

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is organized as follows section 4.2 begins with recapitulating the aims and the research questions of the study as well as a brief background information about the research question. This is followed by the discussion of the results pertaining to the relationship between SEFL's English proficiency levels and strategies of making requests (linguistic variability, section 4.3) including level of directness, internal and external modifications. Next, section (4.4) addresses the discussion of the results pertaining pragmatic realization of making request by Saudi EFL learners. Finally, this chapter ends with a summary of the overall finding and presents a concluding review of the discussion (Section 4.5).

4.2 Research Aims

In the current study, the data were analyzed based on the coding scheme based on the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Research Project (CCSARP) and developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989, p.278). Depending on the semantic formulas/ strategies of that scheme, the head act, external and internal modifications were coded. Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and Scale Response Questionnaire (SRQ) were employed to gather data from 98 SEFLs i.e., 50 participants of HAs and 48 participants of LAs. The DCT was analyzed using Chi square test in the attempt to identify frequency and percentage of the linguistic variability among SEFLs in making request strategies, while data from SRQ was analyzed via T-test to identify the differences and/or

similarities between SEFL of different language proficiency in realizing the socio-pragmatic assessment based on their assessment on the 5-likert scale. While the DCT test provides the linguistic variability among SEFLs in making requests, the SRQ provides in depth understanding of the situational variability concerning the differences and/or similarities between SEFL of different language proficiency in realizing the socio-pragmatic assessment.

4.3 RQ1: Linguistic Variability between HAs and LAs in Making Request

Strategies

Linguistic variability focuses on the social, regional, or contextual differences in the manners that a certain language is utilized. Variability is deep-rooted in language; that is speakers employ a variety of linguistic forms in different situations, and speakers express the same meanings by utilizing different forms. This variation includes word choices, grammar, pronunciation, and morphology based on non-linguistic elements. These elements involve the speaker's aim of communication, the nexus between hearer and speaker and the production circumstance (Hunston, 2002).

The total request strategies gathered from the two groups of HAs and LAs based on Blum-Kulka (1989) request categorization model (CCSARP). The researcher classifies the data by applying it in codes according to Blum Kulka (1989) taxonomy of request strategies, namely, level of directness, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect request strategies (see methodology section 3.8.1, Appendix 11). Additionally, Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework is used to investigate the influence of social variables (power and distance) between two groups in altering their use of request act indicating how two groups FTA strategies in their request act with speakers from different social status.

Two tools were employed to analyze the gathered data. First, chi-square was used to find out the similarities and differences among two groups based on their performance on DCT regarding the first RQ (i.e., external, and internal modification and level of directness) and to reveal the (in)significance difference in their performance. In addition, T-test was exploited on the SRQ data to answer the second RQ pertaining to sociopragmatic competence of contextual variables (i.e., familiarity, difficulty, right, and obligation) based on groups' assessment on 5-Likert scale (see appendix (7), grading was done by a specialist in statistics. Both tests are considered as the most appropriate tests for analyzing data (Al-Momani, 2009; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007)

To clarify, the proficiency levels among the participants are revealed in terms of grammatical errors, fragments, and spelling errors. To begin with, the study found that LAs have poor proficiency levels in making request strategies such as the use of "*can gave calculator*"? (S9, LA# 11) (Appendix, 11). It is clear that they were unable to write a request question correctly, they started with the modal auxiliary verb "*can*" without writing the subject pronoun "*you*", moreover, the wrong tense of verb form "*gave*", rather than "*give*" that did not follow with an object pronoun "*me*", furthermore, the article "*a*" did not precede the noun "*calculator*", which falls under sentence fragment. Besides, LAs were inclined toward using grounder such as "*I waod like time write*" (S7, LA# 11) (Appendix, 11). It is clearly obvious that LAs lack pragmatic knowledge and vocabulary knowledge, along with their spelling errors, and ill-structured sentences hindered them from performing request strategy appropriately.

Also, LAs have encountered grammatical challenges in making requests such as "*can you writes a recommendation letter*?" (S 7, LA# 21) (Appendix 11). A possible explanation of this result may be referred to their unfamiliarity with the subject and verb

agreement, which, in turn, suggests a lack of proficiency levels. To illustrate, the use of “*wao*” rather than “*would*” (Appendix 11). and the structure of the sentence is considered incomprehensible. On the other hand, HAs proficiency levels in making requests are better than LAs. The following section explains in depth the level of directness including D, CI and NCI in attempt to answer the relationship between SEFL’s English proficiency levels and strategies of making requests taking into the consideration the influence of social variables.

4.3.1 Directness Level

Data from Discourse completion test (DCT) was gathered to identify Saudi EFL learners’ responses regarding the request strategies according to Blum-Kulka (1989) taxonomy of request strategies in order to pinpoint the percentage, level of directness that consists of several sub-strategies, namely, five direct strategies (mood derivable, explicit performative, hedge performative, Obligation statement, want statement), two conventionally indirect (suggestory formula, query preparatory) and two in-conventionally indirect (strong hint, and mild hint) that is the total of directness levels are nine strategies (see section 3.8.1,2 and 3 methodology). To do so, frequencies and percentage were extracted, Pearson Chi-Square was applied to explore differences between SEFL’s English proficiency levels and strategies of making requests.

The first classification of request act according to Blum-Kulka (1989) taxonomy of request strategies is directness level. Table 4.1 summarizes the nine direct strategies into three categories among two groups which aims to present the difference\similarities in using direct levels in request act. Then the explanation for each strategy and its branches are addressed. After collecting the DCT, coding them into SPSS by using Pearson Chi-Square, an interrater test was used to verify that the coding is correct.

The following table shows the level of directness as employed by groups. The first column includes three types of directness levels. Next, the number of occurrences and percentages for both groups are presented in column two and three. This is followed by the Pearson Chi-Square values that indicate the frequency and percentage for each situation between groups. The P-value in the last column tells us if there is significant difference between groups in using these strategies.

Table 4.1: The Use of Request Strategies among HAs and LAs

Level of Directness	High		Low		Pearson Chi-Square	p-value
	N	%	N	%		
(Direct)	402	67.22	428	83.76	0.814	0.367
(Conventionally Indirect)	170	28.43	83	16.24	29.917	0.000*
(Non-Conventionally Indirect)	26	4.35	0	-	-	-
Total	598		511		6.825	0.009

* Statistically significant at the level of significance ($p \leq 0.05$)

All groups of participants exhibited similar patterns as they all favored direct strategy, followed Conventionally indirect strategies, then Nonconventionally indirect strategies. Based on the above table, there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($P \leq 0.05$) in (Direct) according to the variable of the proficiency as the value of “Chi-Square” was (0.814) by a statistical significance of p (0.367). However, there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in (Conventionally Indirect) according to the variable of the proficiency as the value of “Chi-Square” was (29.917) by a statistical significance of (0.000). Regarding Non-conventionally indirect, only HAs group employed this strategy (4.35%).

The findings of Table 4.1 indicate that both HAs and LAs incline towards direct request strategies the most. However, LAs tend to use it more than HAs. It is necessary to state that the preference of both groups as L2 learners to employ more direct strategies

may be associated with the difficulties of formulating the structures utilized in indirect requests in the target language (Taguchi, 2012). The second commonly requested strategy by both groups is conventionally indirect. HAs employed CI significantly (28.43%) more than LAs (16.24%) did as the value of “Chi-Square” was (29.917) by a statistical significance of (0.000). Nevertheless, HAs inclined towards using it than LAs. The third frequently used request strategy among the participants is non-conventionally indirect (4.35%). However, HAs preferred using it than LAs. It is noticed that LAs employ only direct and conventionally indirect with zero occurrence of non-conventionally indirect. A closer inspection of the findings reveals that HAs had more proficiency level and familiarity with request strategies that were manifested in their tendency towards using conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect strategies. Possibly, their proficiency level and their training outside the classrooms more than LAs affect their proper use of request strategies. As Brown and Levinson (1987) stated speakers tend to use direct strategy more frequently than indirect in request act particularly when the speaker is in high status ($S > H$) that may conflict politeness norms.

As shown in Table 4.1, the overall distribution along the scale of directness shows the use of request strategies between high achievers and low achievers. To investigate the pragmatic competence of second language learners in producing request act, the researcher used a Discourse Completion Task (DCT). This DCT consisted of 12 situations that show the variance of power and degree of distance between interlocutors as illustrated in (Table 3. 2, section methodology). The finding showed that the number of request strategies performed by high achievers’ amount to (598 request utterances) surpass the number of request strategies produced by low achievers that account for (511 request utterances). Possibly, proficiency level plays a pivotal

role in enabling high achievers from producing request strategies more than their low achievers' counterpart. The data is analyzed by Pearson Chi-Square from participants' responses regarding the use of request strategy according to Blum-Kulka (1989)'s classifications of request strategy.

4.3.1.1 Direct – Making Request Acts between HAs and LAs

There is a strong correlation between directness level and linguistic variability. To clarify, directness level of Blum Kulka (1989) is divided into three sections: directness that reflects the speakers' low proficiency levels, conventionally indirect that shows the speakers' high proficiency levels in making request strategies, and non-conventionally indirect that is divided into mild and strong hint that reflects the high-level politeness. To gain answers of the different request strategies employed by the High and Low Achievers, data were obtained from DCT that contains situations that were designed (Appendix 5). Then data were analyzed by Chi-square to show the frequency for each situation by each group and to find out if there is significant difference between groups in employing direct level strategies. According to Blum-Kulka (1989) direct level includes five strategies (hedge performative, locution, explicit performative, mood derivable and want statement), refer to Table 4.2.

On the other hand, the use of mood derivable by LAs, such as "give me your calculator" (S11, LA#11), (See Appendix 11) which reflects their impoliteness (bald on record as indicated by Brown and Levinson's theory) and high level of direct and their inability to use modal verbs that are inserted before writing a request such as 'can, could, would' or the mitigation devices such as 'please' to show respect on the part of the speaker to the hearer. The findings of this study stated that LAs group used a bald-on-record strategy in making their requests by employing the imperative forms of verbs to

make their requests. Table 4.2 reveals the percentage for each request strategy. This finding relates to statement problem of the current study which assumes that Saudi EFL learners have weakness in using proper request by using direct request as mood derivable.

4.3.1.2 Conventionally Indirect

Conventionally indirect includes query preparatory and suggestory formula. For instance, HAs used query preparatory such as “*can you turn down the volume?*” (S8, HA# 44) (تقدر توطي للصوت). on the other hand, they performed their request by using a reference to a preparatory condition, for instance, possibility, ability, or willingness) (See appendix, 11). On the other hand, the least commonly used request strategy by LAs is conventionally indirect “suggestory formula” (2.54%) such as “*how about make our time late?*” (S6, LA# 11), (See Appendix 11). According to Brown and levinson’s theory of politeness, conventionally indirect is used as negative politeness strategy which is considered as the second preferred strategy by both groups in performing request act. Table 4.2 shows the percentage for each request strategy.

4.3.1.3 Non-conventionally Indirect

The non-conventional classification is used by HAs (4.35%) and no occurrence of this category by LAs which is employed to ask something implicitly using hints, which are sometimes presented with an evident reference to the illocutionary act (strong hints), and sometimes explicitly (mild hints). Strong hint is used when the speakers use part of reference which is required for implementation of the act such as “I am busy” and “no class tomorrow that has never been used by LAs. Non-conventionally indirect was not exploited by any of LAs group, which might assume that the students were not

even aware of them being a viable polite request act in the target language. As mentioned earlier, social power (+/-P) was an essential element that influenced the level of directness in the request strategies preferred by Saudi learners. For instance, mild hint strategy (off-record) increased in use with increase in hearer's power (+P). Using off record as a type of politeness strategy indicates that the speaker employs FTA by using indirect and ambiguous utterance. That the speakers leave the hearer to decide how to interpret the request by indirect and few information to avoid any face threatening act. (For explanation, refer to Table 3.7). The utilization of NCI strategies may conflict with 'Gricean Maxim of Relation' mentioned in chapter two (2.5) with reference to Grice's works (1975, 1978, 1989), when the speaker does use these strategies properly.

Using this type of strategy needs the speaker to be competent in many aspects such sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistic competence that is why HAs used this strategy whereas LAs have not sufficient knowledge to perform such this type of request. On the other hand, mild hint is used when the speaker conveys the illocutionary intent by providing less strong clues, but it is still interpretable as a request with the help of the context. Greater inference is required on the part of the addressee such as "I can't concentrate" (this utterance violates quantity and relation maxims) which need a context "I can't write without a calculator" (S11, HA# 23) by HAs. In fact, non-conventionally indirect request strategies are less employed by HAs (4.35 % compared to CI (28.43%) and to D (67.22%). In addition, it is observed that NCI has been never used by LAs due to their insufficient sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge (See Table 4.1 and 4.2 and Appendix 11).

It is apparent from Table 4.1 and 4.2 that both groups preferred using direct strategies the most. For instance, LAs significantly used the mood derivable (45.79%) “*give me your calculator*” (S11, LA # 11) more than HAs (.33%). While HAs used hedged performative (29.77%) such as “*I would like to ask you if you can give me your calculator?*” (S11, HA #16), (See Appendix 11).

Table 4.2: The Level of Directness among HAs and LAs Groups

Level of Directness	Low		High		Pearson Chi-Square	p-value
	N	%	N	%		
Mood derivable	234	45.79	2	0.33	228.068	0.000*
Explicit performative	26	5.09	57	9.53	11.578	0.001*
Hedge performative	32	6.26	178	29.77	101.505	0.000*
Obligation statement	103	20.16	56	9.36	13.893	0.000*
Want statement	33	6.46	109	18.23	40.676	0.000*
Suggestory formula	13	2.54	9	1.51	0.727	0.349
Query preparatory	70	13.70	161	26.92	35.848	0.000*
Strong hint	0	0.00	10	1.67	-	-
Mild hint	0	0.00	16	2.68	-	-
Total	511		598		6.825	0.009*

Statistically significant at the level of significance ($p < 0.05$)

In terms of how the directness level affects the social power distance in such context, there is a need to further analyze the data based on the ‘face-threatening act’s theory posited by Brown and Levinson (1987). Table 4.2 illustrates in instance, mood derivable direct request strategy is considered as the most preferred strategy used by LAs as indication of face-threatening (Brown & levinson, 1987) on part of the hearer because it begins with an imperative verb such as “*give me*”, while hedged performative request strategy is considered as face-saving on the part of the hearer because it contains politeness device such as “*I would like to ask you*”. Moreover, employing mood

derivable direct request strategy by LAs is considered more direct strategy and it represents a threat to another individual's expectation of self-image and face threatening as it has an illocutionary force (Brown & levinson, 1987) which considered as bald on record.

The second most strategy by LAs was statement of obligation that account for (20.16%) such as “*you have to turn down the volume*” (S8, LA #11), (see Appendix 11). Third, the participants incline towards using query preparatory (13.70%) in which the speaker uses a reference to a preparatory condition, for instance, possibility, ability, or willingness. These include responses such as “*write a recommendation letter, please*” (S7, LA# 15), “*turn down the volume*” (S8, LA#15), “*I am absent tomorrow?*” (S1, LA#15) (Appendix 11).

The least commonly used request strategy by LAs is conventionally indirect “suggestory formula” (2.54%), such as “*how about make our time late?*” (S11, LA #.15). It is clearly obvious that LAs faced challenges in terms of the word choice they do not have the vocabulary knowledge that enable them to select words that demonstrate their language proficiency such as “*make our time late*”. it was used by them rather than saying “postponing our appointment”. As it is noticed that non-conventionally indirect mild hint and strong hints were not exploited by LAs. This finding is in line with Daskalovska et al. (2016) that the least commonly used request strategy by EFLs in the Republic of Macedonia is mild hint due to the lack of pragmatic competence in the second language, therefore, they shifted more towards using direct request strategies.

Table 4.3: Examples of Level of Directness among Groups Gathered from DCT

Sample gathered from DCT	Level of directness D, CI, NC-1
S11, HA# 9 <i>I would like to ask you if you can give me your calculator (-P\ -D)</i>	D Hedged performative
S11, LA # 9 <i>give me your calculator (=P\ -D)</i>	D Mood derivable
S1, HA#13 <i>I would appreciate if you allow me to absent tomorrow (-P\ +D)</i>	CI Query preparatory
S1, LA# 13 <i>I am ask for miss tomorrow's class (-P\ +D)</i>	D Explicit performative)
S10, Stud # 21 (HA) (+P\ +D) <i>"how about make our time late? (+P\ -D)</i>	CI Suggestory formula
S10, LA #21 <i>I need to change my appointment (+P\ -D)</i>	D Want statement

All in all, as reflected in Table 4.2, mood derivable and obligation statements which are closely related to the imperative form of the verb reflect the lack of proficiency level that low achievers have when they address those of higher power unlike high achievers. To clarify, LAs used mood derivable for addressing their professor of higher power and distance neglecting the influence of social variable as, the further information on Table 4.4.

