the request are different here than the first and second requests. That is why the formal, direct and polite strategies are seen to have been used in this request.

The final request formulated by the respondent shows the indirect and formal strategies. That is because, as per Boux et al. (2022), the request was less predictable and of not much relation to the topic the speaker had to abide by. This means that, unlike the sixth respondent who

said: “can you tell me the time?”, the seventh respondent wants to know “how late it is”. As for the formality of the request, it is seen in the use of language and context, as stated by Li et al. (2015).

Refusal Speech Act:

The first refusal expression formulated as a response to a coworker of the same status is: “I am sorry. I am not able to do that”, in which the respondent applied the direct, polite and informal strategies.

The second refusal was addressed to a coworker with a lower status than the respondent, asking the interlocutor to help with teaching something by saying: “can you teach me this?”. The response was: “I am sorry. I cannot now, but there is something to read / watch to help you. Please go through it and then come back to me”. In this refusal, the strategies used are directness, politeness and formality.

As for the third refusal, the respondent was having a conversation with a speaker of a higher status, who asked her to explain something to a student. The response to this request was: “I think it is better if you, her teacher, try again. Let’s brainstorm some ideas”. The interlocutor here used the indirect and formal strategies, since there is no direct refusal by saying ‘I am sorry’ or ‘I cannot do it right now’.

The final refusal shows the usage of direct and polite strategies, as the respondent refused to give out personal information to a work stranger. The interlocutor said: “I am sorry – I do not give out personal information”. This shows that the work status plays a major role in determining the use of refusal strategies to native English speakers.

Eighth Respondent:

The eighth respondent is a male working in the field of education.

Request Speech Act:

The first request formulated posits the direct, polite and formal strategies, which was addressed to a coworker with an equal status. This is through saying “Could you get me a cup of coffee if you’re having?”, in which the formality is in the context of the request, while the politeness is seen in “if you’re having”.

The same request strategies in the first request are also noted in the second, where the respondent requested an early leave from his superior at work. The request created was: “I just wanted to ask if it would be okay if I left a bit earlier today”. While politeness is seen in the context of the request, the indirectness is in starting the request by saying “I just wanted to ask ..” instead of stating the intention directly. To explain, the respondent did not request by saying: ‘I just wanted to leave a little earlier today’.

As for the third request, the speaker said “Can you pass me a napkin please?”, which demonstrates the usage of the direct, formal and polite request strategies. The reason why the request shows directness is that the speaker asked for a napkin directly as the head of department. Both formality and politeness are seen in the context of the request, particularly through the use of “please” and “Can”.

In the last situation, the speaker asked a stranger at work about the time by saying: “Excuse me, would you happen to have the time?”, in which the speaker used the indirect, formal and polite strategies. The

indirectness in this request is due to not asking about the time directly, such as: ‘Excuse me, what is the time now?’. One response to this indirect request would be ‘Yes’, rather than informing the speaker about the time.

Refusal Speech Act:

The first expression of refusal formulated by the respondent to a coworker of the same work status was: “Nope”, responding to the question: “Can you give me some money please?”. The strategy noted is directness, as there was no sign of neither politeness nor formality. This strategy is similar to the one used in the final situation, where the interlocutor responded by saying: “No, you may not” to a request from a work stranger. This is because the respondent was direct in his refusal.

In the second refusal, the respondent said “Sorry, I do not have the time right now”, in a response to a speaker with a lower work status. This shows the usage of the direct, polite and formal refusal strategies, unlike in the first and last situations.

The third refusal formulated is a little more formal than the second refusal, as the respondent justified not being able to help the speaker with a higher work status. The refusal was: “I apologize, but I cannot only focus on teaching this one person alone. I have other responsibilities that are more pressing at the moment”. The direct, polite and very formal refusal strategies are used in this expression.

Ninth Respondent:

The ninth respondent is a female native speaker who works in the educational field, similar to the eighth respondent.

Request Speech Act:

The first request situation asked the respondent to request a cup of coffee from a coworker of the same status. The request was: “Would you mind grabbing me a coffee? I just don’t have the time now”, which entails the polite, formal and the direct strategies. This is due to acknowledging the context and justifying the request, which falls under the polite category, whereas the modal “Would” expresses formality through understanding the context of the request. As for the direct strategy, it is within asking for the coffee directly by asking for it.

For the second situation, the speaker requested an early leave, where she said: “I have a medical appointment for X and I’m unable to attend at any other time. Would it be ok for me to go to this?”. This request shows the usage of the formal, indirect and polite strategies, since the respondent explained the situation to show the formality and politeness of the context before asking to leave work. The indirectness here is within not asking to leave early directly.

On the other hand, the third request asked the respondent to request from a higher work status, unlike the second situation. The request formulated was: “Would you be so kind as to get me a napkin? Thank you so much”, where the direct, formal and polite strategies were applied. These three strategies are noted in the request because of the respondent being direct with what she wanted, and both the formal and polite

strategies were recognized from the context of the request, as stated by Matsumoto (1989) and Li et al. (2015).

The final request situation shows the use of the informal and direct request strategies, as the speaker used an informal language at the beginning of the request and asked the work stranger about the time directly. The request was: “Hi there. Do you have the time?”, which reflects the notion that a more informal and direct language was used by the respondent when having a conversation with a stranger at work than with any other coworker.

Refusal Speech Act:

The first refusal formulated by the respondent was: “I’m so sorry but I’m really not in a position to help you this way”. This refusal expression was made to a coworker of the same work status, in which the strategies used were politeness, directness and formality. The second refusal, which was a response to a person with a lower work status, indicates that the interlocutor used the polite, direct and formal refusal strategies. These were also the strategies adopted in the first refusal. The respondent said: “I would love to but I can’t at the moment. Try asking X”.

Just like the first and second situations, the third, where the respondent refused a request from a person with a higher status, illustrates the usage of the direct strategy only. This is in the sense that the interlocutor refused directly by saying “I cannot”, without applying the polite and formal strategies.

In a response to the question: “Can I ask if your home is close to your work?”, the respondent said: “I don’t think this information is

relevant”. The strategy used here is the indirect refusal, as she did not reply directly with a positive or a negative response. Instead, the interlocutor expressed her opinion regarding the relevance of the question.

Tenth Respondent:

The tenth respondent of this research work is a male native English educator who works in the Higher Education field.

