

External Request Modifications in Yemeni Arabic as Used in Male-Male and Male-Female Interactions

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Abstract:

The current study explores the types and frequency of external request modifications in Yemeni Arabic as produced by male speakers the study participants were 336 undergraduate students (168 male participants and 168 female participants) from Sana'a University, aged 20-23. All of the participants are relatively homogeneous in terms of their cultural background. The data were collected by using Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The analysis of the data is based on Blum-Kulka et al's (1989) CCSARP (Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project) coding scheme. The results of the study showed that the male speakers generally showed greater use of external request modification to mitigate their requests. Seven external request modifications were identified in the data of the present study in M-M, M-F interactions. However, in M-M interactions, the number of external request modifications, which were identified in the data, was 2006. On the other hand, in M-F interactions the number of external request modification was 2016. The results revealed that Yemeni males showed greater use of the external request modification when interacting with females more than to males.

Keywords: *request, politeness, direct request, indirect request, external modifications*

1. INTRODUCTION

A speech act is a direct or an indirect utterance that serves a function in communication such as thanking, apology and request, and which consists of a word, phrase, sentence, number of sentences or gesture and body movement (Hatch, 1992). Speech acts are very important parts in real-life interactions, therefore, the interlocutors must have full knowledge of the language and how to use that language appropriately within a given culture to minimize misunderstanding especially since the speaker's intent and sentence meaning may differ (Lindfors, 1999; Hatch, 1992; Cohen and Olshtain, 1981). Austin (1962) defines speech acts as acts performed by utterances like giving orders or making promises. Austin suggests that speech acts could be expressed directly by using both explicit and implicit performative.

Austin's explanation and distinction between implicit and explicit led Searle (1975) to categorize speech acts into two types, 'direct speech acts' and 'indirect speech acts'. A direct speech act is defined as an utterance in which the meaning of the expression is consistent with what the speaker means or intends. For example:

(a) *I would like you to give me your dictionary.*

In example (a), the speaker performs a speech act of request by using explicit sentence.

On the other hand, Searle (1975) defines indirect speech acts as utterances "in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another" (Searle, 1975:60). For example:

(b) *Can you reach the dictionary?*

It can be observed that when the speaker utters the sentence as the example (b) it is not merely acting as a question, but as a request to pass the dictionary. The problem posed by the indirect speech act is how the hearer can understand the indirect meaning of the sentence.

In some cultures making a request from someone that is not close with the hearer, may make the hearer feel that the speaker is nosy or intrusive. Furthermore, the hearer might feel that the speaker is forcing him to be rude by making a direct request he cannot skate over and may answer with a direct "I don't want to give you my dictionary." Therefore, directness requires good feelings for the situation, however, being too direct when stating your opinion might seem like an insult, especially if the hearer perceives you as being lower in the social hierarchy. Direct commands, can easily sound like the speaker is bossing people around.

It is noted that the interaction of directness and indirectness is also an interesting factor in social situations where people know each other better and as new acquaintances. Using direct speech to old friends and indirect speech to the newcomers is an efficient way to keep the two groups separate. On the other hand, addressing new friends very directly in front of old friends can have a few effects. It can serve as an invitation to join the group.

Many researchers (Searle, 1975; Brown and Levinson, 1978; Leech, 1983; Scollon and Scollon, 1995) point out that the main purpose for using indirect speech acts such as indirect requests is politeness. For example, using the form 'can you' as a request instead of using imperative shows that the speaker is concerned with the person's right and shows that a person can act independently. It can be observed that indirectness of the speech act includes "a theory of speech acts, certain general principles of cooperative behavior, mutually shared factual background information of the speaker and hearer, and an ability on the part of the hearer to make inferences" (Searle, 1975: 61). Searle's taxonomy or classification of direct and indirect speech acts has been adopted by numerous studies, including Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) coding manual that builds on his notion of directness and indirectness.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Politeness

There is a 'disconcerting amount of divergence and lack of clarity concerning the meaning of politeness' (Meier, 1995:345). Politeness is not a natural phenomenon which existed before humanity or was born with human beings, but it is established by interactional relationship. It is a process which has been developed socio-culturally and historically (Reiter, 2000). "The term of polite dates back to the fifteenth century and etymologically derives from Late Medieval Latin politus meaning 'smoothed' accomplished" (Reiter 2000:1). Different scholars and linguists (Goffman, 1967; Lakoff , 1975; Brown and Levinson's, 1978; Brown and Gilman, 1989; Scollon and Scollon, 1995; Watts, 2003, etc.) through different studies introduced different definitions for politeness.