As for high achievers, 29.77% were found to use hedged performative, they indicated their request by using utterances involve verbs or modal verbs expressing intentions such as "*I would like to ask you for writing a recommendation letter for me*", (أبغى أطلب منك رسالة توصية), (S7, HA# 15). Their use of hedge performative reflects their pragmatic knowledge and their proficiency in using polite request strategy for addressing those of higher power.

The second commonly used request strategy by high achievers is conventionally indirect query preparatory strategies that amounts to (26.92%). HAs significantly

overused this strategy compared with LA (13.70%). Examples of the indirect query preparatory strategies include phrases such as “*could I borrow your calculator?*” (S11, HA #36), “*could you change my appointment?*” (S10, HA #15).

Indirect query preparatory strategies are considered to involve higher proficiency language use. It is in keeping with Al-Marrani and Sazalie (2010) study that Yemeni EFL students incline to use conventionally indirect strategies query preparatory more than other strategies when there are social distance and power on the part of hearer over the speaker, which reflects the speaker’s proficiency in using the language. HAs participants of the current study and Al-Marrani and Sazalie (2010)’s participants share the same first language and cultural background which might be the reason for this similarity.

The third commonly used request strategy by HAs is the want statement category (18.23%). This category involves phrases such as “*I want to postpone our appointment*” (S6, HA #15). As stated by Daskalovska et al. (2016) such phrases identified in this category require the addressee to meet the addresser’s need such as “*I want you*”, hence their use of the utterance “postpone” reflects their high proficiency levels.

As for HAs, the least commonly used request strategy is mood derivable that amounts to (0.33%) such as “*give me your calculator*” (S11, HA# 42). Followed by conventionally indirect request strategy suggestory formula (1.51%), such as “*how about delaying the date of submission?*” (S6, HA#36) (Appendix 11). Subsequent by non-conventionally indirect request strong hint, (1.67%) in which the speakers use part of reference which is required for implementation of the act such as “*I am busy.....*”.

By investigating how both groups employ these nine strategies, it is evident that HA used direct request strategy hedged performative, conventionally indirect request strategy query preparatory, and non-conventionally indirect request mild hint, whereas,

LAs employed significantly direct request strategy mood derivable, direct request strategy obligation statement, and conventionally indirect request strategy (query preparatory) and indicating that there is a statically difference in both strategies at (P-value.003).

Such finding is in line with the results reported in Haddad (2017) that conventionally indirect request strategies are frequently employed by second language (L2) learners and with Mohamed (2019) that direct request strategies are commonly used by second language learners, particularly Moroccan Arabic. In this case, a possible explanation of these results might be that high achievers are able to master the language because of their exposure to the second language in their study and their high proficiency in the target language, therefore, they are familiar with using various request strategies. Based on the foregoing, according to Table 4.2, the specific proportions in the choices between the more direct and less direct strategies can be attributed to the academic differences between both.

The reason behind the inclination of both groups towards using direct strategy might be attributed to the challenges they confront in formulating indirect request strategies in the target language. This finding is consistent with Taguchi (2012), who has inferred that indirect request strategies pose difficulties to EFL learners. EFL\ESL have insufficient linguistic repertoire which assumes that they tend to focus more on communication to transfer their purpose neglecting the sociocultural norms of the target language. In this case, as reflected in Table 4.1, both HAs and LAs tended to use direct strategies the most, while the latter group frequently lean to use direct request strategies more than the former group. The findings showed that there were differences among HAs and LAs in using direct level but not significantly at ($p < 0.367$) in which there is an equity of power and distance between the interlocutors. HAs employ fewer direct

strategies with (67.2%) than LA with (83.76%) that confirms that HAs have more pragmatic knowledge in using conventionally and non-conventionally indirect strategies in their speech compared with LAs.

Another interesting finding is that conventional indirect type accounts for (28.4%) of HAs requests and (16.24%) of LAs requests, respectively. By reviewing this category, both groups rarely employ a suggestory formula in which HAs amount to (1.51%), whereas LAs account for (2.54%), but they frequently employ query preparatory such as “*could you allow me to share my ideas?*” (S2, HA #15) by HAs (26.92%), whereas the use of this strategy by LAs is significantly less than HAs (13.70%) “*I could give my ideais?*” (S2, LA#.11). It is clearly evident that HAs are able to master the language more than LAs by choosing sentences that reflect their pragmatic knowledge.

When exploiting a suggestory formula (e.g., *What about borrowing your book?*), the speaker is being very tentative, and down playing his/her own interest as a beneficiary of the action (Trosborg, 1995, p. 201). Suggestory formula is rarely used by both groups because it is connected with the speech act of suggestion. However, the common use of query preparatory by both groups is commensurate with the majority of the previous literatures, thereby presenting that the seventh request strategy on the level of directness is a main strategy for making requests. It is worth mentioning that the query preparatory strategy can be realized through many different sub strategies (i.e. would, will, wondering, possibility, can, mind, and could).

To sum up, non-conventionally indirect classification (i.e., strong and mild hints) are the one least employed by HAs group (4.3%) and LAs group (0 %), This non-conventional classification is employed to ask something implicitly using hints, which are sometimes presented with an evident reference to the illocutionary act (strong hints),

and sometimes explicitly (mild hints). The exploitation of this category possibly violates the relation maxim as mentioned Grice's work on the Cooperative Principle and maxims (1975, 1989). Furthermore, employing strong and mild hints to make a request act requires speakers to be knowledgeable in their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic; this reason justifies the inclination of HAs of using it higher than LAs. The truth that the HAs learners employed more hints than the LAs, indicated that HAs have a good linguistic competence and exposure to target language that influence on their speech compared to LAs.

To summarize, the findings revealed that LAs incline towards using direct strategies the most, such as the mood derivable, while HAs inclined towards using direct request strategies hedged performative. There is a statistically significant difference in using mood derivable category (Pearson Chi-Square, 228.068 at P-value 0.00). Knowing that HAs employ fewer direct strategies (67.2%) than LA with (83.76%) that state that HAs have more pragmatic knowledge in using conventionally and non-conventionally indirectly in their speech compared with LAs. Followed by conventionally indirect, such as "*can you please.....*", however, the least commonly used strategies by both groups is non-conventionally indirect mild hints such as "*I forget my calculator*" by HAs, while the use of non-conventionally indirect has not been observed.

The findings of this section show that HAs used strong and mild hints (4.5%) more commonly than LAs (0%). It seems possible that such results are attributed to the simplicity of direct strategy because low achievers seek only to convey the intended meaning of their request without mitigating the request by using internal modifications. This finding does not corroborate with Umar's (2004) study in which he reported that Arab learners tend to use a high level of directness as a result of pragmatic transfer from

the Arabic language. In this case, such transfer from first language permits using an extreme level of directness with lower status people and close friends.

According to their responses to the designed situations (Appendix, 5), HAs used type of conventionally indirect strategy significantly: query preparatory, they indicated their request by using some mitigating devices, such as possibility, ability, and willingness that are considered face saving act. To illustrate, the third situation (+P, +D) that entails being a doctor (professor) and asking one of your students to give you a charger, HAs were inclined to use query preparatory such as “.....do you mind giving me a charger? (S3, HA#36)1).

In respect of direct request strategies, they used hedged performative such as “*I would like to inform your classmates that tomorrow’s lecture is cancelled*, (S4, HA# 23) “ابغى تبليغ زملائك انو محاضرة بكرة ملغية” in the fourth situation that entails being a doctor and asking one of your students to inform his classmates that tomorrow’s lecture will be canceled (Appendix, 11). The use of query preparatory and hedged performative by high achievers denotes their pragmatic knowledge in addressing the hearer whose power is lower than the speaker. Moreover, HAs show the high proficiency level of high achievers in terms of using well-structured sentences that have correct grammar and spelling.

Moreover, low achievers used obligation statement such as “*you have to tell that tomorrow no class?*” (S#4, S# 21) “يجب ان تبليغ اصحابك انه مافيه محاضرة”. It is clearly obvious that low achievers do not have the pragmatic knowledge that enables them to produce request strategies in an appropriate manner i.e., by taking into account the social distance and power between the interlocutors. Along similar lines, Haddad (2017) indicates that the lack of pragmatic knowledge among second language learners might cause the speaker to insult the hearer; therefore, appearing difficult or rude.

Furthermore, their low proficiency level hinders them from producing request strategies appropriately because their sentences are fragments such as “*you have to tell that tomorrow no class*”. It is clear that the sentence does not have an object after the transitive verb “*tell*” such as “*your classmates*”, moreover, LAs have to say tomorrow will not be a class instead of “*tomorrow no class*”. Second, the use of the wrong tense of the verb such as the use of the past tense “*came*” after the modal auxiliary verb “*will*” (Appendix, 11).

Under this category in which there is a power and social distance (+P, +D) between the requester and the requestee based on FTA theory, the researcher found that LAs used direct request strategies, namely, mood derivable such as “*come, tell*” and obligation statement such as “*you have to...*”. It can be deduced that high achievers have more pragmatic knowledge and proficiency levels in producing request strategies when there is a superiority of power and distance on the part of the speaker over the hearer.

The three types of direct request strategy employed by LAs revealed statically different compared to HAs performance as follows. First, mood derivable (45.79%) is overused significantly compared to HA as P-value (0.000*), for example “*change the class*” (S10, LA#21). Second, obligation statement (20.16%) such as “*you know that no tomorrow come* (S1, LA#18) “تعرف بكره مافيه محاضره”. Third, the want statement (6.46%) when the students show the desire for a certain action “*I want to be absent*” (S1, LA#11). It is clear that low achievers have used direct request strategies that are bald and impolite, particularly in situations that entail addressing those of higher power. Moreover, their proficiency level is low such as the use of “*I am ask*”, rather than “*I am asking*”, furthermore, such phrase was not followed by the object pronoun *you*, the use of the noun “*miss*” rather than using the adjective “*missing*”. All of which indicate their

low proficiency levels which negatively affect their pragmatic competence. This finding is the line with the study's statement problem which indicates that Saudi EFL learners have difficulty in using request act.

In the case of how social and power distance aspect is affected when using different request strategies by the HAs and LAs, qualitative analyses of the request strategies based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) Face threatening act revealed that LAs incline to use two types of direct strategies in the ninth situation (=P\ -D) that entails asking your close friend for giving you the material of Islamic studies from him: mood derivable, which is considered as imperative such as "give me your book (S9, LA#18), and "give me your book of Islamic studies. Furthermore, obligation statement such as "you have give me your book, اعطيني كتابك", which is considered as an imperative. It is clear that LAs used impolite request strategies (on bald record) even when there is an equity of power between interlocutors.

4.3.1.3.1 Requestive Perspectives

As the importance of conventional indirect in request act and it was used frequently by both HAs (28.43%) and LAs (16.24%) with a significant difference between them in this study, it is necessary for more investigation into requestive perspectives and conventions of forms and means. They are described as a social aspect and cultural dimension of language (Al-Ageel, 2016, Al-Momani, 2009 and Blum-Kulka, 1989).

Choosing the request perspective shows a necessary choice of variation in employing request act. According to Blum-Kulka (1989), request perspective could be classified into four categories as follows: impersonal request (e.g., *how about cancelling the session*) inclusive requests (e.g., *can we prepare for the exam together*), speaker-oriented requests (e.g., *may I get this the story*), and hearer-oriented requests (e.g., *could*

you help me) as shown in Table 4.9 below. Request perspective, according to Blum-Kulka (1989) see chapter three, 3.8.2), could be classified into four categories as follows:

1. Impersonal request (S6, HA#23) “*how about postponing the meeting*”
2. Inclusive requests (S2, HA# 36)”*can we prepare for the exam together*”
3. Speaker-oriented requests (S12, LA# 21) “*may I get this story*”
4. Hearer oriented requests (S11, LA#18) “*could you help me*”

The classifications of request strategies according to the speaker-oriented requests, hearer-oriented requests, inclusive requests, and impersonal requests on DCT are illustrated in the following tables. The first column shows the perspective strategies that are used by participants. Next, frequencies and percentages are presented in column three and four. This is followed by the Pearson Chi-Square values that indicate the frequency and percentage for each situation between groups. The P-value in the last column tells us if there is significant difference between groups pertaining pragmatic production in the last column.

Table 4.4: Percentage, Raw Frequency, and Pearson Chi-Square Values of Perspective by Groups

Perspective	High		Low		Pearson Chi-Square	p-value
	N	%	N	%		
Speaker-oriented requests	48	28.2	42	50.60	.400	0.527
Hearer-oriented requests	53	31.17	35	42.16	3.682	0.055
Inclusive requests	51	30.0	6	7.2	35.526	0.000*
Impersonal requests	18	10.58				
Total	170		83		29.917	0.000*

* $p < 0.05$

Table above shows that there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the inclusive requests according to the variable of the

proficiency as the value of "Pearson Chi-Square" was (35.52) by a statistical significance of (0.000*). Furthermore, HAs (30.0%) employed inclusive requests significantly more than LAs (7.2%) at p-value (0.000*). It is noteworthy that low achievers do not utilize impersonal requests in their responses, the reason behind may be due to their insufficient pragmatic competence that helps them to use a variety of request perspectives. HAs (n=170) have a significant pragmatic knowledge compared with LAs (n= 83) in using requests perspective strategies according to Chi-square (29.917) at P-value (0.000*).

The use of speaker-oriented request, which means that the focus lies in the speaker as a requester was higher among LAs (n=42) as opposed to HAs (=48). On the other hand, hearer-oriented request, which means that the focus lies in the hearer was higher among HAs (n= 53) compared to LAs (n= 35). Interestingly, the findings revealed a great tendency of HAs towards using inclusive requests (30.0%) compared to LAs (7.2%). Surprisingly, HAs incline in using impersonal request strategy with the proportion of (10.58%) as opposed to LAs who have never resorted to employ this strategy due to their insufficient pragmatic competence as mentioned on the Table 4.4 with 0.0% of using impersonal request.

The first most commonly used request strategy by HAs was inclusive request such as "*can we change the appointment*" (S10, HA#3). It is clear that HAs used inclusive request in order to avoid face threatening act by showing that both speaker and hearer are involved in the request, moreover, the use of the modal verb "can", which denotes possibility, it is further considered as a request mitigating device which are considered as face-saving because it prevents the hearer from rejecting the request (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

On the other hand, both HAs (6.7%) and LAs (0.0%) were less inclined towards using impersonal request strategy “suggestion”, such as “*how about postponing the meeting*” (S6, HA#18) (see appendix, 11) such request is rendered in an indirect manner that implies suggestion, which entails the hearer to refer to the contextual cues. More importantly, such types of request strategies are considered face-saving because they run the risk of not being understood since there are not sufficient contextual clues for the hearer to interpret them appropriately. As Blum-Kulka (1989) stated that requestive perspective may be employed to mitigate and minimize the coerciveness of the request act as it is seen as face –threatening.

4.3.1.3.2 Conventions of Means and Forms

Blum-Kulka described conventions of means as “the kinds of sentences that are standardly used as indirect requests” (p. 41). For instance, speakers usually start their request by asking the hearer’s ability to reply to his/her request such as “can you borrow me your summarizing” (Sit#5, LA# 34). However, convention of form is used as the linguistic form and exact expressions. For example, the use of “Could you” rather than “would you be able to”. Table 4.5 presents the five conventions of means used by participants: ability (e.g., “*Can you?.....*”), permission (e.g., “*Could I?*”), possibility (e.g., “*Is it okay . . .*”), willingness (e.g., “*Would you...?*”), and suggestion (e.g., “*let us*”).

The data (see Tables. 4.5 and 4.6) shows that there are differences and similarities in their use of conventions of means. Both LAs (n=41) and HAs (n=45) prefer Ability but are not statically different. However, there are also statistically significant differences between HAs (29.41) and LAs (2.40%) at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the willingness according to the variable of the proficiency as the value of " Chi-

Square " was (37.786) by a statistical significance of P-value (0.000*). In addition, it is observed only HAs employ suggestion strategies compared to LAs with no occurrence. Most important, Pearson Chi-Square pair comparisons revealed significant differences in their use of possibility as used by HAs (11.76%) significantly more compared with LAs (6.02%) at P-value (0.003*).

Turning now to unravel the use of conventions of means into suggestion (e.g., *what about ...*) willingness (e.g., *would you mind.....*), possibility (e.g., *is it possible....*), permission (e.g., *may I ...*), and ability (e.g., *could you...*) as shown in Table 4.10 below. The first column shows the Conventions of means strategies that are used by participants. Next, frequencies and percentages are presented in column three and four. This is followed by the Pearson Chi-Square values that indicate the frequency and percentage for each situation between groups. The P-value in the last column tells us if there is significant difference in between groups pertaining pragmatic realization in the last column.