Request Speech Act:

The first request formulated by the speaker was: “Can you please bring me a cup of coffee?”, when communicating with a coworker of the same status. The strategies used in this request are directness, politeness and formality, as the respondent asked for a coffee directly.

The second request, in which the speaker was asking his boss for an early leave, was: “Would it be possible for me to finish work early today please?”, which used the indirect, polite and formal strategies. While the indirectness in the request is in asking to finish work and not leave early, the polite and formal strategies are noted in not only the context of the request, but also within the language use, such as the use of “Would” (Ernestus et al., 2015 ; Matsumoto, 1989).

The third request demonstrates the usage of the direct, polite and formal strategies, since the speaker asked as the head of department to have a napkin directly and with including the polite and formal strategies. The request formulated was: “Please could you give me a napkin?”, where the use of the polite and formal strategies are in the word “Please” and “could”.

Finally, the last request formulated by the respondent was: “Excuse me. Have you got the time?”, using the direct, polite and formal strategies. The directness in the request is within asking for the time directly, whereas the politeness in the request is observed in the context of the request and the use of the phrase “Excuse me”.

Refusal Speech Act:

The tenth respondent said: “I’m sorry. I don’t have enough money on me”, when refusing a request to lend me by a coworker of the same work status. The second refusal expression was: “I’m sorry. I don’t have enough time at the moment”. In these two situations, the direct, polite and formal strategies were used due to apologizing and then justifying why the respondent was unable to do what was requested.

Moving on to the third situation, the respondent refused a request from a person with a higher work status by employing the indirect and formal strategies. The refusal was: “I think she should try to work it out first”, without answering the request directly. This shows the usage of the indirect and formal strategies.

The final refusal shows the use of the direct and polite strategies, in which the respondent replied to a request by a work stranger through saying: “Sorry, that’s a bit too personal”.

Eleventh Respondent:

The eleventh respondent is a female native working in the educational field.

Request Speech Act:

To ask a coworker of the same status for coffee, the respondent said: “Would you please bring me a cup of coffee?”, employing the direct, polite and formal strategies.

The same strategies were used by the speaker in the second situation to ask her boss to leave early. The respondent said: “Would you mind if I leave an hour early today?”.

The strategies applied in the first and second situations were even used in the third, where the speaker said: “Would you please hand me a napkin?”. The formality and politeness in these three requests are noted in the context, and that is with regard to using a modal verb in every request, as per Li et al. (2015).

The last request to a stranger, asking about the time, further denotes the use of the indirect, polite and formal strategies, similar to the other formulated requests. The respondent would say: “Excuse me, do you know what time it is?”, when speaking to a stranger at work. The indirectness here is in asking if the hearer knows about the time. A direct request would be noted when saying: ‘Excuse me, do you have the time?’.

Refusal Speech Act:

Concerning the refusal speech act of the respondent, the first expression to reply to a coworker asking for money was: “I’m sorry. I don’t have any cash with me at the moment”. The direct, polite and formal strategies were used in this refusal, since the interlocutor said “I’m sorry” to express being unable to give the money in a polite manner.

The second refusal was: “Unfortunately, not a convenient time. Perhaps we could schedule another time”, which expressed a low-level of indirectness, politeness and formality. The respondent’s refusal was addressed to a speaker with a lower work status. The indirectness in this refusal is seen in replying with “Unfortunately”, without indicating clearly whether or not she could help.

Moving on to the third refusal, the respondent used the direct strategy by directly refusing the request. The polite and formal strategies were also used when communicating with a speaker of a higher status. The interlocutor said “I’m sorry, it’s not possible now. Perhaps I can meet with her another time”. The respondent even left a note saying: “In most cases, I would not refuse”, indicating that refusing a request from a person with a higher status would only in emergency or necessary cases.

As for the final situation, the respondent used the indirect strategy when refusing a request like: “Can I ask if your home is close to your work?” from a stranger at work. The indirectness in the refusal is noted in changing the subject, in which the interlocutor said: “Wow! It’s really a lot cooler outside today than yesterday”.

4.2 Discussion:

This section discusses and analyzes the findings of the instruments applied in the study.

4.2.1 Discourse Completion Task (DCT):

4.2.1.1 Request Speech Act:

As noted in the findings of the study, there is a slight difference in the use of the request speech act between Bahrainis and native speakers. The number of respondents were 15 Bahrainis and 11 native respondents.

A-Equal Work Status:

As table 1 shows the use of request strategies with workers of an equal work status, most Bahrainis (93.3%) and all native speakers used the direct strategy. i.e. 86.6% and 66.6% of the Bahrainis used the formal and polite strategies in their requests, while 90.9% of the native speakers used the formal and polite strategies. This indicates that the Bahrainis applied less formality in their requests than the native speakers (86.6%), and the native speakers used more politeness (90.9%) than the Bahrainis (66.6%).

One example of the direct and formal strategies used by Bahrainis is “Could you bring me a cup of coffee”, which is noted as a direct and formal request when asking for coffee directly with the application of the modal “Could”. A similar request was even formulated by another Bahraini respondent, who said: “Could you bring me a cup of coffee please?”. Another request by a respondent from the same group was: “May you bring me a cup of coffee?”. This shows that most of the Bahraini respondents tend to use the direct, formal and polite request strategies, in addition to the same syntactic structure in the requests with

people of the same work status. This is realized through the respondents starting their requests with a modal verb, subject pronoun, verb and the direct or indirect object.

The same strategies of directness and formality are seen in the requests “Can you get me a coffee?” and “Can you please grab me a coffee” by the native respondents. These examples, similar to the ones associated with the Bahraini respondents, follow a specific syntactic pattern of a modal verb and a subject pronoun, yet the difference lied in the inclusion of politeness in those formulated requests.

B-Lower Work Status:

Regarding the use of requests from a lower status perspective, it is apprehended that Bahrainis were more prevalent in the use of the direct (80%) and polite (73.3%) strategies than the native speakers. 63.6% of the native respondents applied directness and 72.7% used politeness. On the other hand, native speakers were dominant in the use of formality, as the Bahraini respondents used lesser formality (86.6%) than their counterparts (90.9%).

The difference in the use of direct and indirect strategies by Bahrainis and native speakers shows that there is a difference between the two groups in dealing with work superiors.

An instance of an indirect request used by a Bahraini respondent is “I have an important matter to attend to today, could I please leave work a bit earlier?”. Two Bahraini respondents formulated requests using the indirect strategy, in which the speaker here provided the justification before asking the question, leading to the analysis that the interlocutor might have been misled with the given information.