Goffman (1967) views politeness as the way human beings successfully manage interpersonal relationships to achieve both individual and group goals. He considers that a person has a public self-image which he/she wishes to relate to other group members. He categorizes politeness behaviour or deferential behaviour into two categories. The first one is avoidance rituals, which emphasize the social distance between speaker and hearer. The second one is presentational rituals that convey to the hearer how the speaker regards the hearer and how he treats the hearer in the future.

Similarly, Goffman's notion is reflected in Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory. They use Goffman's notion of face as a starting point for their theory of politeness. They divide the notion of face into two parts: positive face and negative face. They define face as 'the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself' (1987:61). The definition of face and its two parts led them to define politeness as redressive action taken to counter balance the negative effect of face threatening acts. They claim that politeness involves showing concern for two different kinds of face needs: negative face needs or the want not to be imposed upon, and positive face needs or the want to be liked and admired. Later, other sociolinguists defined politeness in their own ways based on their own study of politeness. House and Kasper (1981) define politeness as a social value or culture

feature that might be called ‘urbanity’. It occurs in all civilized societies, even though the social norm relating to what is and what is not considered polite behaviour may vary across cultures.

According to Lakoff (1975) politeness can be defined as forms of behaviour that have been developed in societies in order to reduce conflict in personal interaction. Lakoff states that politeness represents a device that helps a speaker to minimize the risk of conflict in conversation. She claims that there are different politeness styles, which help the speaker to show his/ her respect to others. She suggests that in social distance situations the speaker has to be cool to convey his/her respect to other people, but to show intimacy, the speaker has to be warm to convey his/her feelings to others. She further suggests that if one wants to succeed in communication, the message must be conveyed in a clear manner. This means that the speaker has to use clear style in his interaction to show his respect to others. This is because the ambiguity in communication leads to misunderstanding between interlocutors. Like Lakoff, Leech (1983) sees politeness as forms of behaviour aimed at creating and maintaining harmonious interactions. He claims that politeness is “strategic conflict avoidance” which a speaker uses to avoid conflict in interaction and to establish and maintain respect and admiration.

Brown and Gilman (1989) state that politeness means putting things in such a way as to take account of the feelings of the hearer, and that it is a matter of the psychological situation, which cannot be tested with a speaker’s words alone. Werkhofer (1992) reaches the same definition of Brown and Gilman (1989), She (1992:156) says that politeness can be seen as “the power of a symbolic medium that being used and shaped in acts of individual speakers also represents social standards of how to behave or of what kind of conduct is considered.” She explains that the power is a very important element in social interaction, which guides the speakers to behave with other people politely in the society. Also, it helps the speaker to choose the suitable behaviour in certain situations.

On the other hand, in eastern culture, it should be noted that the current conception of politeness in Modern China is derived and largely developed from its concept of face. *Limao*, which morphemically means ‘polite appearance’, turns out to become the code of conduct for Chinese in their attempt to establish and maintain harmonious and successful communication. To be polite in Chinese discourse is, in many respects, to know how to attend to each other’s *lian* and *mianzi* and to enact speech acts appropriate to and worthy of such an image (Mao 1994:463). Like Japanese conception of politeness (*wakimae*), the Chinese concept of *limao* requires speakers to express deference by humbling themselves and placing themselves in a lower position (Matsumoto 1989). Gu (1990: 239) held that within the Chinese conception of *limào* comprise four basic notions: ‘respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth, and refinement’. Respectfulness refers to the observance of the speaker to positively appreciate or show admiration for the hearer’s face, social status, and so on. Modesty is seen as another way of saying ‘self-denigration’ which may derive from the speaker’s timidity. Attitudinal warmth requires the speaker to

demonstrate kindness, consideration, and hospitality to others and refinement obligates the speaker to behave to another within certain standards.