Table 4.5: Percentage, Raw Frequency, and Pearson Chi-Square Values of Conventions of Means b by Group

Conventions	High		Low		Pearson Chi-Square	P-value
	N	%	N	%		
Ability	45	26.47	41	49.39	0.186	0.666
Permission	49	28.82	35	42.16	2.333	0.127
Possibility	20	11.76	5	6.02	9.000	0.003*
Willingness	51	29.41	2	2.40	37.786	0.000*
Suggestions	5	2.94	0	0	-	-
Total	170		83		29.917	0.000*

* $p < 0.05$

Pearson Chi-Square was used to identify the differences and/or similarities between two groups in using request strategies according to the convention of means request strategies that consists of ability, permission, possibility, willingness, and

suggestions. The findings in the above Table (4.5) showed that there are differences between HAs and LAs in using convention of means request strategies that consists of ability, permission, possibility, willingness, and suggestions. The data presents that the participants have used the convention of means sub-strategies with either major or minor differences between them. It is clearly obvious that “ability” sub-strategy occupies the highest rank for LA group. For instance, HAs used “*could you....*” while “*can you...*” among LAs.

To clarify, the use of request strategy “could you” is considered hearer-oriented requests in which the speaker might seek to check the ability of the hearer to do a specific matter such as “*could you give me a charger.....?*” (S3, HA#18). On the contrary, LAs used “*me sorry, can you give me charge?*” (S3, LA#45), (see appendix, 11). To draw a distinction between them, both groups are using request strategies but statically different. However, HAs used more polite strategy than LAs. Moreover, it is clearly obvious that LAs have low English language proficiency. To illustrate, they use the verb “charge” rather than the noun “charger”, moreover, they did not use an article “a” that precedes the noun “charger”. The reason behind their linguistic errors might be attributed to their poor vocabulary items and their low linguistic and proficiency levels.

To sum up, there is a statistical difference between both groups in employing conventions of forms. Let us now turn to demonstrate the percentage of using convention of forms by HAs and LAs as indicated in Table 4.6. Closer inspection of Table 4.6 shows that conventions of forms sub-strategies, such as possibility, ability, permission, and willingness have been used by both groups with either major or minor differences between them. Remarkably, LAs have a greater tendency to use ability strategy, while HAs have a great tendency to use permission strategy. Furthermore, the

use of the introductory phrases that precede the request strategy differs between both.

However, it is observed no use of the suggestion strategy by LAs compared to HA.

Based on the results on Tables (4.5 and 4.6), the three most preferred strategies by HAs were willingness (29.41%), permission (28.82%) and ability (26.47%). However, LAs showed their preference just to the two strategies that are: ability (49.39%) and permission (42.16%).

Table 4.6: Percentage and Raw Frequency of Conventions of Form by Group

Convention of form	HA		LA	
	N	%	N	%
Ability	45	26.47	41	49.39
Can you . . .	14		27	
Could you . . .	21		14	
Would you be able . . .	10			
Permission	49	28.82	35	42.16
Can I . . .?	13		11	
Could I . . .?	15		9	
May I . . .?	13		15	
Would I be able . . .?	8			
Possibility	20	11.76	5	6.02
Is it possible/okay . . .?	9		4	
Would it be possible/okay...?	0	0		
Is there any way . . .?	11		1	
Willingness	51	29.41	2	2.40
Will you . . .?	7		0	
Would you . . .?	14		2	
Would you mind . . .?	12			
Do you mind. .	18			
Suggestion	5	2.94	0	
How about . . .?	3			
Let us	2			
Total	170		83	

Permission strategy was among both groups in which HAs inclined to use the phrase “could I”, while LAs were inclined to use the phrase “*can I*” for asking the hearer’s permission to perform the request. It is worth mentioning that using “could” is considered more polite than “*can*”, therefore, HAs have more proficiency levels in performing request strategies as opposed to LAs (see appendix, 11). On the other hand,

the least commonly used request strategy by HAs groups is suggestion. To illustrate, HAs showed a much stronger tendency towards using “how about” introductory phrases that denote suggestion, while LAs did not use this strategy in their request situations.

Generally speaking, the data suggested that HAs group exhibited a high frequency of using ability request strategy, but a low frequency of using suggestion sub-strategy. In addition, LAs showed low frequency in using possibility and willingness compared with HAs. Based on the foregoing, HAs use of willingness, suggestory strategies and “could” suggests their ability to master the language and their pragmatic realisation in using request strategies that are appropriate for addressing those with higher power and social distance such as the use of could in the sixth situation in which the student asks his professor to postpone the date of submission for the final homework by using the following request strategy “*could you postpone the date of submission?*” (S6, HA#16).

On the other hand, LAs use of “can” suggests their lack of L2 pragmatic competence due to their inability to use the appropriate modal verb for addressing those with higher power and social distance such as using the following request strategy “*can postpone mision*” (S6, LA#45). which is considered informal as opposed to “could” that is considered more formal. More importantly, LAs lack the vocabulary knowledge that enables them to produce request strategy in an appropriate manner such as missing pronoun “you” after the verb postpone and the use of “mision”, rather than “submission.

4.3.1.4 Contextual Variable in Using Level of Directness between HAs and LAs

A main assumption in speech act research is that speech act is directly connected with contextual variables (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Kasper, 1989). An evident example is the relationship between the weightiness of social distance and power and

the choice of a particular politeness strategy. contextual variables may determine the speaker to realize the request act by using the directness level and type and amount of external and internal modifications (BlumKulka & House, 1989; Kasper, 1989). Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61) described a request as a “face-threatening” speech act since the speaker is imposing on the hearer’s freedom of action”. Hence, request act is constrained by several sociocultural factors, and needs the use of particular pragmatic strategies to soften the act and minimize the threat to face (see Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984).

One of the FTA strategies is negative politeness which is used when there is social distance and power between interlocutors. Hence, the speakers try to be as polite as possible when making their request. This study shows how groups differ in altering their request strategies according to social variables. The level of directness between groups was investigated in the light of social power and distance. Table (4.7) shows the relation between power categories among both groups in using direct level as follows: $+P \setminus =P$, $=P \setminus -P$ and $=P \setminus -P$ indicating that $+P$ ($S > H$), $=P$ ($S = H$) and $-P$ ($S < H$). chi-square test was used to compare between groups based on social power variable.

Table 4.7: The Influence of Social Power between Groups in Using Directness Level

Level of directness	+P		=P		-P	
	HA	LA	HA	LA	HA	LA
Mood derivable	2	84	0	86	0	64
Explicit performative	27	9	17	9	13	8
Hedge performative	88	12	55	9	35	11
Obligation statement	21	29	19	35	16	39
Want statement	58	9	32	10	19	14
Suggestory formula	4	9	3	1	2	3
Query preparatory	40	27	52	23	69	20
Strong hint	0	0	5	0	5	0
Strong hint	2	0	5	0	9	0
Total	242	179	188	173	168	159
	(40.46%)	(35.02%)	(31.43%)	(33.85%)	(28.09%)	(31.11%)

* $p < 0.05$

The following Table 4.8 summarizes the relationships between power categories for both groups by using Chi-square and *p*-value to reveal the influence of social power in using direct strategy for each group separately.

Table 4.8: Chi-square Results in the Effect of Social Power between HAs and LAs in Using Directness

Group	+P		=P		-P		+P\=P Chi-square P-value	+P\ -P Chi-square P-value	=P\ -P Chi-square P-value
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
HA	242		188		168		6.781	13.356	1.124
	(40.46%)		(31.43%)		(28.09%)		0.009*	0.000*	0.289
LA	179		173		159		.102	1.183	.590
	(35.02%)		(33.85%)		(31.11%)		0.749	0.277	0.442

**p* < 0.05

As mentioned earlier, this study aimed to investigate the use of request act among SEFL at different language proficiency based on social power variables: (+P) speaker has power over hearer, (-p) speaker has power over hearer and (=P) speaker and hearer have equal power. According to the previous tables (Table 4.4 and 4.5), it is clear that HAs show an awareness of using direct level in different social power categories. For instance, HAs shifted in using directness level according to social power, they were more direct when the speaker had more power over the hearer (+P (S>H)), the less direct when there were equal power (S=H), and showed the least power when there low power (-P (S<H)). Statistically, there is a significant difference between (+P and =P) and (=P and -P). However, LAs showed fractured shifting in using direct level which shows their inability to make control on using speech act based on power variable with no statically difference between any power relationships. Table 4.9 shows the social distance relationships between HAs and LAs in using directness strategies.

Table 4.9: The Influence of Social Distance between HAs and LAs in Using Directness Level

Level of directness	Familiar		Unfamiliar	
	HA	LA	HA	LA
Mood derivable	2	116	0	118
Explicit performative	35	14	22	12
Hedge performative	124	24	54	8
Obligation statement	36	63	20	40
Want statement	76	16	33	17
Suggestory formula	5	11	4	2
Query preparatory	75	39	86	31
Strong hint	4	0	6	0
Mild hint	6	0	10	0
Total	366 (60.70%)	283 (55.38%)	235 (39.29%)	228 (44.61%)

* $p < 0.05$

Table 4.10: Chi-square Results in the Effect of Social Power between HAs and LAs in Using Directness

Groups	Familiar		Unfamiliar		Familiar-Unfamiliar
	N	%	N	%	
HA	366 (60.70%)		235 (39.29%)		Chi-square (28.554) P-value (0.000*)
LA	283 (55.38%)		228 (44.61%)		Chi-square (5.920) P-value (0.015*)

* $p < 0.05$

In keeping with Brown and Levinson (1987)'s theory, results of Table 4.10 stated that HAs and LAs were more direct when using requests with familiar interlocutors. It is observed a statistical difference between (familiar\unfamiliar) situations among two situations for each group. And both were less direct with unfamiliar interlocutors.

Table 4.11: Percentage, Raw Frequency, and Pearson Chi-Square Values of Directness levels by Groups in the Six Social Category

Category	Social Category	LAs		HAs		Pearson Chi-Square	p-value
		N	%	N	%		
1	(+P, +D) 3 and 4	117	22.8	150	25.08	4.079	0.043*
2	(-P, +D) 1 and 6	104	20.3	136	22.7	4.267	0.039*
3	(=P, -D) 9 and 11	63	12.3	65	10.86	0.031	0.860
4	(-P, -D) 7 and 12	95	18.5	111	18.56	1.243	0.265
5	(=P, +D)	98	19.17	100	16.72	0.020	0.887
6	2 and 5 (+P, -D) 8 and 10	34	6.65	36	6.02	0.057	0.811
Total		511		598		6.825	0.009*

* $p < 0.05$

Based on Brown and Levinson (1987)' theory of social power and distance and as indicated in Table 4.11, the findings show the use of request strategy by both HAs and LAs in social categories in terms of using request strategies, the first category (+P, +D) reflects the presence of power and social distance variables between the requester and the requestee. A closer inspection of Table 4.11 shows that the request strategies made by HAs accounts for (25.08%), whereas the request strategies made by LAs accounts for (22.8%) for the first category (+P, +D) in which there is a social power and distance between the interlocutors, particularly for situations three and four (appendix 5). It is observed a statistical difference between two groups at Chi- square (4.079) and P-value (0.043*).

As for the second category (-P, +D) in which there is no power, but there is a social distance between the speaker and the hearer, HAs (22.7%) used request strategies, whereas (20.3%) of LAs used request strategies, particularly for situations one and six.

It is observed a statistical difference between two groups at Chi- square (4.267) and P-value (0.039*).

In respect of the situations (1 and 6) in which there is no power but there is a social distance (-P, +D) between the requester and the requestee. The researcher found that two sub-strategies were used by HAs, namely, the use of query preparatory, such as “*can I....?*”, hedged performative such as “*I would like to ask you....*”. However, the researcher found that three sub-strategies were used by LAs, namely, mood derivable such as “*I will not come*”, explicit performative such as “*I am asking for...*”, and obligation statement such as “*you have to*”. This result is in alignment with Brown and Levinson's concept that when there is no power, the speaker uses a high level of directness as mood derivable.

As for the third category ($=P \setminus -D$), It can be seen from the data in Table (4.11) that the HAs group (10.86%) reported a similar use of the strategies with LAs (12.3). The situations that fall under this category are situation 9 and 11, where there is equal power and no social distance between speaker and hearer. The findings have revealed statistically insignificant differences between both groups. According to their responses to the designed situations, the HAs used types of direct strategies: want statement, they indicated their request by showing the speaker's feelings, desires, and intentions.

To illustrate, their use of this strategy in the ninth situation ($=P \setminus -D$) that entails asking your close friend for giving you the material of Islamic studies from him, HAs incline to use want statement such as “*I want to collect the book of Islamic studies from you (S9, HA#36)*, and “*I want to take the book from you(S9, HA#23*. Moreover, the second commonly used request strategy by HAs is hedged performative such as “*I would like to take the course of Islamic studies from you (S9, HA#39)*, “*أرغب باخذ كتاب*

”الدراسات الإسلامية

As for the eleventh situation (=P\ -D), the HAs used one type of conventionally indirect strategies: query preparatory: they indicated their request by referring to preparatory conditions, such as possibility, ability, and willingness. To clarify, their use of this strategy in the eleventh situation, which suggests asking your roommate, who live with you in the university campus for borrowing his calculator, HAs tended to use conventionally indirect strategies: query preparatory; which is considered as save threatening acts on the part of hearer because it begins with the request expression “*is it possible.....*’.

In respect of the fourth category (-P, -D) in which there is no power nor distance between the interlocutors. Both groups showed similar use of direct strategies as LAs (18.5%) used request strategies, whereas HAs (18.56%) used request strategies, particularly for situations seven and twelve (Appendix 5). According to their responses to the designed situations, the HAs used hedged performative, they indicated their request by using utterances involving verbs or modal verbs expressing intentions. To illustrate, their use of this strategy in the seventh situation (-P\ -D) that entails asking your doctor for writing a recommendation letter for you, HAs were inclined to use hedged performative such as “*I would like to ask you for writing a recommendation letter for me* (S7, HA#18) “أبغى تكتبلي رسالة توصيه”.

Moreover, HAs have used strong hint in the twelfth situation that suggests "asking your lecturer for borrowing a book from him" such as “*are you using the new short story.....*(S12, HA#16), and query preparatory such as “*can you write a recommendation letter for me?*”(S7, HA#23). However, the LAs were inclined to use two types of direct strategies: mood derivable, which is considered as imperative such as “*write a recommendation letter for me* (S7, LA#18),” “اكتب لي رسالة توصيه” without taking into consideration the social distance between them and the hearer and obligation

statements such as “*you have to write a recommendation letter for me...*”, (Appendix 11).

Under this category in which there is a power on the speaker over the hearer (-P, -D). The researcher found that three sub-strategies were used by HAs, namely, the use of hedged performative such as “*I would like to...*”, strong hint “*are you using.....*”, and query preparatory such as “*can you?*”. However, the researcher found that two sub-strategies were used by LAs, namely, mood derivable such as “*write*” and obligation statement such as “*give me*”.

The fifth category (=P, +D) such category entails that the distance variable exists which means that the speaker and the hearer are not familiar to each other, and their power is equal i.e., they have no power over each other. The situations that fall under this category are 2 and 5. As shown above, the level of directness in performing request strategies among LAs (18.10%) was higher than HAs (16.60%). According to participants’ responses to the designed situations, the HAs used two types of direct strategies: hedged performative, they indicated their request by using utterances involving verbs or modal verbs expressing intentions.

To illustrate, their use of such strategy in the second situation that entails sharing your idea with your classmates that you are not familiar with, therefore, there is a social distance between you and them, HAs incline to use hedged performative such as “*I would like to share my idea (S2, HA#18),*” “أبغى اشارككم ارائي”. Moreover, they used explicit performative such as “*I ask you to share my ideas with you (S2, LA#18),* اشارككم افكاري ابغى”. On the other hand, LAs use two types of direct strategies: obligation statement in which the speaker’s intention is explicitly taken from the semantic meaning of the utterance such as “*you have to listen my idea*” (S2, LA#21. without taking into consideration the social distance between them and the hearer. Furthermore, mood

derivable, which is considered as an imperative “*listen to my ideas*” (S2, LA#45), (Appendix 11).

In a situation in which there is an equity of power, but a social distance between the speaker and the hearer (=P, +D). The researcher found that three sub-strategies were used by HAs, namely, the use of hedged performative such as “*I would like to...*”, query preparatory such as “*can you?*”, and explicit performative such as “*I ask..*”. However, the researcher found that two sub-strategies were used by LAs, namely, obligation statements such as “*you have to listen*” and mood derivable “*listen to my ideas*”.