The use of indirectness when asking to leave work early is used four times, as already mentioned, by the native respondents. One of the respondents said: “Good day Ms., I need to request to leave early for (mention reason)”. As mentioned in the findings of this study, the major purpose behind considering this request as indirect goes back to the respondent needing to request an early leave. A direct request here would have been ‘Good day. I need to leave early today’, or even ‘Good day. I am requesting an early leave’, since the speaker here would be asking for an early leave directly and without any sort of indirectness. It is worth noting that both requests included the strategies of formality and politeness.

To further explain, the use of the indirect requests by the four native speakers was more in the lower status than the two Bahrainis. This was anticipated through the research by Coulson and Lovett (2010) and Boux et al. (2022), who stated that the indirectness in a request can be anticipated and known by recognizing the context. This can be apprehended through the hierarchal concept at work. Since the respondent was expected to formulate a request to a work superior, 4 native speakers and 2 Bahrainis believed they should have used the indirect request to show who the superiority in the workplace belongs to.

C-Higher Work Status:

The findings of the requests from a higher work status perspective are different from the lower work status, as the native speakers here used more directness (100%) and politeness (90.9%) than the Bahrainis. As well as that, the Bahrainis used less formality (86.6%) in their requests than the natives (90.9%).

The major difference between the *Lower Work Status* and the *Higher Work Status* sections is that regardless of the similarity in the frequency and percentage of indirectness used by Bahrainis for both the higher and lower status, all native speakers used the direct strategy. In other words, 11 native speakers prefer using the direct request strategy when in a higher status than the interlocutor, which is different with regard to the Bahraini respondents.

Such a finding shows that the hierarchy at the workplace is highly recognized by the native speakers, and this is with both the *Lower Work* and *Higher Work Status* sections (See *Lower Work Status*). Since the hierarchy at work belongs to the speaker when having a higher work status than the hearer, all native speakers built on this hierarchy and assumed that it is not necessary to apply the indirect request strategy when wanting to request from someone with a lower work status. This finding does not correlate with the requests made by the Bahrainis from a higher work status perspective, as numeric Bahraini respondents used the indirect request strategy when wanting to ask an employee with a lower work status for a napkin.

One of the indirect requests made by the Bahrainis is: “Will you give me a napkin, please?”, in which the respondent asked if there is a possibility to have a napkin instead of saying: ‘Can you give me a napkin?’. On the contrary, a direct request made by one of the native speakers to ask for a napkin from one of the employees was: “Could you bring me a napkin please?”.

D-Strangers:

The findings of the final situation show the use of more directness by Bahrainis (86.6%) than the native speakers (81.8%), with formality more in the requests of native speakers (81.8%) than Bahrainis (53.3%). For the polite strategy in the request speech act, it was employed by 72.7% of native speakers, whereas 40% of the Bahraini respondents used it in their requests.

Regarding the higher work status point of view, the native respondents used more directness (100%) and politeness (90.9%) than the Bahraini respondents (80%), leaving the latter with less formality as well (86.6%). The last situation showed that the native speakers used more formality (81.8%) and politeness (72.7%) in their requests, as the Bahrainis used more directness (92.3%).

The difference between the two groups in the use of the request speech act with strangers at work lies in the fact that two native respondents employed the indirect strategy to ask about the time. This can be explained in that the two native speakers use the indirect request strategy with those they do not know. The direct strategy was used by 9 native respondents (81.8%). This is quite distinct from the Bahraini respondents, as 13 respondents (86.6%) applied the direct request strategy when asking strangers about the time.

One example of the indirect request strategy used by a native respondent is: “How late is it?”, instead of asking ‘What time is it?’. A likely response to the question “How late is it” would be ‘Very late’, rather than the interlocutor informing the speaker about the time.

Overall, the results in this section correspond with the findings of Vine (2009) regarding the impact of work status on the use of direct and indirect speech acts.

4.2.1.2 Refusal Speech Act:

In comparison to the discussion of the request speech act, the use of the refusal speech act between the two groups (Bahrainis and natives) shows major differences. 12 out of 15 Bahraini respondents formulated refusal expressions to the situations they were provided.

A-Equal Work Status:

As noted in table 2, there is a major difference in the use of refusals to employees with an equal work status. While native speakers used directness (100%), formality (81.8%) and politeness (90.9%), Bahrainis applied the three strategies with a lesser percentage than the natives (Directness and politeness 80%, formality 60%).

The findings of the refusal strategies used by Bahrainis and native speakers are different from the request strategies used with the employees with an equal work status. Twelve Bahrainis (80%) used the direct strategy. In these refusals, a lesser percentage used the formal (60%) and polite (80%) strategies than those applied by the native speakers (81.8% formality & 90.9% politeness), as already noted. In addition to that, all the native speakers used the direct refusal strategy. One example of the use of the direct strategy by the Bahraini respondents is: “No I’m sorry”, which expresses politeness as well.

Similar to the discussion of the *Request Speech Act* in section 4.2.1.2, one explanation to the use of the direct strategy by all native speakers can be that the work status and hierarchy are better understood and applied by them than the Bahraini respondents. To elaborate, through the informal discussions conducted with the respondents, one reason why all the native speakers used the direct strategy in their refusals with employees of equal work status is the belief that there is no work superiority in the equal work status relationship between the interlocutor and the speaker, however 81.8% and 90.9% of those refusals were formal and polite.

One instance for the use of the direct, formal and polite strategies by a native respondent is: “I’m sorry, but I don’t have any I can spare”, in which a justification was provided. One reason to why native speakers provided more reasons and used more polite expressions in their refusals with those of an equal work status can go back to not wanting to display any sort of superiority through the face-threatening acts (FTAs), as per the research by Matsumoto (1989), who stated that the social context is a major factor in using formality and politeness.

This leads to the point that most native English speakers prefer to apply formality and politeness in their refusals to employees of an equal work status, even though the use of the direct strategy is common with those employees.

B- Higher Work Status:

Moving on to the refusals formulated from a higher work status perspective, 81.8% of the native speakers used directness and 90.9% used formality and politeness. However, 53.3% of the Bahrainis used directness, 80% formality and 73.3% politeness.

Regardless of the high use of the direct, formal and polite refusal strategies by both groups, it is understood that 4 Bahrainis and 1 native expressed their refusal when in a higher work status than the speaker using the indirect strategy.

As part of the discussion in this section, the high usage of the direct refusal strategy by native speakers can be because of understanding that the status they have is higher than the speaker, similar to what was discussed in the *Request Speech Act* section. In other words, since the use of indirectness is mostly for work superiors in this context, 9 native speakers (81.8%) applied directness due to them being the work superiors in this case. An instance for the use of the direct, polite and formal refusal strategies by a native respondent is: “I’m sorry, but I don’t have the time right now”. In order to change this refusal to indirect, the respondent could say: ‘Could you come again after a while’, and that is to show the incapability of performing the request from the speaker instantly.

Nonetheless, one reason behind the usage of the indirect refusal by four Bahraini respondents can be due to not wanting to express superiority to the employees despite being in a higher work position. One example of the use of indirect, formal and polite strategies with employees of a lower work status is: “Please go through the topic and research about it. If you don’t understand it, then come by my office and I’ll try to explain it better”.

This aspect of indirectness between people with a higher work status and a lower work status is further noticed in the researcher's workplace, where a teacher would refuse a request from a student, saying: 'Could you come to me some other time? I am a little busy now'.

C-Lower Work Status:

As for the refusals from a lower work status, 26.6% of the Bahrainis used directness in their responses, and 60% used both formality and politeness. On the other hand, 63.6% of the native respondents used directness and politeness in their refusals, while 81.8% of the refusals included formality.

The findings of the lower work status section show the usage of the indirect refusal strategy by the 40% Bahraini respondents, while 36.3% of native speakers applied it.

Out of the 11 Bahrainis, seven used the formal and polite strategy, whereas out of 11 native speakers, 9 used the formal and 7 used the polite refusal strategy. 3 Bahraini respondents did not respond accurately to the refusal speech act in the third situation. Therefore, the frequency and percentage of formality and politeness between Bahrainis and the native English is slightly the same.

One example of the use of the indirect, formal and polite strategies by a Bahraini respondent is: "I recognize how crucial it is to assist you, yet I could lack the knowledge or the right context to effectively express the concept. It might be more beneficial if someone with a deeper understanding of the topic could provide an explanation".

In addition to this, one example of the use of the direct, formal and polite refusal strategies by a native respondent is: “Sorry, I can’t commit to this without being given the time and resources”.

D-Strangers:

Regarding the final situation (Section D), the native speakers used more formality and politeness (45.4%) than Bahrainis (20% for formality & 33.3% for politeness). The Bahraini respondents applied more directness (80%) in their refusals to strangers than native speakers (63.6%).

The findings show that all the Bahraini respondents who responded to the situation used the direct request strategy (80%), with 20% formality and 33.3% politeness. This indicates that Bahrainis generally tend to use the direct refusal strategy when conversing with strangers in the English language. The table below illustrates some examples from the refusal expressions formulated by Bahrainis.

Table (13)

Example	Strategies of Refusal
“Mind your business”	Direct strategy
“No sorry”	Direct & polite strategies
“I’m sorry but this is a bit of a personal question”	Direct, polite and formal strategies

Moving on to the refusals used by the native English speakers, 63.6% used the direct refusal strategy, with four respondents using the indirect refusal when communicating with strangers at work. This rate of the use of the direct refusal strategy is lesser in the native English respondents than in the Bahrainis. In addition, 45.4% of the native

speakers used the formal and polite refusal strategies, which is more than the formality (20%) and politeness (33.3%) used by the Bahraini respondents. It is overall noted that some native respondents decide to use the indirect refusal strategy in order to not ruin the relationship with the work stranger.

The table below demonstrates some examples of the strategies used by the native English speakers when communicating with a work stranger.

Table (14)

Example	Strategies of Refusal
“I don’t think this information is relevant”	Indirect strategy
“Sorry, that’s a bit too personal”	Direct & polite strategies
“I am sorry – I do not give out personal information”	Direct, polite and formal strategies

It is understood from the discussion above that native speakers used both the direct and indirect strategies when refusing a request from a stranger.

On the other hand, Bahrainis used the direct strategy with lesser formality and politeness than the native speakers in their refusals. This shows that there is a difference in the use of the refusal speech act when communicating with a work stranger by Bahrainis and native speakers.

Generally, it is seen that native speakers used more formality and politeness in all their refusals than the Bahrainis. This is even the same with directness as well, since Bahrainis applied more directness in their requests with strangers than Bahrainis, as already stated.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Research Implications:

This study investigated the use of English refusal and request strategies by native speakers and Bahraini workforce. For the politeness in the request and refusal expressions formulated by the respondents, they were investigated and identified with regard to different research works (Brown and Levinson, 1978; Matsumoto, 1989). Formality was identified in the expressions by the respondents with the help of different studies as well (Li et al, 2015; Ernestus et al, 2015; Jassim & Nimehchisalem, 2016). These research works were references to investigate the use of refusal and request strategies by the two groups. All of the respondents were either current or retired employees when collecting the data. That is why the respondents were expected to formulate proper refusals and requests to denote the differences between the two groups (native speakers & Bahrainis).

The findings of the study showed major differences between native speakers and Bahrainis concerning the requests and refusals. One of the differences is that, with regard to the request speech act, the native speakers used lesser directness when in a lower work status and with strangers than the Bahraini respondents. The second difference is that Bahrainis used lesser directness when in a higher work status (i.e. when in a higher status than the interlocutor). This shows that, as already stated, Bahrainis do not follow a specific pattern concerning the work status when formulating requests, and that is evidential when looking at the directness percent in table 1. The third difference is that native speakers are more direct when refusing a request from an employee with an equal, higher and lower work status, but with less direct refusals than the Bahraini respondents when addressing strangers. As for the fourth

difference, it is the fact that the native respondents used more politeness and formality in the refusal situations than the Bahrainis. The fifth difference is that the Bahraini respondents used more formality in situations of equal, lower and higher work status, as the native speakers employed more formality with strangers when formulating a request. The sixth difference is that the native respondents used more politeness in the equal, higher and strange situations, leaving the Bahraini respondents with more politeness when requesting something from an employee with a higher work status.

For both the request and refusal speech acts, it is seen that most native speakers tend to emphasize work hierarchy and use language in relation to that hierarchy (i.e. use an indirect refusal strategy with people of higher work status but a direct strategy with speakers of lower work status).