As regards the sixth category (+P, -D) in which there is a social power but no social distance between the speaker and the hearer, HAs (6.02%) used request strategies, whereas LAs (6.6%) used direct request strategies, particularly for situations eight and ten (appendix 5). The situations that fall under this category are 8 and 10. According to their responses to the designed situations, the HAs used one type of conventionally indirect strategy: query preparatory. For instance, their use of such strategy in the eighth situation that entails requesting you neighbors’ kids to turn the volume down because of your inability to concentrate, therefore, the speaker has social power over the hearers because they are younger than him such as “*Could you turn the volume down?* (S8, HA#16)? *تقدر توطي الصوت*” and “*Would you mind turning the volume down*” (S8, HA#18)?

Furthermore, they used two types of direct request strategy “hedged performative” such as “*I would like to ask you to turn the volume down?* S8, HA#23), *ابغى اطلب منكم توطو صوت المسجل*” and want statemen. To clarify, their use of this strategy in the tenth situation that entails changing your appointment with your neighbors because you have an exam; thus, you are unable to visit him such as “*I would like to change the appointment with you* (S10, HA#23), *ابغى موعدي اغير*”, (Appendix, 11). On the other

hand, LAs use one type of direct strategies: mood derivable in which the speaker use utterances that mark as a request such as “*trn the volm daown*” (S 8, LA#45) “وطي الصوت” for the eighth situation, moreover, the use of mood derivable in the tenth situation such as “*I will chang the apointmnt*” (S6, LA#21), “موعدى اغير رح”. It is clearly obvious that low achievers were unable to write a sentence with correct spelling. To illustrate, they wrote “trn” instead of “turn”, the volm instead of “the volume”, daown rather than “down”, (Appendix, 11).

Both groups heavily employed direct request strategies to make their requests, and within this category HAs mostly employ the hedge performative and query preparatory strategy, while LAs mostly employ mood derivable. Additionally, when investigating usage of the nine request strategies between both groups, more statistical differences were noticed. Regardless of the fact that the results have shown that both groups employ direct strategy the CI and NCI, HAs use NCI significantly more than LAs. Thus, LAs use less polite strategy than HA. It is clear that HAs group showed more pragmatic knowledge in their usage of request act than LAs group by different request strategies compared to LAs who just employ CI and NCI.

The results based on Tables 4.4 and 4.5, HAs show an awareness of using direct level in different social power categories. For instance, HAs shifted in using directness level according to social power. However, LAs showed fractured changes in using direct level which show their inability to make control on using speech act based on power variable with no statically difference between any power relationships. Regarding social distance, it is stated that HAs and LAs were more direct when using request with familiar interlocutors.

4.3.2 External Modifications

The sub objective of the first question of this research is to identify the production of external modification among HAs and LAs as adopted from Blum-Kulka (1989), AL-Momani (2009) based on CCSARP pattern (refer to chapter 3, Table 3.8). External modification in request act is utilized before or after head acts to perform several goals. In most cases, it is employed to mitigate the sharpness of the request act. The following table shows the external modification strategies employed by groups. The first column includes twelve strategies as sub types of external modifications. Next, the number of occurrences and percentages for both groups are presented in column two and three. This is followed by the Pearson Chi-Square values that indicate the frequency and percentage for each situation between groups. The P-value in the last column tells us if there is significant difference between groups in using these strategies.

Table 4.12: Percentage, Raw Frequency, and *Pearson Chi-Square* Values of External Modification by Group

External Modification	Low		High		Pearson Chi-Square	p-value
	N	%	N	%		
Availabilitypreparator	16	4.73	120	26.32	0.947	0.330
Grounder	130	38.46	158	34.65	2.722	0.099
Getting pre-comitment	8	2.37	10	2.19	0.222	0.637
Disarmer	5	1.48	6	1.32	0.091	0.763
Promise of reward	0	0.00	2	0.44	-	-
Imposition minimizer	0	0.00	14	3.07	-	-
Sweetener	4	1.18	6	1.32	0.400	0.527
Small talk	118	34.91	22	4.82	0.017	0.897
Appreciation	1	0.30	24	5.26	21.160	0.000*
Self-introduction	12	3.55	26	5.70	5.158	0.023*
Affective appeal	2	0.59	6	1.32	2	0.157
Apology	42	12.43	62	13.60	3.846	0.050*
Total	338		456		17.537	0.000*

Statistically significant at the level of significance (*p < 0.05)

Table 4.12 revealed that HAs group (n= 456) used external modification significantly more than did LAs group did (n= 338) with Chi square (17.537) at P-value

(0.000*). As shown in Table 4.6, all subtypes of external modification were used by HAs and only ten out of twelve were used by LAs with significant or non-significant differences between them. As for low achievers, the most commonly used subtype of external modification was *grounder* (38.46%) in which the utterances contain justifications, explanations or reasons for the request act such as “*I waod like time write*” (S7, LA#11) (see Appendix 11). It is clearly obvious that LAs lack pragmatic knowledge and vocabulary knowledge, along with their spelling errors, and ill-structured sentences hinder them from performing request strategy appropriately. To illustrate, the use of “*waod*” rather than “*would*” and the structure of the sentence is considered incomprehensible.

As illustrated in Appendix 11 and Table 4.12, small talk documented 34.91% that reflects the utterance has social rapport to ease the target request like “*hello doctor, are you good, can submitted the submission*” (S6, LA#21) (Appendix, 11). It is clear that the utterance involves grammatical weakness by using past form of the verb (*submitted*) after modal verb (*can*). The third common subtype of external modification used by LAs was *apology* in which the speaker expresses apology to the addressee prior performing the request (12.43%), for instance, “*...sory I ned tym*”. (S6, LA#18).

Affective appeal (.59%), appreciation (.30%) and sweetener (1.18%) are considered as the least internal strategies employed by LAs group with statistically significant appearance compared with HAs group. For example, sweetener (1.18%) in which the utterance includes exaggerated appreciation to raise the probability to respond to the request, such as “*you can daly the work*” (S6, LA#25). Subsequent by affective appeal which amounts to (.59%) such as “*my mum sik, I not did asymet*” (S6, LA#11). It is clear that low achievers made spelling errors such as writing “*daly*” rather than “*delay*”, “*sik*” rather than “*sick*”, “*asymet*” rather than “*assignment*”. Moreover, word

choice such as “delay” rather than “postpone”. Additionally, sentence structure such as “my mum sick” instead of “my mum was sick”, “I not did” instead of “I did not”. Moreover, grammatical errors such as writing the auxiliary verb “did” without writing the main verb “write”. Using like this utterance “mum sick” may be referred to negative pragmatic transfer since in Arabic, it is used such expression أنا مريض (pronoun and adjective) meaning that speakers tended to transfer the expression from L1 to L2 without taking into consideration the rules of the TL.

On the contrary, LAs used subtype of external modification was self-introduction (3.55%) in which the speaker prefaces the speech by introducing themselves to the addressee prior to making a request, for example, “*I am good delay*”. It is clearly obvious that LAs lack the ability of writing a sentence in an appropriate manner e.g., they did not write the article “a” before the adjective “good”, moreover, they used “delay” rather than “postpone”. The majority of the sentences provided by low achievers are ungrammatical and incorrect such as the structure of their sentence which reflect their pragmatic incompetence such as “I like” instead of “I would like”, “ask” rather than “to ask for”.

As for High achievers, the data revealed that the participants tend to use grounder the most with the percentage of (34.65%), such as “*I would like an extension for my assignment because I take long time typing my work*” (S6, HA#43). The second most commonly used subtype of external modification by HAs was availability (26.32%) that the speaker tries to ask about the hearer availability to take a permission to make request act such “*actually I need a help, you are one of best professor.....can you write to me a good recommendation letter, please*” (S7, HA#16) regarding to FTA strategies using like these expressions are considered positive politeness according Brown and Levinson (1987)

The third most frequent strategy employed HAs was apology (13.60%) when the speaker tries to apology before performing request act, "*I am sorry, I need extra time*" (S6, HA#23). The fourth most commonly used subtype of external modification by LAs was self-introduction (5.70%), such as "*I am one of your student in your class, I was extremely sick yesterday, I was unable to attend the class, how about delaying the submission?*" (S6, HA#36). It is noticed both groups employed grounder strategy the most. The length of request is also linked with the degree of politeness' (Tanaka, 2015). Additionally, Brown and Levinson (1987), the use of more strategies show more politeness. Accordingly, HAs are considered more polite compared with LAs. According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 187) apology is used as a means of negative politeness by apologizing to the hearer for doing the FTA. This type of strategy is used to minimize the effect of impingement on the hearer's negative face.

It is clearly obvious that LAs made a lot of mistakes in performing requests that are classified into grammatical mistakes, spelling errors, sentence structure errors such as fragment or incomplete sentences. As for grammatical mistakes, the use of the possessive pronoun "your" instead of subject pronoun "you". As for spelling mistakes, the use of "kod" instead of "could", "exten" rather than "extension", "sory" rather than "sorry", "ned" rather than "need", and "tyme" rather than "time".

Based on the above, grounder occupies the highest rank among LAs, followed by small talk, subsequent by apology, while appreciation occupies the lowest rank among LAs, subsequent by affective appeal. Further, they showed no occurrence of promise of reward and imposition minimizer in their request. In respect of HAs, grounder occupies the highest rank, followed by availability, followed by apology whereas promise of reward occupies the lowest rank, followed by sweetener and disarmer. The similarities between both groups occurred in using grounder external modification the most.

However, the main difference is that LAs do not show any use of two external modifications namely: promise of reward and imposition minimizer that means they show less of use of negative politeness strategy according to FTA theory.

Table 4.13: Examples of External Modifications among HAs and LAs

Sample gathered from DCT	Strategies of external modifications
S6, HA# 43 <i>"I would like an extension for my assignment because I take long time typing my work".</i>	Grounder
S11, LA# 11 <i>"ar you busy? give me your calculator</i>	Availability
S7, HA# 13 <i>How are you? I hope you are feeling well? May I have some of your time?"</i> .	Small talk
S7, LA# 13 <i>"I weld like time write recommendation".</i>	grounder
(S7, HA#16) <i>"actually I need a help, you are one of best professor.....can you write to me a good recommendation letter, please"</i>	Availability
S6, LA#11 <i>"my mum sik, I not did asymnet".</i>	affective appeal

Based on the foregoing, there are considerable differences between HAs and LAs in terms of proficiency level and using external modification, it seems that HA overused external modifications significantly more than LAs did at p-value (0.00) with chi-square (17.53). To sum up, the majority of low achievers made grammatical mistakes, spelling errors, and sentence structure errors. On the other hand, none of the high achievers made any of these errors. Moving on now to demonstrate the pragmatic differences between both groups in using external modification in terms of proficiency level and using request strategies by taking into account the social power and distance variables as indicated in Table 4.14 below.

The first column shows the number of categories (1 to 12). The second column shows the situations that are used in DCT with social categories. Next, percentages are presented in column three and four. This is followed by the Pearson Chi-Square values

that indicate the frequency and percentage for each situation between groups. The P-value in the last column tells us if there is (in)significant difference in between groups in six social categories.

Table 4.14: Percentage, Raw Frequency, and Pearson Chi-Square Values of External Modification by Group in the Social Category

Social Category		Low		High		Pearson Chi-Square	p-value
Category		N	%	N	%		
1.	(+P, +D) 3 and 4	49	14.50	74	16.23	5.081	0.024*
2.	(-P, +D) 1 and 6	60	17.75	88	19.30	5.297	0.021*
3.	(=P, -D) 9 and 11	30	8.88	58	12.72	8.909	0.003*
4.	(-P, -D) 7 and 12	63	18.64	82	17.98	2.490	0.115
5.	(=P, +D) 2 and 5	71	21.01	80	17.54	0.536	0.464
6.	(+P, -D) 8 and 10	65	19.23	74	16.23	0.583	0.445
Total		338		456		17.537	0.000*

Statistically significant at the level of significance (* $p < 0.05$)

It is observed from the above Table (4.14) that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the categories $(-P \setminus -D, =P \setminus +D$ and $+P \setminus -D)$ according to the variable of the proficiency level. However, there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in $(+P \setminus +D, -P \setminus +D$ and $=P \setminus -D)$ according to the variable of the proficiency. There are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in total of request by HAs and LAS according to the variable of the proficiency as the value of "Chi-Square " was (17.537) by a statistical significance of (0.000).

As indicated in Table (4.14) above, which shows the pragmatic differences in the use of external modifications by both HAs and LAs in social categories in terms of

using request strategies, the first category (+P, +D) indicates the existence of power and social distance variables between the requester and the requestee; it is clear that HAs percentage (16.23%) was significantly higher than the percentage of LAs (14.50) at p-value (0.024). The situations that fall under this category are 3 and 4.

According to their responses to the designed situations, the LAs used availability, they declare a request by inquiring about availability. To illustrate, they used this strategy in the third situation in which the speaker is supposed to be a lecturer in the university; thus, he has social power and distance over his students, the speaker's role is embodied in asking one of the students to bring his laptop charger from his office, LAs were inclined to use availability such as "*are you busy?* (S3, LA#11) هل انت مشغول". LAs made spelling errors by writing "r" instead of "are". Followed by apology such as "*me sorry, can you give me charge*" (S3, LA#45) انا اسف give charge", which is considered ungrammatical.

It is obvious that LAs made grammatical mistakes in the beginning of the sentence by writing the object pronoun "me" rather than "I am", incorrect part of speech and spelling such as "*charg*", instead of "*charger*". However, the HAs use a variety of external modification strategies: grounder in which the utterances contain justifications, explanations, or reasons for the request act such as "*could you give me charger because I have a lecture now?* (S3, HA#18). Followed by small talk such as "*how are you, can you do me a favor by bringing my laptop charger?*" كيف الحال, تسوي معروف تحضرلي شاحن". Subsequent by self-introduction "*I did not sleep yesterday at all. I am unable to do anything.*" ماقدرت انام امس لهيك ماقدرت اسوي شي.

As for the fourth situation that revolves around being a college lecturer and requesting one of your students to inform the rest of the class that you are calling off tomorrow's lecture because you have an appointment, the LAs used one type of external

modification: availability. such as “*I cant came tomorrow*”(S4, LA#11). On the contrary, HAs tended to employ external modification strategy: grounder such as “*I would like to call off tomorrow’s lecture because I have an important appointment* (S4, HA# 43).

Under this category (+P, +D), the researcher found that two sub-strategies were used by LAs, namely, availability such as “*I cont came tomorrow...*”, apology “*me sorry*”. However, the researcher found that the following sub-strategies were used by HAs, namely, grounder such as “*I would like to call off...*”. Followed by small talk such as “*how are you,.....?*”. Subsequent by self-introduction “*I did not sleep yesterday.....*”?

In respect of the second category (-P & +D), the percentage of performing requests among LAs concerning this category is (17.75%), while the percentage of performing requests among HAs is (19.30%). There is a significant difference with Chi-square (5.297) at p-value (0.021%). The situations that fall under this category are 1 and 6.

Under this category in which there is a social power and distance between the speaker and the hearer (-P, +D) meaning that they are not familiar with each other. The researcher found that three sub-strategies were used by LAs, namely, the use of grounder such as “*I like you....?*”, sweetener such as “*you r good....*” and getting pre-commitment such as “*can time write....?*”. However, the researcher found that two sub-strategies were used by HAs, namely, apology such as “*I am sorry....*”, grounder such as “*can?*” and imposition minimizer “*I wonder if you can please...*”. According to FTA theory, using this strategy come under the negative politeness strategy according to Brown and levinson theory of politeness (1987) when the speaker used apology strategy before making request act in order to smooth the request act.

With regard to the third category (=P & -D) in this category the distance variable does not exist which means that the requester and the requestee are familiar to each other, and they have no power over each other; it is equal. LAs percentage accounts for (8.88%), whereas HAs amounts to (12.72%) which is significantly different at p-value (0.003). The situations that fall under this category are 9 and 11.

According to their responses to the designed situations, the LAs used grounder. To illustrate, they used this strategy in the ninth situation regarding asking your close friend for giving you the material of “Islamic Studies”, LAs were inclined to use availability, which means declaring request by inquiring about availability, such as “*can you favr givin islam study?* (S9, LA#21) *تسوي معروف تعطيني كتاب دراسات اسلاميه*”.