This study is considered significant due to some reasons. First, there were hardly any studies conducted on the use of refusal and request speech acts by Bahrainis and native speakers, and this conveys that this research work adds a lot to the field of pragmatics. Second, the results of the study can be used to try and prepare a university course where speech acts and how they are different are addressed.

5.2 Research Recommendations:

Through this research work, the use of the refusal and request speech acts by Bahrainis is realized, and this can help with trying to anticipate the differences in the refusals and requests through making them in coordination with the speech acts produced by native speakers. This would lead to the understanding of the English language in terms of speech acts and how native speakers tend to produce those acts. In simple terms, the results of the study may help Bahraini learners in general and those in the workplace with the usage of refusal and request speech acts in the workplace, especially with regard to work status and hierarchy.

The primary plan to further improve the production of speech acts for Bahrainis is raising their awareness regarding using the English language. As already stated by Yates (2010), learning the production of speech acts can lead second language learners to apprehend the English cultural values when communicating in workplace settings. To explain, it should be clarified to Bahrainis – in their university courses – that the English speech acts are unsimilar to the Arabic acts. They need to be further informed about when to include formality and politeness, and when not to do so. This is expected to help them use the English language competently in the same way used by native speakers.

5.3 Further Research:

Since this study only addressed the use of request and refusal strategies by native speakers and Bahrainis in the workplace, further research can be conducted on a comparison of the use of English requests by Bahraini males and females in the workplace and native English speakers. The idea in this topic would be to consider the potential native English respondents the baseline of the research, while also referring to gender concerning the Bahraini respondents in the workplace. Researchers can even use the implemented methodology in the study, where the objective would be to investigate and examine the use of request strategies by Bahrainis in the workplace and native English speakers. This will lead to having more studies conducted on the Bahraini workplace setting.

The reason behind suggesting this topic for further research goes back to the need of addressing the inaccurate request and refusal production by Bahrainis in the workplace regarding the work hierarchy. In other words, the potential future research would further investigate and examine how Bahrainis in the workplace can level their speech acts to meet the work hierarchy.

References:

- 1- Abudalslam, A., & Behbood, M. (2021). Realisation of the Speech Act of Request, Suggestion and Apology by Libyan EFL Learners. *SAGE Open*, 11(4).
<https://eric.ed.gov/?q=request+speech+acts+in+the+workforce+&pr=on&id=EJ1320371>
- 2- Ahmed Hatim, Q. (2021). Use of Refusal Strategies among Saudi EFL Students: An Investigative Study. *English Language Teaching*, 14(7), 27–43.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?q=refusal+speech+acts+&id=EJ1309588>
- 3- Akmal, H., Alfi, S., & Tuty, H. (2022). *Request Speech Act of Indonesian English Learners and Australian English Speakers through Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Perspectives*. Retrieved July 4, 2023, from
<https://eric.ed.gov/?q=request+speech+acts+in+the+workforce+&pr=on&id=EJ1358734>
- 4- Al-Gahtani, S. F., & Roever, C. (2011). Proficiency and sequential organization of L2 requests. *Applied Linguistics*, 33(1), 42–65. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amr031>
- 5- Al-Gahtani, S. F., & Roever, C. (2013). “Hi doctor, give me handouts”: low-proficiency learners and requests. *ELT Journal*, 67(4), 413–424. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/cct036>
- 6- Al-Ghamdi, N. A., & Alqarni, I. R. (2019). A Sociolinguistic Study of the Use of Refusal Strategies by Saudi and American Females. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 9(5), 66. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v9n5p66>
- 7- Allami, H., & Naeimi, A. (2011). A cross-linguistic study of refusals: An analysis of pragmatic competence development in Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(1), 385–406. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2010.07.010>
- 8- Alrefaee, Y. (2020). Refusals of Suggestions and Offers: An Interlanguage Pragmatic Study. *Refusals of Suggestions and Offers: An Interlanguage Pragmatic Study*, 16, 176–185. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3621233
- 9- Al-Shboul, Y., & Huwari, I. F. (2016). A Comparative Study Of Jordanian Arabic And American English Refusal Strategies. *European - American Journals*. <https://eajournals.org/bjel/vol-4-issue-3-may-2016/a-comparative-study-of-jordanian-arabic-and-american-english-refusal-strategies/>
- 10- Attapol, K. (2022). Speech Acts or Speech Act Sets of Refusals: Some Evidence from Thai L2 Learners. *Novitas-ROYAL*, 16(1), 97–121.

<https://eric.ed.gov/?q=request+speech+acts+in+the+workforce+&pr=on&id=EJ1343047>

- 11- Basnakova, J., Van Berkum, J. J. A., Weber, K., & Hagoort, P. (2015). A job interview in the MRI scanner: How does indirectness affect addressees and overhearers? *Neuropsychologia*, 76, 79–91.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2015.03.030>
- 12- Bayat, N. (2013). A Study on the use of Speech Acts. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, 213–221.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.057>
- 13- Betti, M. J. (2021). Grice's Maxims. *ResearchGate*.
<https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.12486.60487>
- 14- Biesenbach-Lucas, S. (2006). Making Requests in E-mail: Do Cyber-Consultations Entail Directness? Toward Conventions in a New Medium. *Pragmatics & Language Learning*, 11, 81–158.
[https://books.google.com.bh/books?hl=en&lr=&id=v_HdzvVs48oC&oi=fnd&pg=PA81&dq=Biesenbach-Lucas,+Sigrun.+2006.+Making+requests+in+email:+Do+cyber-consultations+entail+directness%3F+Toward+conventions+in+a+new+medium.+In+Kathleen+Bardovi-Harlig,+J.+C%C3%A9sar+F%C3%A9lix-Brasdefer+%26+Alwiya+S.+Omar+\(eds.\),+Pragmatics+and+language+learning+,+volum&ots=5yFTkHdA3N&sig=XDL3cMisd-KF6RuEuub0vFFpElU&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com.bh/books?hl=en&lr=&id=v_HdzvVs48oC&oi=fnd&pg=PA81&dq=Biesenbach-Lucas,+Sigrun.+2006.+Making+requests+in+email:+Do+cyber-consultations+entail+directness%3F+Toward+conventions+in+a+new+medium.+In+Kathleen+Bardovi-Harlig,+J.+C%C3%A9sar+F%C3%A9lix-Brasdefer+%26+Alwiya+S.+Omar+(eds.),+Pragmatics+and+language+learning+,+volum&ots=5yFTkHdA3N&sig=XDL3cMisd-KF6RuEuub0vFFpElU&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- 15- Bilbow, G. T. (1997). Cross-cultural impression management in the multicultural workplace: The special case of Hong Kong. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 28(4), 461–487.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/s0378-2166\(97\)00036-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0378-2166(97)00036-2)
- 16- Blum-Kulka, S. (1987). Indirectness and politeness in requests: Same or different? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 11(2), 131–146. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(87\)90192-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(87)90192-5)
- 17- Boux, I., Margiotoudi, K., Dreyer, F. R., Tomasello, R., & Pulvermüller, F. (2022). Cognitive features of indirect speech acts. *Language, Cognition and Neuroscience*, 38(1), 40–64.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23273798.2022.2077396>
- 18- Brown, P. (2015). Politeness and language. In *Elsevier eBooks* (pp. 326–330). <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-08-097086-8.53072-4>
- 19- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). Politeness: Some universals in language usage (Vol. 4). Cambridge university press.