Moreover, the use of grounder such as “*I lik sumry islam study because I need for my study* (S#9, LA#15) *”ارغى اخذ تلخيص مادة العلوم الإسلامية لدراستي احتاجها إلني*”. It is clear that LAs made a lot of mistakes in terms of the omission of the subject “you” that should be occurred after “can”, the incorrect spelling of “favr” that should be written as “favor”, “givin” rather than “giving”, “sumry” rather than “summary”. Moreover, the lack of the proposition “by” that should be followed by the gerund “giving”. The omission of object “your book”. The incorrect rendering of the proper name “Islamic studies” that was rendered as “islam study”. Moreover, this part “*because I need for my study*” is considered as fragment since there is a missing subject after the verb “*need*”

However, the HAs were inclined to use small talk, such as “*How are you? I hope you are feeling well, may I take your summary of Islamic Studies?* (S9, HA#18) (see appendix, 11). As for the eleventh situation that revolves around being a student in the university and asking your friend to give you a calculator because yours does not work, the HAs used promise of reward such as “*could you give me your calculator? I promise I will return it back as soon as I finish using it?* (S11, HA#43) *تقدر تعطيني الحاسبة اوعدك*”

”ارجعها”. On the contrary, LAs tended to employ one type of external modification strategy: grounder such as “*I like give me you calculator, (S11, LA#45) احب انك تعطيني الحاسبه*”. LAs did not use the polite request phrase “I would like”, but rather they wrote “I like”, the wrong use of the possessive pronoun, they wrote “you calculator” rather than “your calculator”.

Under this category in which there is an equity of power between interlocutors and there is no social distance between them meaning that they are familiar to each other (=P, -D). The researcher found that LAs used grounders such as “*I like.....*”. However, the researcher found that HAs used promise of reward such “*could giv me your calculator,i giv you back*” (S11, LA#25)

Considering the fourth category (-P & -D) in this category, there is neither power nor distance between hearer and speaker. HAs percentage accounts for (17.98%), whereas LAs amounts to (18.64%%) with no significant difference between them. The situations that fall under this category are 7 and 12. According to their responses to the designed situations, the HAs used grounders. To clarify, they used this strategy in the seventh situation regarding asking the head of department for writing a recommendation letter because of the necessity of attaching it for applying for a master’s degree. HAs were inclined to use grounder such as “*I would like to write a recommendation letter for me because is a prerequisite paper for pursuing my degree (S7, H#43).*

Moreover, the HAs were inclined to use disarmer in which the speaker tries to use a certain utterance in order to prevent any possible objections such as “*I know you are busy, but could you write a recommendation letter for me? (S7, H#36), عارف انك مشغول*”. On the other hand, LAs used sub-strategies of external modification such as small talk “*how r you, write recomndasion latar for me*” (S7, H#25). Followed by grounder such as “*I like write letar because I need to study*”. LAs made spelling

mistakes, such as “recomndasion” rather than “recommendation”, “latar” rather than “letter”, “r” rather than “are”. Moreover, sentence fragments such as “write” instead of saying “can you write”, “I like” rather than “I would like”.

As for the twelfth situation s revolves around being a student in the university and asking your doctor for borrowing a short story from him, the HAs used types of external modification: getting pre-commitment such as “*can you help me, could you give me the short story?*” (S12, HA#36), “تقدر تساعدني تقدر تعطيني كتاب القصه القصيره”. On the contrary, LAs tended to employ external modification strategy: availability such as “*can I take time....can you give short story?*”. (S12, LA#25)

Under this category in which there is no social power nor social distance between the speaker and the hearer (-P & -D) The researcher found that sub-strategies were used by HAs, namely, the use of getting pre-commitment such as “I would like to ...because....?”, disarmer such as “I know... but could you?”, and getting pre-commitment such as “*could you.....?*”. However, the researcher found that LAs used small talk “how r you.....”, *grounder* such as “I like...because” , availability such as “*can you time.....?*”.

As regards the fifth category (=P & +D) in this category the distance variable exists which means that the requester and the requestee are not familiar to each other and there is an equity of power between them. LAs percentage accounts for (21.01%), whereas HAs amounts to (17.54%) with no significant difference between groups. The situations that fall under this category are 2 and 5.

According to their responses to the designed situations, the HAs used a type of external modification strategy: availability. To illustrate, they used this strategy in the second situation regarding being a student and asking your friends that you are not familiar with to share your idea about the presentation. HAs were inclined to use self-

introduction such as *"I am your colleague, I would like to share my idea because I think it is appropriate (S#2, HA#23), ودي اشارككم لاني اشوفه مناسب"*. Moreover, HAs employed appreciation such *"I highly appreciate your help, I need to borrow your book...."* (S5, HA#36). However, the LAs were inclined to use one type of external modification strategies: disarmer such as *"I now ideas a lot I wont my idea share (S#2, LA#25)*. LAs were unable to perform request appropriately, there were mistakes in terms of sentence structure such as *"I wont my idea share"* rather than *"I want to share my idea"*, along with spelling mistakes such as *"wont"* instead of *"want"*, *"now"* rather than *"know"*.

As for the fifth situation that revolves around being a student in the university and asking your best friend for borrowing his summarizing because you were sick and you were unable to attend the class, the HAs used one type of external modification: Promise of reward such as *"Can you allow me to borrow your summarizing, I promise I will give you back? (S5, HA#18),"*. On the contrary, LAs tended to employ external modification strategy: grounder such as *"I like take it yesterday sick"* (S5, LA#11), ودي اخذه لاني كنت مريض. LAs made mistakes in terms of word choice such as *"I like"* rather than *"I would like"*, *"take"* rather than *"borrow"*, and sentence structure such as *"yesterday sick"*, rather than saying *"because I was sick yesterday"*.

Under this category in which there is an equity of power between the speaker and the hearer and a social distance between them (=P, +D). The researcher found that two sub-strategies were used by HAs, namely, Appreciation such *"I highly appreciate your help...."*, the use of grounder such as *"I would like to share my idea...because...?"*, Promise of reward such as *"I promise you.....?"*. However, the researcher found that two sub-strategies were used by LAs, namely, disarmer such as *"I now ideas a lot I wont my ideas share"* and grounder such as *"I like take yesterday sick...."*.

In terms of the sixth category (+P, -D) in this category the hearer has a kind of power over the speaker and no distance variable between the speaker and hearer. HAs percentage accounts for (16.23%), whereas LAs amounts to (19.23%%) with no significant difference at p-value (0.0445). The situations that fall under this category are 8 and 10.

According to their responses to the designed situations, the HAs used types of external modifications strategies: apology and availability. To illustrate, they used this strategy in the eighth situation regarding asking your neighbors' kids to turn the volume down because they are disturbing you. HAs were inclined to use apology such as "*sorry, I would like you to turn the volume down because I'm unable to concentrate (S8, HA#43)*". Moreover, HAs have used availability such as "*can i take from your time? I know that you're having fun, but can you please turn the volume down?, (S2, HA#16)*".

As for the tenth situation that is concerned with changing your appointment with your neighbors because you have an exam, the HAs used one type of external modification: *Affective appeal* such as "*I will not be able to come, so I would like to change the time of our appointment because I have an exam, (S10, HA#16)*" ابغى امتحان. On the contrary, LAs tended to employ external modification strategy: small talk such as "*How r u? exam tomorrow I has change time*" (S10, LA#25), كيف الحال الاختبار غدا ودي اغيره. It is clear that there are grammatical mistakes made by LAs such as the use of "has" instead of "have", spelling errors such as "r" rather than "are", "u" rather than "you". The incomplete sentence such as "exam tomorrow I has" rather than "I have an exam tomorrow". The lack of politeness devices such as "change time" rather than "can we change our time". The word choice such as "time" rather than "appointment".

Under this category in which there is no social distance between the speaker and the hearer and the superiority of power on the part of speaker over the hearer (+P, -D). The researcher found that two sub-strategies were used by HAs, namely, the use of affective appeal such as “I would like you...because?”, However, the researcher found that LAs used small talk such as “*How r u? exam tomorrow I has change time*”. The following sub section sheds light on the influence of contextual variables in external modifications for each group.

4.3.2.1 Contextual Variable in Using External Modifications between HAs and LAs

The influence of social variables (power and distances) among HAs and LAs was investigated pertaining to the use of external modification. Analysis was conducted based on Brown and Levinson (1978)’s theory of politeness, the comparison between two groups in term of different social power ($=P/+P$ and $-P$) stated that HAs clearly change their use of external modifications based on the power weight. They used more strategies in $(-P)$ situations ($=P$) situations and least in $(+P)$. Chi-square demonstrated satirical difference in three power relation with P-value (0.000*) in all types. On the other hand, LAs showed less influence by social variables in category $+P/-P$ and $+P/-P$, they showed awareness in $=P/-D$.

Table 4.15: The Influence of Contextual Variables (power) on Using External Modifications

External Modification	+P		=P		-P	
	HA	LA	HA	LA	HA	LA
Availability\preparator	5	4	7	8	10	4
Grounder	30	55	50	30	78	45
Getting pre-commitment	2	0	3	4	5	4
Disarmer	0	1	0	2	6	2
Promise of reward	0	0	1	0	1	0
Imposition minimizer	2	0	4	0	8	0
Sweetener	0	0	1	3	5	1
Small talk	23	30	37	25	60	63
Appreciation	4	0	6	1	14	0
Self-introduction	5	3	11	7	10	2
Affective appeal	0	0	4	2	2	0
Apology	12	20	20	10	30	12
Total	83 (18.2%)	113 (33.43)	144 (31.57%)	92 (29.28%)	229 (50.2%)	133 (39.34%)

* $p < 0.05$

Table 4.16: Chi-square Results Effect of Social Power between HAs and LAs in Using External Modification

Groups	+P	=P	-P	+P\=P Chi – square P – value	+P\ -P Chi – square P – value	=P\ -P Chi – square P – value
HA	83 (18.2%)	144 (31.57%)	229 (50.2%)	16.392 0.000*	68.321 0.000*	19.370 0.000*
LA	113 (33.43)	92 (29.28%)	133 (39.34%)	2.151 0.142	1.626 0.202	7.471 0.006*

* $p < 0.05$

Table 4.17: The Influence of Contextual Variables (Distance) on External Modifications

External Modification	Unfamiliar		Familiar	
	HA	LA	HA	LA
Availability\preparator	9	8	13	8
Grounder	60	60	98	70
Getting pre-commitment	3	4	7	4
Disarmer	0	3	6	2
Promise of reward	1	0	1	0
Imposition minimizer	6	0	8	0
Sweetener	1	3	5	1
Small talk	57	45	63	73
Appreciation	10	1	14	0
Self-introduction	11	10	15	2
Affective appeal	4	2	2	0
Apology	30	30	32	12
Total	192 (42.10%)	166 (49.11)	264 (57.89%)	172 (50.88%)

* $p < 0.05$

Table 4.18: Chi-square Results in the Effect of Social Power between HAs and LAs in Using External Modifications

Groups	Familiar		Unfamiliar		Familiar-Unfamiliar
	N	%	N	%	
HA	264	(57.89%)	192	(42.10%)	Chi – square (11.368) P – value (0.001*)
LA	166	(49.11%)	172	(50.88%)	Chi – square.107 P – value (0.744)

* $p < 0.05$

Pertaining social distance, it is observed from the above Tables (4.17 and 4.18) that the HAs group employed significantly more supportive moves when using speech act of request requesting from a familiar than from an unfamiliar interlocutor showing their conscious to social distance with P- value (0.000*). As Brown and Levinson (1987), and Leech (1983) stated that realizing of the social variables (power and distance) reflect the degree of politeness employed by speakers. However, LAs were not aware of the influence of social distance in using requests with familiar or unfamiliar interlocutors although they change but it was slight and insignificant. Now, the following section (4.3.3) associates with the first sub research question that focuses on the use of internal modification between HAs and LAs based on social variable influence.

4.3.3 Internal Modification

Turning now to internal modification that is defined as “elements within the request utterance proper (linked to the head act), the presence of which is not essential for the utterance to be potentially understood as a request” (Blum-Kulka 1989: 60). Internal modification is the most significant part of the request act. Depending on CCSARP, internal modifications include upgraders and downgraders. The speech act of request does not have upgrades, unlike apologies and compliments because this

study focuses on mitigation and politeness used in request act, it entails downgraders. The pragmatic differences of internal modification among both groups are analyzed depending on Blum–Kulka (1989) as shown in Table 4.19.

The first column includes nine strategies as sub types of internal modifications. Next, the number of occurrences and percentages for both groups are presented in column two and three. This is followed by the Pearson Chi-Square values that indicate the frequency and percentage for each situation between groups. The P-value in the last column tells us if there is significant difference between groups in using these strategies.

Table 4.19: Percentage, Raw Frequency, and Pearson Chi-Square Values of Internal Modification by Group in the Social Category

Internal Modification	High		Low		Pearson Chi-Square	p-value
	N	%	N	%		
Politeness device	301	74.68	164	67.76	11.550	0.001*
Play-down (past tense)	30	7.44	15	6.19	3.630	0.000*
Conditional clause (hedge)	15	3.72	28	11.57	1.815	0.000*
Subjectiviser	11	2.72	8	3.3	2.000	0.157
Embedding	4	.99	0	0.00	-	-
Understater	17	4.21	7	2.8	6	0.014*
Appealer	3	.744	0	0.00	-	-
Hedge \ Downtoner	8	1.98	7	2.8	0.286	0.593
Consultative device	14	3.47	13	5.3	0.154	0.695
Total	403		242		27.689	0.000*

Statistically significant at the level of significance (* $p < 0.05$)

Compared to external modifications, the use of internal modification is completely different. According to Table 4.19, the chi-square results show that HAs (n=402) employed significantly internal modifications more than LAs (n=242) with Chi-square (27.687) at P-value (0.000*). As shown in Table 4.19, the overall distribution of internal modifications examines the use of request strategies between HAs and LAs students. Therefore, the specific proportions in the choices between the more direct and less direct strategies can be attributed to academic differences between both.

The choice of request strategies is influenced by their pragmatic realization of social power and distance variables. It is clearly obvious that the most used request strategies are politeness devices, which is an optional device that may be added to a request act to enhance cooperative behavior, that accounts for (67.76%) among LAs and (74.68%) among HAs. For instance, “*could I borrow your calculator, please?*” (S11, HA# 36) and “*can me give please,* (S11, LA# 49) for LAs, respectively. It is clear that LAs wrote incorrect sentence structure that is fragment structure with the pronoun “me”, followed by the verb, rather than saying “*can you give me your summary, please?*”. Surprisingly, politeness devices request strategy has occupied the highest ranks among LAs and HAs. High use of “please” as sub subtype of internal modifications by both groups is an indicator as a negative politeness strategy. Brown and Levinson (1987) assumed nonnative speakers incline to use “please” as a necessary tool of smoothing communication, and it is simple to use compared with other internal strategies, and it reduces the interlocutor’s disturbance.

Results show the second preference strategy among HAs was play down (n=30), whereas the third was understate (n=17). Findings indicate that HAs employed all internal modification strategies. On the contrary, the second strategy used by LAs was conditional clause (n=28) and the third was play down (n=15).

The second strategy used by LAs is conditional clause hedge by including a conditional sentence (11.57%), the requester might further separate his or her request from reality such as “*I borw like bok if mynd u give me*” (S12, LA#15). It is clear that there are spelling mistakes produced by LAs such as borw” rather than “borrow”, “bok” rather than “book”, “mynd” rather than “mind”, “u” rather than “you”. Another mistake is the sentence fragment such as “I borw” rather than “I would like to borrow”, the non-

existence of the object “your book”. Furthermore, they wrote “if mynd” rather than “if you don’t mind”, the incorrect word choice such as “give” rather than.

On the other hand, the least commonly used internal modification sub-strategies among HAs was appealer (n=3) which was used to claim for requestee understanding the request such as “*can you turn down the volume, okay*” (S8, HA#36). However, hedge/ downtoners, (2.8%) which are “modifiers which are used by the speaker in order to modulate the impact his or her request is likely to have on the hearer” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 284), have occupied the lowest rank among LAs with the percentage of (2.8) such as “*it possible turn the volume down?*” (S8, LA#18). surprisingly, the las strategy also used by LA understate (2.8%) “*can you turn decrised the volume little*” (S8, LA#25). It is noticed grammatical (past form after modal) and spelling (decrised instated of decrease) mistake in this statement. It is observed that there is no occurrence of some strategies pertaining LAs such as embedding and appealer.

It is clear that HAs tended to use mitigating expressions to reduce the potential threat such as “could you”, “please?”. Remarkably, the general preference among HAs is “politeness devices”. The reason behind that might be attributed to the fact that the participants were inclined to avoid face threatening acts by using politeness devices. On the contrary, the findings suggested that HAs exhibit a high frequency of play-down tense (n=30) as second sub-strategy. A possible explanation of this might be that HAs attempts to avoid face threatening act by asking for the hearer’s possibility to perform the request. The following table shows some examples collected from DCT pertaining internal modification use.

Table 4.20: Examples of Internal Modifications among HAs and LAs Gathered from DCT

Sample gathered from DCT	Strategies of internal modifications
S1, HA#15 <i>I wonder if you can please allow for missing tomorrow class</i>	Play down
S8, LA#25 <i>can you turn decried the volume <u>little</u>”</i>	Understate
S11, HA# 36 <i>could I borrow your calculator, <u>please</u>?”</i>	Politeness marker
S12, HA #43 <i>Is there any way that I borrow your short story</i>	Downtoner
S4, LA #15 <i>I wanted told students class cancelled</i>	Play- down (past tense)

As the main goal of the current study is to investigate the influence of social variables on the performance among both groups, the below Table 4.21 provides the frequency of using strategy in the social category. The first column shows the number of categories (1 to 12). The second column shows the situations that are used in DCT with social categories. Next, percentages are presented in column three and four. This is followed by the Pearson Chi-Square values that indicate the frequency and percentage for each situation between groups. The P-value in the last column tells us if there is (in)significant difference between groups in six social categories.

Table 4.21: Percentage, Raw Frequency, and Pearson Chi-Square Values of Internal Modification by Group in the Social Categories

Category	Social Category	Low		High		Pearson Chi-Square	p-value
		N	%	N	%		
1.	(+P, +D) 3 and 4	31	12.80	66	16.37	7.538	0.006*
2.	(-P, +D) 1 and 6	49	20.24	71	17.61	4.033	0.045*
3.	(=P, -D) 9 and 11	38	15.7	69	17.12	5.053	0.025*
4.	(-P, -D) 7 and 12	30	12.39	59	14.64	6.128	0.013*
5.	(=P, +D) 2 and 5	39	16.1	71	17.61	6.877	0.009*
6.	(+P, -D) 8 and 10	55	22.7	67	16.62	1.180	0.277
	Total	242		403		27.689	0.000*

Statistically significant at the level of significance (*p < 0.05)

Based on chi-square results on the use of internal modifications among two groups in different social classifications, it is evident that HAs tended to use internal modification significantly more than LAs in the following category (+P\+D, -P\+D, =P\+D, -P\+D and =P\+D) meaning that only on one category there is no significant difference (+P\+D).

As indicated in Table 4.21 above, which shows the pragmatic differences in the use of internal modifications by both HAs and LAs in social categories (Brown and levinson, 1987) in terms of using request strategies, the first category (+P, +D) indicates the existence of power and social distance variables on the speaker over the hearer; it is clear that HAs percentage (16.37%) was significantly more than the percentage of LAs (12.80%) at p-value (0.006). The situations that fall under this category are 3 and 4.

According to their responses to the designed situations, the HAs used three types of internal modifications strategies: politeness device, which is an optional device that may be added to a request act to enhance cooperative behavior. They used this strategy in the third situation in which the speaker is supposed to be a lecturer in the university; thus, he has social power and distance over his students, the speaker's role is embodied in asking one of the students to bring his laptop charger from his office, HAs were inclined to use politeness device such as *"could you give my laptop charger from my office, please?" (S3, HA#23)" (See appendix, 11).*

Second, HAs used play down such as *"I was wandering if you..." (S3, HA#36)"* and consultative device in which the speaker tries to include the hearer and bid for speaker cooperation. such as *"would it be ...? my from charger laptop my bring could you if alright (S3, HA#15)".* However, the LAs inclined to use two types of internal modification sub-strategies, namely, politeness device such as *"you can give charge please (S3, LA#15).* It is clear that the word order produced by LAs is incorrect they started with the subject "you", followed by the modal verb of request "can", subsequent by the main verb "give", the incorrect word choice they used the verb "charge", rather than the noun "charger", furthermore, sentence fragment that lack of the object "me" that should occur after the verb "give". All in all, the whole request question should be *"can you give me my charger?"*. The second commonly used internal modification request sub-strategy by LAs was "downtoner", which is an adverbial device that underrepresents the state of affairs such as *"is way there charge to me" (S3, LA#23).* It is obvious that there are three problems in the above-mentioned request questions. First, the incorrect word order such as "is way there" should be *"is there any way"*, the incorrect word choice they used the verb "charge", rather than the noun "charger",

sentence fragment that lacks the subject, modal verb, main verb, and article that should occur before the noun “charger” such as “could I get a”.

As for the fourth situation that revolves around being a college lecturer and requesting one of your students to inform the rest of the class that you are calling off tomorrow’s lecture because you have an appointment, the HAs used this of internal modification: politeness device such as “*could you inform your classmates that tomorrow’s lecture is cancelled, please?* S4, HA#9). ” رجاء؟ ” and consultative device such as “*would it be possible if you inform your classmates that tomorrow’s lecture is cancelled?* (S4, HA#36) ” هل ممكن الغاء محاضرة غدا؟ ”.

On the contrary, LAs tended to employ sub-strategies of internal modification: politeness device such as “*you can tell no class, please?* (S4, LA#18). It is clear that the word order produced by LAs is incorrect they started with the subject “you”, followed by the modal verb of request “can”, subsequent by the main verb “tell”, instead they should say “can you tell”, the sentence fragment the lack of object “your classmates” after the main verb “tell”, the word choice “no class” should be “tomorrow’s lecture is cancelled”. Second, past tense (play-down) such as “*I wanted to told students class cancelled* , (S4, LA#45) ” اريد تبليغ الطلاب مافيه محاضره . It is obvious that there are three problems in the above-mentioned request questions. First, the incorrect word order such as “wanted to told” should be “wanted you to tell\inform”, the incorrect word choice they used the noun “cancel”, rather than the phrase “tomorrow’s lecture is cancelled”, sentence fragment that lack of the subject, modal verb, main verb, and article such as “*you could inform the students*”. All in all, the whole sentence should be “*I wanted if you could inform the students that tomorrow’s lecture is cancelled*”.

Under this category in which there is a social power and distance (+P, +D) between the speaker and the hearer. The researcher found that three sub-strategies was

used by HAs, namely, politeness device such as “*could you, please?*”, play down “*I was wandering if*”, consultative device such as “*would it be alright if*”. However, the researcher found that two sub-strategies were used by LAs, namely, politeness device such as “*you can....please?*” And play down (past tense) such as “*I wanted?*”.

In respect of the second category (-P, +D), in this category the distance variable exists between the requester and the requestee and the requestee has a kind of power over the requester. The percentage of performing requests among HAs concerning this category is (17.61%), while the percentage of performing requests among LAs is (20.24%). The situations that fall under this category are 1 and 6. At this category, there is significant difference in using internal modification between groups according to Chi-Pearson results (4.35) at P-value (0.045*).

According to their responses to the designed situations, the HAs used three types of internal modifications sub-strategy: downtoner, which is an adverbial device that underrepresents the state of affairs. They used this strategy in the first situation in which the speaker is a student who is unable to attend the lecture because of the bad weather, therefore, he wants to ask his professor for giving him a permission for being absent from tomorrow’s class, HAs were inclined to use downtoner such as “*I just want to ask you if it is possible to be absent from tomorrow’s class?* (S1, HA#18)”. Second, consultative device such as “*Can I absent from tomorrow’s class, would you mind,* (S1, HA#2)”. However, the LAs were inclined to use one type of internal modification strategy: politeness request such as “*I can absent please?* (Sit#1, LA#49)”. It is clear that the word order produced by LAs is incorrect. They started with the subject “*I*”, followed by the modal verb of request “*can*”, followed by the adjective “*absent*” the whole request question should be “*can I be absent tomorrow, please?*”.

As for the sixth situation, which revolves around being a student in the university and asking your doctor to postpone the date of submission for the final homework because you have other quizzes and exams, the HAs used two types of internal modification: consultative device such as “*Is it possible to postpone the date of submission?*” (S6, HA#39). “من الممكن تأجيل التسليم” and politeness device “*could you please postpone the date of submission?*” “هل من الممكن تأجيل التسليم”. On the contrary, LAs tended to employ one type of internal modification strategies: play down in which speakers usually use the past tense but contain a present time reference to decrease the perlocutionary effect such as “*I asked could I if delay?*” (S6, LA#7). It is clearly obvious that LAs made mistakes that are related to word choice such as “I ask” rather than “I was wondering”, “delay” rather than “postpone”, word order “could I if” rather than “if I could”, sentence fragment in terms of the lack of the object such as “delay” rather than “postpone”.

Under this category in which there is no social power, but there is a social distance between the speaker and the hearer meaning that they are not familiar with each other (-P, +D). The researcher found that three sub-strategies were used by HAs, namely, the use of downtoner such as “*I just want....?*”, the use of consultative device such as “*is it possible to....?*”, and the use of politeness device such as “*could you please?*”. However, the researcher found that two sub-strategies were used by LAs, namely, a politeness device such as “I can absent”, and a play down such as “*I asked could I if...*”.

With regard to the third category (=P, -D) In this category the distance variable does not exist which means that the requester and the requestee are familiar to each other, and they have equal power between speaker and hearer. LAs percentage accounts for (15.7%) significantly fewer than HAs amounts to (17.12%) at P-value (0.025*). The situations that fall under this category are 9 and 11.

According to their responses to the designed situations, the HAs used types of internal modifications strategies such as a politeness device. To illustrate, they used this strategy in the ninth situation regarding asking your close friend for giving you the material of “Islamic Studies”, HAs were inclined to use politeness device such as “*can I please take your summary of Islamic Studies?*”(S9, HA#44) and conditional clause “*if you finish your guys, could I take it for*”(S9, HA#34) and consultative device such as “*would you mind lending me your summary of Islamic studies?* (S9, HA#34)”. However, the LAs were inclined to use one type of internal modification strategy: politeness device such as “*I can need summary please?* (S9, LA#45)”. It is clear that the question structure is incorrect it should start with the politeness device “modal verb” can, followed by the subject “I”, moreover, LAs wrote a sentence that lack of the proper main verb “take, lend, borrow” as well as the lack of the possessive pronoun “your” and the lack of the object “of Islamic studies” after “summary”.

As for the eleventh situation that revolves around being a student in the university and asking your friend for giving you a calculator because yours does not work, the HAs used, for example, downtoner such as “*I just want to take your calculator because mine does not work,* (S11, HA#34) *”بس كنت ودي اله حاسبه لانه حقتي ما تشتغل*” and consultative device such as “*would you mind giving me your calculator?* (S11, HA#24)”. On the contrary, LAs tended to employ one type of internal modification strategy: politeness device such as “*I like give me you calculator, please*”.

Under this category in which there is an equity of power between interlocutors and there is no social distance between them meaning that they are familiar to each other (=P, -D). The researcher found that four sub-strategies were used by HAs, namely, the use of politeness device such as “*can I please....?*”, the use of downtoner such as “*I just want to....*” and the use of consultative device such as “*would you mind*” and

conditional clause “if you.... However, the researcher found that one sub-strategy was used by LAs, namely, politeness device such as “....*please* “

Considering the fourth category (-P & -D) in this category the hearer has a kind of power over the speaker and there is no social distance between them. HAs percentage accounts for (14.64%) significantly more than LAs amounts to (12.39%) at P-value (0.013*). The situations that fall under this category are 7 and 12.

According to their responses to the designed situations, the HAs used many types of internal modifications strategies. To illustrate, they used a different strategy in the seventh situation regarding asking the head of the department for writing a recommendation letter. In addition, HAs used subjectivizer strategy in this situation by showing his subjective opinion” *I wonder if you could assist me in my recommendation letter”* (S7, HA#33).

As for the twelfth situation that revolves around being a student in the university and asking your doctor for borrowing a short story from him, the HAs used types of internal modification such as an understater device “*can I borrow your short story for a while?* S12, HA#23) (see appendix, 11) , and play-down such as “*I was wondering if I could borrow your story,* (S12, HA#47)”. On the contrary, LAs tended to employ one type of internal modification strategy: politeness device such as “*I can take samary please*” (S12, LA#44). It is clear that the question structure is incorrect it should start with the politeness device “modal verb” can, followed by the subject “I”, moreover, LAs wrote a sentence fragment that lack of the possessive pronoun “your” and the object “story”, the incorrect word choice such as “write” rather than “borrow” and misspelling “samarly”.

Under this category in which there is no social power nor social distance between the speaker and the hearer (-P, -D). The researcher found that two sub-strategies were

used by HAs, namely, the use of an understater device “*can I borrow your short story for a while?*” the use of play-down such as “I was wondering if I could....” consultative devices such as “would you mind writing...?”. However, the researcher found that sub-strategies was used by LAs, namely, politeness devices such as “*I can...please*”.

As regards the fourth category (=P & +D) in this category the distance variable exists which means that the requester and the requestee are not familiar to each other and there is an equity of power between them. HAs percentage accounts for (17.61%) more significantly than LAs (16.1%) at P-value (0.09*). The situations that fall under this category are 2 and 5.

According to their responses to the designed situations, the HAs used types of internal modifications strategies such as *appealer* which is used to as discourse element such as “*I would like to share my ideas, okay*” (S2, HA#18). To illustrate, they used a politeness device in the second situation regarding being a student and asking a friend who are not familiar with the speaker to share ideas about the presentation. HAs had been inclined to use politeness devices such as “*can I share my ideas, please?*” (S2, HA#43).? (see appendix, 11), and consultative device such as “*would you mind sharing my ideas?*” (S2, HA#9). However, the LAs were inclined to use two types of internal modification strategies: politeness device such as “*I share my idea please*” (S2, LA#40).. It is clear that the question structure is incorrect it should start with the politeness device “modal verb” can, followed by the subject “I”, moreover, LAs wrote a sentence fragment that lack of the possessive pronoun “my” and the object “ideas”, the incorrect word choice such as “give” rather than “share”.

As for the fifth situation that revolves around being a student in the university and asking a friend to borrow a summarising because of sickness. For example, HAs used downotoner such as “*is there any way I could get your summarizing?* S5, HA#43)? هل

”يوجد طريقه اخذ الملخص” and play-down such as “*I was wondering if I can get the summary*”(S5, HA#16). On the contrary, LAs used, for instance, understater such as “*can take sumry for mints*”(S5, LA#45). It is obvious that there are problems in spelling (sumry instead summary, mints instead minutes) and the sentence is a fragment that lacks the subject. All in all, the whole sentence should be “*I could take your summary for minutes?*”.

Under this category in which there is an equity of power between the speaker and the hearer and there is a social distance between them (=P, +D). The researcher found that three sub-strategies were used by HAs, namely, the use of politeness device, such as “*.....please?*”, the use of downtoner such as “*is there any way I could*”, and consultative device such as “*would you mind ...?*” and play-down such as “*I was wondering if I could*”. However, the researcher found that two sub-strategies were used by LAs, namely, a politeness device such as “*I can...please*” and an understater such as “*...for minutes*”.

In terms of the sixth category (+P, -D) in this category the speaker has a kind of power over the hearer and no social distance between them. HAs percentage accounts for (16.62%), whereas LAs amounts to (22.7%). The situations that fall under this category are 8 and 10.

The eighth situation regarding asking neighbors’ kids to turn the volume down, the HAs used for example the embedding strategy such as “*I am happy if you turn down the volume down*”(S8, HA#39). LA, for instance, used understater such as “*turn the volum down little abet*”(S8, LA#34). It is evident that LAs used direct request with grammatical and spelling mistakes.

As for the tenth situation that is concerned with changing appointments with a neighbour as a student, the HAs used consultative devices such as “*would you mind*

changing our appointment because I have an exam?”(S10, HA#36). ”عندك مانع مو عدنا نغير” and play-down such as *“I was wandering if we could change our appointment?”* (S10, HA#18). On the contrary, LAs tended to employ types of internal modification strategy: conditional device such as *“I can change.....if you want”*.(”(S10, LA#45). It is clear that the question structure is incorrect it should start with the politeness device “modal verb” can, followed by the subject “I”, moreover, LAs wrote a sentence fragment that lacks the possessive pronoun “our”, followed by the object “appointment”.

Under this category in which there is an equity of social distance between the speaker and the hearer and the superiority of power on the part of speaker over the hearer (+P, -D). The researcher found that two sub-strategies were used by HAs, namely, the use of politeness device such as *“can you please ...?”*, the use of consultative device such as *“would you mind...?”* and the use of play-down such as *“I was wandering if.....”*. However, LAs used conditional device *“.....if you want”*.

According to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, this stated that the HAs’ use of request was more softened, mitigated, and socially acceptable in respect of politeness. It was also noticed that HA groups used more internal modifications in their requests when addressing higher status interlocutors than to equal and lower status interlocutors. The following section reveals the awareness of each group to social distance and social power.