- 20- Caponetto, L. (2023). The pragmatic structure of refusal. *Synthese*, 201(6). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-023-04177-4>
- 21- Chen, R., He, L., & Hu, C. (2013). Chinese requests: In comparison to American and Japanese requests and with reference to the “East-West divide.” *Journal of Pragmatics*, 55, 140–161. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2013.05.012>
- 22- Clark, H. H. (1979). Responding to indirect speech acts. *Cognitive Psychology*, 11(4), 430–477. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285\(79\)90020-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285(79)90020-3)
- 23- Clark, H. H., & Schunk, D. H. (1980). Polite responses to polite requests. *Cognition*, 8(2), 111–143. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0277\(80\)90009-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0277(80)90009-8)
- 24- Coulson, S., & Lovett, C. (2010). Comprehension of non-conventional indirect requests: An event-related brain potential study. *Italian Journal of Linguistics*, 22(1), 107–124. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=7e7e429145c2efdfce4ebc01fada93feca7c6e7a>
- 25- Curl, T. S., & Drew, P. (2008). Contingency and Action: A Comparison of Two Forms of Requesting. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 41(2), 129–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08351810802028613>
- 26- Deveci, T., & Abbas, E. Y. (2023). Emirati University Students’ Use of the Request Speech Act in Arabic in Email Communication with Faculty. *Studies in Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis*, 4(1). <https://www.sabapub.com/index.php/spda/article/view/681>
- 27- Ernestus, M., Hanique, I., & Verboom, E. (2015). The effect of speech situation on the occurrence of reduced word pronunciation variants. *Journal of Phonetics*, 48, 60–75. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wocn.2014.08.001>
- 28- Farenkia, B. M. (2023). Socio-pragmatic variation in request refusals in Cameroon French. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 205, 174–184. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2023.01.007>
- 29- Fraser, B. (1990). Perspectives on politeness. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14(2), 219–236. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(90\)90081-n](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(90)90081-n)
- 30- Fultner, B. (2019). Speech Act. In A. Allen & E. Mendieta (Eds.), *The Cambridge Habermas Lexicon* (pp. 430-431). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781316771303.112
- 31- Gibbs, R. W. (1986). What makes some indirect speech acts conventional? *Journal of Memory and Language*, 25(2), 181–196. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-596x\(86\)90028-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-596x(86)90028-8)

- 32- Goffman, E., 1967. The Nature of Deference and Demeanor. In: Goffman, E. (Ed.), *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*. Harper and Row, New York.
https://old.tsu.ge/data/file_db/faculty_psychology/4.%20R..pdf
- 33- Green, M. D. (2017). Speech Acts. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Linguistics*.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199384655.013.200>
- 34- Hanks, P. (2018). Types of speech acts. In *Oxford University Press eBooks*.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198738831.003.0005>
- 35- Harris, D., Fogal, D., & Moss, M. (2018). Speech Acts. In *Oxford University Press eBooks*.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198738831.003.0001>
- 36- Hasegawa, Y. (2014). Speech acts. In *Cambridge University Press eBooks* (pp. 243–254).
<https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139507127.026>
- 37- Heylighen, F. (1999). Advantages and limitations of formal expression. *Foundations of Science*, 4(1), 25–56.
<https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1009686703349>
- 38- Heylighen, F., & Dewaele, J.-M. (1999). *Formality of Language: definition, measurement and behavioral determinants*. Research Gate. Retrieved August 18, 2023, from
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Francis-Heylighen/publication/2420048_Formality_of_Language_definition_measurement_and_behavioral_determinants/links/0912f50584d98e852d000000/Formality-of-Language-definition-measurement-and-behavioral-determinants.pdf
- 39- Hiani, K. E. (2015). Performing Speech Acts among Moroccan EFL Advanced Learners. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 199, 479–485.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.535>
- 40- Holtgraves, T. (2021). Understanding Miscommunication: Speech Act recognition in Digital Contexts. *Cognitive Science*, 45(10). <https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.13023>
- 41- Imed, S., & Tahar, B. (2019). Speech Act of Refusal on the Phone. *Arab World English Journal*, 10(2), 165–180.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?q=refusal+speech+acts+&id=EJ1275297>
- 42- Kissine, M. (2008). Locutionary, Illocutionary, Perlocutionary. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 2(6), 1189–1202. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-818x.2008.00093.x>
- 43- Koester, A. (2002). The performance of speech acts in workplace conversations and the teaching of communicative