4.3.3.1 Contextual Variable in Using Internal Modifications between HAs and LAs

This section focuses on the effect of social variables (power and distances) on each group regarding the use of external modification. The comparison between two groups in term of different social power –P (S<H), +P (S>H) and =P (S=H) based on

Brown and Levinson theory of politeness (1987) stated that HAs clearly altered their use of external modifications based on the power weight. They used more strategies in (-P) situations, (=P) situation and least in (+P). Chi-square demonstrated statistical difference in three power relation with P-value (0.000*) in all types. On the other hand, LAs showed less consciousness of social variables, they vary slightly in using according to social power with no significant difference.

Table 4.22: The Influence of Contextual Variables (power) on Internal Modifications

Internal Modification	+P		=P		-P	
	HA	LA	HA	LA	HA	LA
Politeness device	51	49	100	55	150	60
Play-down	7	16	8	7	15	5
Conditional clause	5	4	5	6	7	5
Subjectiviser	0	0	5	4	6	4
Embedding	2	0	0	0	2	0
Understarter	3	0	4	3	8	4
Appealer	0	0	0	0	3	0
Downtoner	0	1	1	2	7	4
Consultive device	3	4	6	6	5	3
Total	71 (17.61%)	74 (30.57%)	129 (32%)	83 (34.29%)	203 (50.37%)	85 (35.12%)

* $p < 0.05$

Table 4.23: Chi-square results effect of Social Power between HAs and LAs in Using Internal Modifications

Groups	+P	=P	-P	+P\=P Chi – square P – value	+P\ -P Chi – square P – value	=P\ -P Chi – square P – value
HA	71 (17.61%)	129 (32%)	203 (50.37%)	16.820 0.000*	63.591 0.000*	16.494 0.000*
LA	74 (30.57%)	83 (34.29%)	85 (35.12%)	.516 0.473	.761 0.383	.024 0.877

* $p < 0.05$

As shown in the above table, HAs were sensitive to the role of social power in the use of internal modifiers, as they altered their use of internal modifiers based on the

value of power. When the social power of the hearer increased, they employed more internal modifications. P-value (0.000*) confirmed the significant statistic among power relations. Regarding LAs performance, social power factor did not appear to be a significant variable for LAs in using internal modifications, who employed the same level of this strategy less or more equivalently with no significant differences in three power relations.

Table 4.24: The influence of Contextual Variables (distance) on Internal Modifications

Internal Modification	Familiar		Unfamiliar	
	HA	LA	HA	LA
Politeness device	184	90	117	74
Play-down	23	12	7	16
Conditional clause	7	7	10	8
Subjectiviser	7	4	4	4
Embedding	3	0	1	0
Understarter	11	5	4	2
Appealer	3	0	0	0
Downtoner	6	4	2	3
Consultive device	9	10	5	3
Total	250 (62.03%)	132 (54.54%)	150 (37.22%)	110 (45.45%)

* $p < 0.05$

Pertaining social distance as presented on Tables (4.23 and 4.24), it is observed that the HAs group employed significantly more internal modifications when using speech act of request requesting from a familiar than from an unfamiliar interlocutor. However, LAs were not aware of the influence of social distance in using requests with familiar or unfamiliar interlocutors.

Table 4.25: Chi-square Results in the Effect of Social Power between HAs and LAs in Using Internal Modifications

Group	Familiar		Unfamiliar		Familiar- Unfamiliar
	N	%	N	%	
HA	250	(62.03%)	150	(37.22%)	Chi- square (25.000) P-value (0.000*)
LA	132	(54.54%)	110	(45.45%)	Chi- square (2.000) P-value (0.157)

* $p < 0.05$

The first aim of this research is to investigate pragmalinguistic competence of SEFL at different language proficiency. The third section of this chapter entails the second aim of the current study which the pragmatic realization between HAs and LAs in using speech act indicating similarities and differences in their socio pragmatic knowledge which refers to the correlation between the appropriate utterance concerning social power and distance, rights, obligation, and the level of the force engaged in the specific act (Leech, 1983).

4.4 RQ2: Pragmatic Realization of Making Request (Situational Variability).

As mentioned earlier, the second section sheds light on the second question of the current research pertaining the situational variability (sociopragmatic competence) between high and low achievers using 5-likert scale (familiarity between interlocutors, difficulty in making request, imposition in carrying request, right of performing request and power), for further information, refer to section (3.5.3, methodology and appendix, 7).

Brown and Levinson (1987) and Mir, 1994 stated that speakers' assessment of values of contextual variables (e.g., power, right and obligation) may influence speech act production which may consider as cross-cultural differences. To gain the required data, students were instructed to assess social variables from 1 to 5; 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest. T-test is performed to investigate if there is any significant difference between two groups in realizing social variables in making a request act. The analysis focuses on all six social classifications. The integration of the social variables will equal six possible formulations in the current SRQ as follow: situation 6 and 1 (-D, +P),

situations 3 and 4 (+D, +P), situations 2 and 5 (=P, +D), situations 12 and 7 (-P, -D), situations 10 and 8 (+D, -P), and situations 11 and 9 (=P, -D).

As stated, the letter (P) stands for the power of the speaker over the hearer that includes three possible cases such as (+P) speaker has more power, (-P) the speaker has less power, and (=P) speaker and hearer have the same degree of power. Moreover, social distance (D) refers to what extent interlocutors know each other; in this variable, it would be either they are familiar with each other (+D) or not familiar (-D).

4.4.1 Familiarity between Interlocutors

It is the first variable that influences the use of request strategy among HAs and LAs. The ability of both groups in performing requests by considering the familiarity between interlocutors to carry out requests is illustrated in Table 4.26. The first column shows the social categories. The second and third columns present the number of each group. Next, mean and standard deviations are presented in column four and five. This is followed by the T- values that indicate the frequency and percentage for each situation between groups. The P-value in the last column tells us if there is significant difference between groups pertaining to pragmatic realization.

The independent-samples t-test (or independent t-test) compares the means between two unrelated groups on the same continuous, dependent variable. an independent t-test could be used to understand whether means responses in 5-likert scale differed based on proficiency (the dependent variable would be "means responses in 5-likert scale" and the independent variable would be "proficiency", which has two groups: " LOW " and " HIGH ").

Table 4.26: Independent - Sample T-Test results for the Detection of Differences for Familiarity at the Two Category across High and Low SEFL Proficiency Learners

Field	Proficiency	No	Mean	Standard deviation	t value	p. value
(+P, +D) Familiarity	LOW	48	2.352	1.067	-2.783	0.006*
	HIGH	50	3.023	1.320		
(-P, +D) Familiarity	LOW	48	2.426	1.143	-2.739	0.007*
	HIGH	50	3.068	1.169		
(=P, -D) Familiarity	LOW	48	2.519	1.145	-2.578	0.011*
	HIGH	50	3.182	1.402		
(-P, -D) Familiarity	LOW	48	2.611	1.280	-3.750	0.000*
	HIGH	50	3.568	1.228		
(=P, +D) Familiarity	LOW	48	2.426	0.988	0.681	0.497
	HIGH	50	2.284	1.070		
(+P, -D) Familiarity	LOW	48	2.924	0.988	-0.095	0.924
	HIGH	50	2.940	1.291		

* $p < 0.05$

Table 4.26 above shows that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance (≤ 0.05) in the Familiarity (=P, +D), (+P, -D) field according to the variable of the proficiency. Accordingly, four categories show significant differences in favor of high achievers at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) as follows: +P, +D ($t = -2.783$, $p = 0.006$), -P, +D ($t = -2.739$, $p = 0.007$), =P, -D ($t = -2.578$, $p = 0.011$) and -P, -D ($t = -3.750$, $p = 0.000$).

In this category (+P, +D), HAs ($M = 3.02$) assessed speaker's familiarity significantly more than LAs ($M = 2.35$) at P-value (0.006*). category 1 (+P, +D) includes situation 3 (fetching the charger) and situation 4 (broadcasting news). Based on the foregoing, it can be deduced that HAs were completely aware of the social power and distance between the speaker and the hearer in which there is social between them in terms of the familiarity field i.e. the familiarity between the speaker and the hearer. For

instance, their use of a politeness device when the speaker has power over the hearer and there is a social distance between them, for example, they used the following request “*could you please fetch the charger from my office, highly appreciated?*” (S3, HA#16). On the other hand, LAs have less pragmatic competence in understanding social power and distance. For instance, using mood derivable is considered as an imperative request strategy in this situation (+P, +D) for example “*tell them no class tomorrow*” (S4, LA#3)

In this category (-P, +D), HAs (M=3.068) assessed speaker’s familiarity significantly more than LAs (M=2.42) at P-value (0.007*). Category 2 (-P, +D) includes situation 1(permission to absent) and situation 6 (postpone the submission). The speaker has less social power and there is a social distance (-P, +D) between the requester and the requestee. The researcher found that HAs inclined to employ a variety of external and internal modification and less level of directness meaning that they were conscious of social power and distance as the speaker in this category has less power, namely, the use of query preparatory, such as “*can I ...? I am willing to, ..., is it possible*”, want statement such as “*I want...*”, hedged performative such as “*I would like to..*”....etc. However, the researcher found statistically that LAs less aware of familiarity variable in their assessment (M= 2.42) compared to HAs (3.068), for example, they used explicit performative such as “*I ask you ...*” and hedged performative statement such as “*I wou to ask yo..*”.

In this category (=P, -D), HAs (M=3.18) assessed speaker’s familiarity significantly more than LAs (M=2.51) at P-value (0.011*). Regarding an equity of power and distance (=P, -D) between the speaker and the hearer. *Category 3 (=P, -D)* includes situation 9 (using old course book) and situation 11(taking calculators). HAs showed more awareness of social variable compared with LAs but they used less of

external and internal modification since there is equal power between speaker and hearer (see Table 4.23 and 4.16) which assumed that HAs use less strategies in (=P) compared with (-P) situation.

The researcher suggests some sub-strategies used by HAs, namely, the use of hedged performative such as "*I would like to...*" the use of query preparatory, such as "*would you mind...? I am willing to..., is it possible*", want statements such as "*I want...*". The researcher found that two sub-strategies were used by HAs, namely, the use of politeness devices, such as "*could/can you please....?*", the use of play-down such as "*I was wondering if I could...*" consultative devices such as "*would you mind writing...?*". However, the researcher found LAs show less consciousness of social familiarity especially when there is equal power. Hence, they did not vary in using strategies. For example, they used mood derivable such as "*give me...*" and conditional clause "*if you....*".

In this category (-P, -D), HAs (M=3.56) assessed speaker's familiarity significantly more than LAs (M=2.61) at P-value (0.000*). Category 4 (-P, -D) includes situation 7 (asking a recommendation) and situation 12 (Borrowing short story). In respect of less power and distance (-P, -D) between the speaker and the hearer. It is observed that the speaker increased their use of request strategy (internal and external modification) when the speaker has less power and no distance. This result is confirmed with the results on Tables (4.7, 4.23 and 4.16 and 4.5). for example, HAs increase in the use of politeness devices such as "*can I please....?*", the use of downtoner such as "*I just want to....*" and the use of consultative devices such as "*would you mind*". However, the above results in this category totally agree with the results on Tables (4.7, 4.16, and 4.23) that demonstrated that LAs did not concentrate on the familiarity (distance) factor in their speech. They for example, they used grounder "*I like to....*"

In this category (=P, +D), the speaker's familiarity assessment between HAs (M=2.28) and LAs (M=2.24) was not significantly different. Category 5 (=P, +D) includes situation 2 (Sharing ideas) and situation 5 (Copying notebook) that includes an equity of power, but there is a social distance between the speaker and the hearer (=P, +D). In this situation, it is observed both HAs and LAs assessed the familiarity somehow the same with slight difference. The reason may refer to the nature of the situation as there is equal power between speaker and hearer.

In this category (+P, -D), the speaker's familiarity assessment between HAs (M=2.94) and LAs (M=2.92) was not significantly different. Category 6 (+P, -D) includes situation 10 (Changing the time) and situation 8 (Turning down the volume). In terms of a superiority of power on the part of speaker over the hearer, but there is no social distance between the speaker and the hearer (+P, -D). T-test results indicated there is no significant difference between HAs and LAs in assessing the familiarity between interlocutors. For example, when the speakers have power, they tend to use more direct strategy and less conventional indirect as stated in this research.

4.4.2 Speaker's Power over the Hearer

It is the second variable that influences the use of request strategy among HAs and LAs. The ability of both groups in performing requests by taking into account the power of speaker over the hearer are illustrated in Table 4.27. The first column shows the social categories. The second and third columns present the number of each group. Next, mean and standard deviations are presented in column four and five. This is followed by the T- values that indicate the frequency and percentage for each situation between groups. The P-value in the last column tells us if there is significant difference between groups pertaining to pragmatic realization.

Table 4.27: Independent - Sample T-Test Results for the Detection of Differences for Power at the Two Category across High and Low SEFL Proficiency Learners

Field	Proficiency	No	Mean	Standard deviation	t value	p. value
(+P, +D) Power	LOW	48	2.185	1.230	-2.713	0.008*
	HIGH	50	2.818	1.040		
(-P, +D) Power	LOW	48	2.528	0.823	-2.579	0.017*
	HIGH	50	3.045	0.971		
(=P, -D) Power	LOW	48	3.222	1.550	-2.076	0.041*
	HIGH	50	3.818	1.225		
(-P, -D) Power	LOW	48	2.806	1.025	-0.540	0.590
	HIGH	50	2.920	1.073		
(=P, +D) Power	LOW	48	2.330	0.977	-1.458	0.148
	HIGH	50	2.630	1.056		
(+P, -D) Power	LOW	48	3.065	1.270	-2.147	0.034*
	HIGH	50	3.534	0.773		

* $p < 0.05$

Table above shows there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the Power (-P, -D) and (=P, +D) field according to the variable of the proficiency. Accordingly, four categories show significant differences in favour of high achievers at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) as follows: +P, +D ($t = -2.713$, $p = 0.008$), -P, +D ($t = -2.579$, $P = 0.017$), =P, -D ($t = -2.076$, $P = 0.041$), =P, -D ($t = -2.147$, $P = 0.034$).

In this category (+P, +D), HAs ($M = 2.81$) assessed the speaker's power significantly more than LAs ($M = 2.18$). Category 1 includes situation 3 (Fetching the charger), such as the use of mood derivable among LAs "*fetch my charger from my office*" while HAs inclined to use politeness device such as "can you please bring my charger?" and situation 4 (Broadcasting news) such as the use of strong hint among HAs in which speakers use part of reference which is required for implementation of

the act “*there will be n class tomorrow*,” while the use of hedged performative among HAs “I would like to tell you that tomorrow’s lecture is cancelled”.

In this category (-P, +D), the speaker’s power assessment between HAs (M=3.045) and LAs (M=2.528) was significantly different at P-value (0.017). Category 2 includes situation 1 (Canceling a class) in which HAs used hedged performative such as “I would like to tell that I will not attend tomorrow’s lecture”, whereas LAs used want statement such as “*I want to tell that I will not attend tomorrow’s lecture*” and situation 6 (Postpone the submission) the use of external modification: sweetener among HAs, such as “My lovely doctor, I was sick yesterday, can you postpone the date of submission?”. However, LAs tended to use mood derivable such as “postpone the date of submission”.

In this category (=P, -D), HAs (M=3.81) assessed the speaker's power significantly more than LAs (M=3.22). Category 3 includes situation 9 (Using an old course book) in which HAs used a politeness device such as “can I borrow your book?”, while LAs used mood derivable such as “give me your book” and situation 11 (Taking calculators) in which both groups used politeness device such as “can I use your calculator?”

In this category (-P, -D), the speaker’s power assessment between HAs (M=2.92) and LAs (M=2.80) was not significantly different. Category 4 includes situation 7 (asking a recommendation) in which both groups used politeness request such as “*can you please write a recommendation letter for me?*” and situation 12 (Borrowing short story)

In this category (=P, +D), the speaker’s power assessment between HAs (M=2.63) and LAs (M=2.33) was not significantly different. Category 5 includes situation 2 (Sharing ideas); both groups used hedged performative such as “*I would like to share*

my ideas” and situation 5 (Copying notebook) in which both groups used politeness request such as “*can I please copy your notebook?*”

In this category (+P, -D), HAs (M=3.53) assessed the speaker's power significantly more than LAs (M=3.06). Category 6 includes situation 10 (Changing the time) in which HAs used hedged performative such as “I would like to change my appointment”, moreover, HAs used strong hint such as “I am busy” and situation 8 (Turning down the volume) in which HAs used politeness request such as “can I turn the volume down?”, while LAs used mood derivable such as “turn the volume down”.

Based on the above findings, HAs were able to perform requests by taking into account the social power and distance between the speaker and the hearer as their assessment was significantly higher than LA. However, LAs assessed the power variable lower than HAs indicating that they were unable to perform a request when there is a power of the speaker over the hearer, but there is no social distance between them such difference is manifested in their pragmatic realization.