- functions. *System*, 30(2), 167–184.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/s0346-251x\(02\)00003-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0346-251x(02)00003-9)
- 44- Kohandani, M., Farzaneh, N., & Kazemi, M. (2014). A critical analysis of speech acts and language functions in top notch series. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98, 1009–1015. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.511>
- 45- Köppen, K., Ernestus, M., & Van Mulken, M. (2019). The influence of social distance on speech behavior: Formality variation in casual speech. *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory*, 15(1), 139–165. <https://doi.org/10.1515/cllt-2016-0056>
- 46- Li, H., Graesser, A. C., Conley, M., Cai, Z., Pavlik, P. I., & Pennebaker, J. W. (2015). A new measure of text Formality: An Analysis of Discourse of Mao Zedong. *Discourse Processes*, 53(3), 205–232.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0163853x.2015.1010191>
- 47- Lingyun, J. (2015). An Empirical Study on Pragmatic Transfer in Refusal Speech Act Produced by Chinese High School EFL Learners. *English Language Teaching*, 8(7), 95–113.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?q=refusal+speech+acts+&id=EJ1075434>
- 48- Lisa, L. (2015). Request Strategies in Professional E-Mail Correspondence: Insights from the United States Workplace. *TESL Canada Journal*, 32(2), 1–29.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?q=Workplace+speech+acts+&id=EJ1083913>
- 49- Locher, M. A., & Watts, R. J. (2005). Politeness theory and relational work. *Journal of Politeness Research*, 1(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1515/jplr.2005.1.1.9>
- 50- Matsumoto, Y. (1989). Politeness and conversational universals – observations from Japanese. *Multilingua*, 8(2–3), 207–222. <https://doi.org/10.1515/mult.1989.8.2-3.207>
- 51- Merve, S., & Deniz, O. (2019). Conceptual Socialization in EFL Contexts: A Case Study on Turkish EFL Learners' Request Speech Acts Realization. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 15(1), 376–399.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?q=request+speech+acts+in+the+workforce+&pr=on&id=EJ1212055>
- 52- Mohammad, G., Alireza, B., & Shirin, M. (2013). Investigating cross-linguistic differences in refusal speech act among native Persian and English speakers. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, 2(4), 49–63. <https://10.5861/ijrsl.2012.214>

- 53- Monika, A., Andrew, K., & Paul, V. (2021). Speech Acts Addressed to Hadza Infants in Tanzania: Cross-Cultural Comparison, Speaker Age, and Camp Livelihood. *First Language*, 41(3), 294–313.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?q=speech+acts+&id=EJ1297616>
- 54- Moody, S. E. (2017). Fitting in or Standing out? a Conflict of Belonging and Identity in Intercultural Polite Talk at Work. *Applied Linguistics*, 39(6), 775–798.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amw047>
- 55- Morkus, N. (2014). Refusals in Egyptian Arabic and American English. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 70, 86–107.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2014.06.001>
- 56- Murphy, M. L., & De Felice, R. (2019). Routine politeness in American and British English requests: use and non-use of please. *Journal of Politeness Research*, 15(1), 77–100.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2016-0027>
- 57- Naoko, T., Ying, C., & Yuqing, Q. (2023). Metapragmatic Knowledge and Transfer of Learning across Speech Acts. *Applied Linguistics*, 44(2), 217–238.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?q=speech+acts+&ff1=subPragmatics&ff2=subSpeech+Acts&id=EJ1377883>
- 58- Newton, J., & Kusmierczyk, E. (2011). Teaching second languages for the workplace. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31, 74–92.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0267190511000080>
- 59- Nugroho, A., & Rekha, A. (2020). Speech Acts of Requests: A Case of Indonesian EFL Learners. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 5(1).
<https://download.garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/article.php?article=1644296&val=14720&title=SPEECH%20ACTS%20OF%20REQUESTS%20A%20CASE%20OF%20INDONESIAN%20EFL%20LEARNERS>
- 60- Oo, P. P., Jiang, L., Sahaym, A., Parhankangas, A., & Chan, R. (2023). Actions in words: How entrepreneurs use diversified and changing speech acts to achieve funding success. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 38(2), 106289.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2023.106289>
- 61- Pang, P. S. (2018). Directives in professional kitchens and potential learning opportunities. *Applied Linguistics*, 40(5), 754–772. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amy017>
- 62- Pearson, B. A. (1989). “Role-ing out control” at church business meetings: Directing and disagreeing. *Language*

- Sciences*, 11(3), 289–304. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0388-0001\(89\)90020-x](https://doi.org/10.1016/0388-0001(89)90020-x)
- 63- Rahma, A.-M., & Khalsa, A.-A. (2016). Refusal Strategies among Omani EFL Students. *SAGE Open*, 6(4), 1–10. <https://eric.ed.gov/?q=refusal+speech+acts+&id=EJ1198407>
- 64- Rauniomaa, M., & Keisanen, T. (2012). Two multimodal formats for responding to requests. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 44(6–7), 829–842. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2012.03.003>
- 65- Sbisà, M. (2023). Speech acts, effects, and responses. In *Oxford University Press eBooks* (pp. 43-C2P35). <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192844125.003.0003>
- 66- Sbisà, M. (2023b). Speech acts in context. In *Oxford University Press eBooks* (pp. 129-C7P41). <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192844125.003.0008>
- 67- Searle, J. R. (1975). Indirect Speech Acts. In *Speech Acts* (Vol. 3, pp. 59–82). https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004368811_004
- 68- Shirazi, M. F., Ahmadi, S. a. Y., & Mehrdad, A. G. (2016). The Effect of Using Video Games on EFL Learners' Acquisition of Speech Acts of Apology and Request. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 6(5), 1019. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0605.16>
- 69- Shishavan, H. B., & Sharifian, F. (2016). The refusal speech act in a cross-cultural perspective: A study of Iranian English-language learners and Anglo-Australian speakers. *Language & Communication*, 47, 75–88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2016.01.001>
- 70- Tanju, D., & Ikhlas Ben, H. (2017). The Request Speech Act in Emails by Arab University Students in the UAE. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 13(1), 194–214. <https://eric.ed.gov/?q=request+speech+acts+in+the+workforce+&pr=on&id=EJ1140729>
- 71- *The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA): Pragmatics and Speech Acts*. (2021, March 3). Retrieved June 20, 2023, from <https://carla.umn.edu/speechacts/definition.html>
- 72- Tomasello, R. (2022). Linguistic signs in action: The neuropragmatics of speech acts. *Brain and Language*, 236, 105203. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bandl.2022.105203>
- 73- Tuba, D. (2019). Refusal Production via DCTs and Role-Plays. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 15(1), 200–