4.4.3 Difficulty of Performing Request

It is the third variable that influences the use of request strategy among HAs and LAs. The ability of both groups in performing requests by taking into account the difficulty in performing requests and social distance variables is illustrated in Table 4.28. The first column shows the social categories. The second and third column present the number of each group. Next, mean and standard deviations are presented in column four and five. This is followed by the T- values that indicate the frequency and percentage for each situation between groups. The P-value in the last column tells us if there is significant difference between groups pertaining to pragmatic realization.

Table 4.28: Independent - Sample T-Test Results for the Detection of Differences for Difficulty at the Two Category across High and Low SEFL Proficiency Learners

Field	Proficiency	No	Mean	Standard deviation	t value	p. value
(+P, +D) Difficult	LOW	48	2.216	0.824	-0.138	0.890
(-P, +D) Difficult	HIGH	50	2.241	0.930	-4.209	0.000*
	LOW	48	2.519	0.916		
(=P, -D) Difficult	HIGH	50	3.318	0.951	-1.559	0.122
	LOW	48	2.148	0.984		
(-P, -D) Difficult	HIGH	50	2.489	1.179	-2.579	0.011*
	LOW	48	2.213	0.940		
(=P, +D) Difficult	HIGH	50	2.727	1.031	-2.424	0.017*
	LOW	48	2.528	0.993		
(+P, -D) Difficult	HIGH	50	3.045	1.120	-2.272	0.025*
	LOW	48	2.157	1.072		
	HIGH	50	2.914	0.875		

* $p < 0.05$

Table above shows there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in only two categories of the Difficulty (+P, +D), (=P, -D) field according to the variable of the proficiency. However, four categories show significant differences in favor of high achievers at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) as follows: - P, +D ($t = -4.209$, $p = 0.000$), -P, -D ($t = -2.579$, $P = 0.011$), =P, +D ($t = -2.424$, $P = 0.017$), +P, -D ($t = -2.272$, $P = 0.025$).

In this category (+P, +D), the speaker's difficulty assessment between HAs ($M = 2.24$) and LAs ($M = 2.61$) was not significantly different. Category 1 (+P, +D) includes situation 3 (Fetching the charger) and situation 4 (Broadcasting news). In this situation there is social power and distance between speaker and hearer. HAs assessed difficulty more than LAs but still insignificant.

In this category (-P, +D), HAs (M=3.31) assessed the speaker's difficulty significantly more than LAs (M= 2.51). Category 2 includes situation 1 (Cancelling a class) such as the use of hedged performative among HAs "*I would like to tell that I will not attend tomorrow's lecture*", whereas LAs used mood derivable "*I will not come tomorrow*" and situation 6 (Postpone the submission) such as the use of sweetener among HAs "*my lovely doctor, my mum was sick, I was unable to write my assignment, can you postpone the date of submission?*", whereas LAs used want statement "*I want you to postpone the date of submission*". These results show how HAs were more conscious of social variables than LAs. That is when speakers have low power, HAs used more polite expressions by employing a variety of request strategy with a person who has more power.

In this category (=P, -D), the speaker's difficulty assessment between HAs (M=2.48) and LAs (M=2.14) was not significantly different., Category 3 (=P, -D) includes situation 9 (Using old course book) in which both groups used few of request strategies such politeness device "*can I*" and situation 11 (Taking calculators) in which both groups used query preparatory strategy: permission: "*May I ?*", and want statement "*I want ...*".

In this category (-P, -D), HAs (M=2.72) assessed speaker's difficulty significantly more than LAs (M= 2.21) at P-value (0.011*). Category 4 includes situation 7 (Asking a recommendation) in which HAs used politeness device such as "*can you writeplease, I appreciate you?*", while LAs used direct strategy (explicit performative) such as "*I ask you to write*" and situation 12 (Borrowing short story) in which HAs used query preparatory such as "*do you mind borrowing your story*", whereas LAs used want statement such as "*I want to.....*".

Regarding category 5 (=P, +D), HAs (M=3.04) assessed the speaker's difficulty significantly more than LAs (M= 2.52) including situation 2(Sharing ideas) and situation 5(Copying notebook). In addition, category 6 (+P, -D), HAs (M=2.91) assessed the speaker's difficulty significantly more than LAs (M= 2.15) including situation 10(Changing the time). For both categories, HAs scored high level than LAs in their assessment of difficulty of performing request strategies. That is an indicator that HAs have a sociopragmatic knowledge more than LAs.

Based on the foregoing, there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the Difficult (+P, +D), (=P, -D) field according to the variable of the proficiency. There are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the Difficult (-P, +D) field according to the variable of the proficiency as the value of "t" was (-4.209) by a statistical significance of (0.000) in favor of high achievers. There are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the Difficult (-P, -D) field according to the variable of the proficiency as the value of "t" was (-2.579) by a statistical significance of (0.011) in favor of high achievers.

There are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the Difficult (=P, +D) field according to the variable of the proficiency as the value of "t" was (-2.424) by a statistical significance of (0.017) in favor of high achievers. There are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the Difficult (+P, -D) field according to the variable of the proficiency as the value of "t" was (-2.272) by a statistical significance of (0.025) in favor of high achievers.

It is observed statistically that HAs have a better pragmatic realization depending on their assessment compared to LAs' assessment. That is LAs showed weakness in their pragmatic competence in realizing social variables that influence speech act.

Moreover, the findings contended that the preferable request strategy was conventional indirectness as recognized by question modals and forms. LAs were not familiar with situational and social rules influencing the making of requests. Also, it was observed that the participants did not have sufficient competence to perform requests in English because of their reliance on “mood derivable” and “want statement” that are considered as imperative and face threatening act (FTA) on the part of the hearer. Moreover, their performance was not consistent with HAs regarding pragmatic realization. All of which, indicate the difficulty of LAs to use request strategy with the same impact as HAs.

4.4.4 Right of Performing Request

It is the fourth variable that influences the use of request strategy among HAs and LAs. The ability of both groups in performing requests by taking into account the right of performing requests is illustrated in Table 4.29. The first column shows the social categories. The second and third columns present the number of each group. Next, mean and standard deviations are presented in column four and five. This is followed by the T- values that indicate the frequency and percentage for each situation between groups. The P-value in the last column tells us if there is significant difference between groups pertaining to pragmatic realization.

Table 4.29: Independent - Sample T-Test results for the Detection of Differences for Right at the Two Category across High and Low SEFL Proficiency Learners

Field	Proficiency	No	Mean	Standard deviation	t value	p. value
(+P, +D) Right	LOW	48	2.778	1.327	-2.063	0.042*
	HIGH	50	3.295	1.112		
(-P, +D) Right	LOW	48	2.861	1.143	-0.226	0.822
	HIGH	50	2.909	0.910		
(=P, -D) Right	LOW	48	3.046	1.125	-1.607	0.111
	HIGH	50	3.364	0.742		
(-P, -D) Right	LOW	48	2.954	0.958	-1.438	0.154
	HIGH	50	3.239	0.997		
(=P, +D) Right	LOW	48	2.972	0.983	1.441	0.153
	HIGH	50	2.705	0.823		
(+P, -D) Right	LOW	48	2.991	1.176	-2.893	0.005*
	HIGH	50	3.602	0.846		

* $p < 0.05$

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the speaker's right of making the request is considered another factor which could influence the level of directness and politeness in making requests in the English language. Table above shows there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the Right (-P, +D), (=P, -D), (-P, -D), (=P, +D) field according to the variable of the proficiency. However, only two categories show significant differences in favor of high achievers at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) as follows: (+P, -D, ($t = -2.893$, $P = 0.005$) and +P, +D ($t = -2.063$, $P = 0.042$).

In this category (=P, +D), HAs ($M = 3.29$) assessed the speaker's right significantly more than LAs ($M = 2.77$). Category 1 includes situation 3 (Fetching the charger) such as the use of politeness devices among both groups "can you please bring my charge?" and situation 4 (Broadcasting news) in which both groups used politeness devices such as "can you inform the students that tomorrow's lecture is cancelled?".

In this category (-P, +D), the speaker's right assessment between HAs (M= 2.90) and LAs (M=2.86) was not significantly different., Category 2 includes situation 1(Canceling a class) in which both groups used hedged performative such as "I would like to tell you that I will not come tomorrow" and situation 6 (Postpone the submission) in which both groups used external modification: grounder "*I would like an extension for my assignment because I take long time typing my work*".

In this category (=P, -D), the speaker's right assessment between HAs (M= 3.36) and LAs (M=3.04) was not significantly different., Category 3 includes situation 9 (Using old course book) in which both groups used politeness device such as "can I use your old book?" and situation 11(Taking calculators) in which both groups used external modification: disarmer "I know you are busy, but can I use your calculator?"

The speaker's right assessment in category 4 (-P, -D) was by HAs (M= 3.23) and by LAs was (M=2.95) and the speaker's right assessment in category 5 (=P, +D) was by HAs (M= 2.97) and LAs (M=2.70). meaning that in both categories HAs and LAs showed similarities in assessing the right of speaker to perform requests although HAs assessed higher than LAs but is not significant.

Finally, in this category (+P, -D), HAs (M= 3.60) assessed the speaker's right to perform request significantly more than LAs (M= 2.99). Category 6 includes situation 10(Changing the time) in which HAs used strong hint such as "*I am busy.....*" and situation 8(Turning down the volume) in which LAs used mood derivable such as *turn the volume down...*

The findings showed that both HAs and LAs show similar more than different assessments of the right of performing requests. Based on the above, there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the Right (-P, +D), (=P, -D), (-P, -D), (=P, +D) field according to the variable of the proficiency.

However, there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the Right (+P, +D) field according to the variable of the proficiency as the value of "t" was (-2.063) by a statistical significance of (0.042) in favor of high achievers and in the Right (+P, -D) field according to the variable of the proficiency as the value of "t" was (-2.893) by a statistical significance of (0.005) in favor of high achievers.

4.4.5 Imposition to Carry Out Request

It is the fifth variable that influences the use of request strategy among HAs and LAs. The ability of both groups to perform requests by taking into account the imposition to carry out requests are illustrated in Table 4.30. The first column shows the social categories. The second and third columns present the number of each group. Next, mean and standard deviations are presented in column four and five. This is followed by the T- values that indicate the frequency and percentage for each situation between groups. The P-value in the last column tells us if there is significant difference between groups pertaining to pragmatic realization.

Table 4.30: Independent - Sample T-Test Results for the Detection of Differences for Obligation at the Two Category across High and Low SEFL Proficiency Learners

Field	Proficiency	No	Mean	Standard deviation	t value	p value
(+P, +D) Obligation	LOW	48	2.815	1.191	-1.324	0.189
(-P, +D) Obligation	HIGH	50	3.125	1.106	-4.209	0.000*
	LOW	48	2.519	0.916		
(=P, -D) Obligation	HIGH	50	3.18	0.951	-2.520	0.013*
	LOW	48	2.667	1.046		
(-P, -D) Obligation	HIGH	50	3.159	0.848	-2.582	0.011*
	LOW	48	2.620	1.149		
(=P, +D) Obligation	HIGH	50	3.159	0.854	-0.998	0.321
	LOW	48	2.352	0.867		
(+P, -D) Obligation	HIGH	50	2.546	1.025	-2.292	0.024*
	LOW	48	2.759	1.400		
	HIGH	50	3.386	1.280		

* $p < 0.05$

Brown and Levinson (1987)'s politeness theory reported that context factors such as imposition influence the choosing and realization request act in order to achieve communicative acts. Table above shows there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the Obligation (+P, +D), (=P, +D) field according to the variable of the proficiency. However, three categories show significant differences in favor of high achievers at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) as follows: - P, +D ($t = -4.209$, $p = 0.000^*$), =P, -D ($t = -2.520$, $p = 0.013$), -P, -D ($t = -2.582$, $P = 0.011$), +P, -D ($t = -2.292$, $P = 0.024$)

In category 1 (+P, +D), the speaker's obligation assessment between HAs ($M = 3.125$) and LAs ($M = 2.81$) was not significantly different. Moreover, in category 5 (=P, +D), the speaker's obligation assessment between HAs ($M = 2.54$) and LAs ($M = 2.35$) was not significantly different. It is observed based on T-test results that compared

between HAs and LAs' assessment of the speakers' obligation to perform request the following findings: in category 2 (-P, +D), the speaker's obligation assessment between HAs (M= 3.18) and LAs (M=2.519) was significantly different at P-value (0.000*) including situations 1 and 6. In category 3 (=P, -D), HAs (M= 3.15) assessed the speaker's obligation significantly more than LAs (M= 2.66) including situation 9 and 11. In category 4 (-P, -D), HAs (M= 3.15) assessed the speaker's right significantly more than LAs (M= 2.62) including situations 7 and 12. Finally, in category 6 (+P, -D), the speaker's obligation assessment between HAs (M= 3.38) and LAs (M=2.75) was significantly different including situation 10 and 8.

There are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the Obligation (-P, -D) field according to the variable of the proficiency as the value of "t" was (-2.582) by a statistical significance of (0.011) in favor of high achievers. For example, LAs were unaware of the influence of social variables that requires the speaker to modify their speech according to the weight of power and distance. However, HAs assessed this category more taking into consideration the importance of social variable in their speech which reflect the ability to employ appropriate utterance according to power and distance level. In some situations when the speaker has low power, LAs used mood derivable as highest degree of directness which is considered as imperative statement and as a face-threatening act on the part of the hearer such as "*give me*", and "*write to me ...*". So, results so far support the claim of the statement problem of the current study which states that LAs show difficulty in using and realizing request act and language proficiency have a significant impact on producing range of request strategies.

4.5 Conclusion

The study found that HAs have more proficiency levels than LAs in terms of using sentences that have well structured, correct grammar, and word choice. Moreover, HAs were more inclined towards using mitigating request devices and polite strategies compared to LAs. Furthermore, HAs used non conventionally indirect (NCI) strategies, which reveal their high proficiency level as opposed to LAs.

Moreover, LAs face challenges in terms of semantic level such as the use of “*daly*” rather than “*delay*”, along with having problems in terms of spelling such as “*tommorrow*” rather than “*tomorrow*”, and grammatical mistake such as the use of auxiliary verb “*does*”, rather than “*do*”, moreover, the use of weak sentences in terms of grammar and word choice, such as “*your have*” instead of “*you have*” and using the assignment soon instead of “*delay the date of submission*”, which manifest their low proficiency levels. The researcher believes that pragmatic competence is difficult for non-native speakers to achieve due to the cultural differences between the two languages.

HAs have used conventionally indirect strategies the most such as “*I would like to ask you to write a recommendation letter*”; this could be due to the fact that they are more exposed to English than LAs. Generally speaking, HAs have a better ability to minimize the transfer of the first language by using polite expressions and devices that are commonly used in English. According to the politeness scale (FTA), HAs preferred negative politeness by using external modifications expressions such as apology in their request taking into account the importance of the factor of social variables (power and distance) and off record strategy such as non-conventionally indirect strategies (strong and mild hints). However, LAs groups use on record strategy by using direct request and they use less internal and external modification in comparison with HAs performance.

The study found that both groups declined in using internal modifications and inclined to use direct in performing request strategies regardless of the fact that HAs performed better than LAs, both groups were unable to master the language as native speakers because SEFLs used direct request strategies. The finding of this study is consistent with Qari (2017) that Saudi Arabic Native speakers inclined to use direct speech acts unlike British Native speakers who tend to use indirect speech act.

The study concluded that both groups had some similarities in recognizing pragmatic competence that means they were similar in assessing some variables to perform request strategies in an appropriate manner although HAs have more pragmatic realization than LAs, both groups inclined to directness which indicate the lack of pragmatic competence among SEFLs because of their negligence of the norms, values, and culture of the second language.

This finding is consistent with Alsulayyi (2016) study who stated that Saudi learners have a lack of pragmatic competence, and they have to increase the exposure to real - life activities. One of the effective strategies to improve their pragmatic ability is realizing the norms, values, and culture of the target language. To sum up, this study comes to conclude that there were more differences than similarities among HA and LA in producing and realizing speech acts.

This study showed that learners of low language proficiency could not have the capability to make a successful request unlike their high language proficiency counterparts. Their insufficient grammatical and vocabulary competence leads to the use of incorrect speech acts. This study conformed with Kasper (1989) findings as stated that language proficiency influences significantly on pragmatic competence.

However, HAs tended to use a wide range of linguistic forms in using external modifications and internal modification significantly compared to LAs' performance.

Regarding the influence of contextual variables in using request strategies between HAs and LAs, it is observed that HAs showed awareness to both social power and distance in realizing and producing speech acts. However, LAs show less consciousness of the effect of social power and distance in altering request strategies. The following chapter presents the recommendation and conclusion of the current research.