209.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?q=refusal+speech+acts+&id=EJ1212067>
- 74- Vine, B. (2009). Directives at work: Exploring the contextual complexity of workplace directives. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41(7), 1395–1405.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2009.03.001>
- 75- Wang, Q. (2019). A Comparative Study of Gender Differences in Refusal Strategies from English Majors. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 9(8), 1040.
<https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0908.24>
- 76- Wannaruk, A. (2008). Pragmatic transfer in Thai EFL refusals. *RELC Journal*, 39(3), 318–337.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688208096844>
- 77- Yates, L. (2010). Speech act performance in workplace settings. In *Language Learning and Language Teaching* (Vol. 1, pp. 1–18). JOHN BENJAMINS B V PUBL.
<https://researchers.mq.edu.au/en/publications/speech-act-performance-in-workplace-settings>
- 78- Yusop, B., & Eric A., A. (2019). Refusal as a Social Speech Act among Thai EFL University Students. *Arab World English Journal*, 10(2), 213–224.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?q=refusal+speech+acts+&id=EJ1275160>
- 79- Almutairi, M. (2019). Kachru's Three Concentric Circles Model of English Language: An Overview of Criticism & the Place of Kuwait in it. *English Language Teaching*, 13(1), 85.
<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n1p85>
- 80- Hassan, M. (2023, August 15). Content Analysis - methods, types and examples. Research Method.
<https://researchmethod.net/content-analysis/>
- 81- Karlık, M. (2023). EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF CULTURE ON LANGUAGE LEARNING: HOW UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL CONTEXT AND VALUES CAN DEEPEN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION. *International Journal of Language Linguistics Literature and Culture*, 02(05), 05–11. <https://doi.org/10.59009/ijlllc.2023.0035>
- 82- Lun, L. (2020). Relationship between language and culture. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Humanitarian Series*, 65(1), 71–77.
<https://doi.org/10.29235/2524-2369-2020-65-1-71-77>

Appendices:

7.1- Appendix ‘A’:

First Section:

“This form is for academic purposes. It includes four sections. The estimated time you can finish this form is 10 minutes. Your cooperation is highly appreciated”.

Second Section:

Gender: Male Female

Choose the category you fit in: Bahraini Speaker Native English

Which field do you work in: _____

Third Section:

“You are expected to create requests to the following scenarios. You are the speaker”

.

How would you formulate your request question to the following scenarios?

Situation 1:

You ask your coworker to bring you coffee (**both of you have an equal status**)

Situation 2:

You ask your boss to leave work early (**You have a lower status than the hearer**)

Situation 3:

You are the head of the department and you ask one of those who work under you for a napkin (**You have a higher status than the hearer**)

Situation 4:

You meet a stranger from a different department at work, and ask him / her about the time (**You both do not know each other**)

7.2- Appendix ‘B’:

“You are expected to refuse the following scenarios. You are the hearer here”.

“How would you refuse the following scenarios?”

Situation 1:

“Can you give me some money please?” (**Both of you have an equal status**)

Situation 2:

“Excuse me, can you teach me this? I cannot understand it”. (**You have a higher status than the speaker**)

Situation 3:

“How about you explain this to the student? She really does not know it”. (**You have a lower status than the speaker**)

Situation 4:

“Can I ask if your home is close to your work?” (**Both of you are strangers here**)

ملخص البحث

هدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة ومقارنة أساليب الرفض والطلب عند متحدثي اللغة الانجليزية والعاملين البحرينيين، هذا وقد تمت معرفة أساليب التأدب الكلامي في الرفض والطلب من خلال عدد من الأبحاث، كبراون وليفسون (1987) وماتسوموتو (1989)، في حين أن الأساليب الرسمية قد تم معرفتها من خلال الدراسات الآتية: لي ات ال (1989) وارنستوس ات ال (2015) وجاسم ونيميهشيز اليم (2016). أما من حيث عدد المشاركين في ال DCT (مهمة استكمال الخطاب)، فقد بلغوا 13 عامل (موظف) بحريني و 11 متحدثاً للغة الانجليزية، وقد تم تطبيق مهمة استكمال الخطاب الخاصة بالطلب من ميرف ودينيز (2019)، في حين أن مهمة استكمال الخطاب الخاصة بالرفض قد تم تطبيقه من رحمة وخلص (2016)، مع الأخذ بعين الاعتبار التغييرات المحدثّة لملائمة مهمات استكمال الخطاب لموضوع البحث. وقد تضمن مهمة استكمال الخطاب فصلان، وهما فصلا الطلب والرفض. هذا وتواصل المشاركون في البحث مع أربعة سيناريوهات فيما يخص موقع العمل، حيث تضمنت تلك السيناريوهات التواصل – من خلال الرفض والطلب – مع مكانات الزملاء الموظفين. وقد توصل البحث إلى أن متحدثي اللغة الانجليزية استخدموا الأسلوب المباشر وأسلوب التأدب الكلامي أكثر من العاملين البحرينيين في طلباتهم مع الأشخاص الأدنى منهم في العمل، في حين أن البحرينيين كانوا صريحين أكثر واستخدموا نسبة أقل من الأسلوب الرسمي وأسلوب التأدب الكلامي في محادثاتهم مع الغرباء في العمل. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، توصلت نتائج البحث إلى استخدام كبير لمتحدثي اللغة الانجليزية للأسلوب المباشر وأسلوب التأدب الكلامي والرسمي في رفضهم للطلبات من شركائهم في العمل أصحاب المكانة المتساوية والعالية والأدنى منهم كذلك، ويوصي البحث بتكثيف برامج اللغة الانجليزية للبحرينيين للتركيز على استخدام اللغة الانجليزية بشكل عام وأساليب الرفض والطلب بشكل خاص. أما فيما يخص خاتمة البحث، فتحدثت عن وجود فوارق عديدة بين متحدثي اللغة الانجليزية والموظفين البحرينيين فيما يتعلق بالطلب والرفض، حيث تم التشديد في الطلب والرفض من قبل متحدثي اللغة الانجليزية على التسلسل الهرمي في العمل، والذي لم يكن مطبقاً بفعالية من البحرينيين. ويوصي البحث أن يتم تدريس اللغة الانجليزية للبحرينيين بشكل مكثف لتطوير أساليب الطلب والرفض المستخدمة.

الكلمات الرئيسية: حدث الاختلاف الكلامي – التأدب الكلامي – الأسلوب الرسمي – الأسلوب المباشر – الأسلوب الغير مباشر

جامعة البحرين

قسم اللغة الانجليزية وادابها

كلية الاداب



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

استخدام أساليب الرفض والطلب باللغة الانجليزية من متحدثي اللغة الانجليزية والعمالة البحرينية

رسالة مقدمة استكمالاً لمتطلبات درجة الماجستير في الدراسات التطبيقية في اللغة الانجليزية

مقدمة من قبل الطالب

حسين علي أكبر

الرقم الأكاديمي: 20176666

بإشراف

د. نوري رحومة العجيلي

أستاذ اللغويات المشارك

مملكة البحرين

2023