Similarly, Ide (1989) states that politeness in Japanese society means to perceive one's position in relation to others and choose the proper formality level of speech according to social conventions. Holmes (1995) and Nwoye (1992) confirm and agree with Mao and Ide's definitions. Holmes (1995:5) defines politeness as the "behavior which actively expresses positive concern for others, as well as non-imposing distancing behavior". Nwoye (1992:312) defines politeness in Igbo society as "a response to one's awareness of social expectation appropriate to his/her place in society". Furthermore, Meier (1995) supports Nwoye's definition of concept of politeness and confirms that concept of politeness has different judgments, and it is related to the context itself. He (1995:387) states that "politeness can only be judged relative to a particular context and a particular addressee's expectations and concomitant interpretation".

In Arabic, On the other hand, the term of politeness is 'ʔadab' the only other terms as a synonym is 'ʔihtiraam' or 'tagdir' which means 'respect'. The terms 'ʔadab', 'ʔihtiraam' or 'tagdir' are used alternately in Arabic language. In Arabic language the term 'wakaadah' (rudeness) and 'qillat adab' (lack of politeness) are considered antonyms of politeness (Atawneh, 1991). From the discussion on definition of politeness, it can be observed that the term 'politeness' is defined differently by various scholars and linguists and this leads making it vague and not clear for the researchers in this field. It is considers as culture-specific and it is different from one culture to another.

2.2 Request Modification

Request modification is a "unit external to the request" (Blum-Kulka et al, 1989: 276) which functions as a mitigator to a request utterance since a request is defined as a face-threatening act. Speakers may use request modifications to justify, or modify the request head act. On the other hand, request modifications are utterances that mitigate or aggravate the impositive force of a request. Request modifications either precede or follow the head act.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

The participants of the study totaled 336 undergraduate students (168 male participants and 168 female participants) from Sana'a University, Faculty of Education Sana'a, Faculty of Education Arhab and Faculty of Education Al-Mahweet. All of the participants were native speakers of Yemeni Arabic, aged 20-23. All of the participants were relatively homogeneous in terms of their cultural background.

3.2 Procedures

All participants were asked to fill out a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The Discourse Completion Test (DCT) used in this investigation involves twelve written

situations. The participants are then asked to complete each dialogue by writing a suitable request in Yemeni Arabic in Male-Male and Male-Female Interaction across twelve situations. The participants were asked to put themselves in real situation and to assume that in each situation they would, in fact, say something they were asked to write down what they would say.

3.3 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data is based on Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) CCSARP (Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project) coding scheme. They were coded following Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) for the following types of mitigation:

Table: External Request Modifications (Blum-Kulka et al.'s, 1989)

supportive move	Definition	Example
Grounder	The speaker gives reasons, explanations, or justifications for his/her request.	<i>I forgot my notebook.</i> Can I borrow yours?
Disarmer	The speaker tries to remove any potential objections the hearer might raise.	<i>I know you are very busy,</i> but could you help me to answer these questions?
Imposition minimizer	The speaker tries to reduce the imposition placed on the hearer by his request.	Would you give me a lift? <i>But only if you are going my way.</i>
Preparator	The speaker prepares the hearer for ensuing request by announcing that he/she will make a request by asking the potential availability of the hearer or by asking for the hearer's permission to make the request	<i>I'd like to ask you something.</i> Can you lend me some money?
Getting a pre-commitment	The speaker tries to get the hearer's promise in advance before he/she issues a request to avoid refusal	<i>Would you do me a favour?</i> Can you tell me the direction to the airport?
Apology	The speaker acknowledges the imposition created by the request.	<i>I am sorry to bother you.</i> Can I use your computer for few minutes?
Gratitude	The speaker expresses his/her appreciation for the hearer's compliance with the request before or after it is performed.	<i>Thanks for your nice food.</i> Can you give the bill, please?

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 External Request Modifications used with Direct and Indirect Head Act of Requests by Male-Male and Male-Female Interactions

This section presents the distribution of external request modifications across the twelve situations in male-male and male-female interactions. The results are presented according to direct and indirect head act of the requests as shown in the tables 1, 2 and 3.

As shown in table 1, situations (1, 2, 3 and 4), the findings indicate that the male participants employed external request modifications with direct and indirect strategies in order to mitigate their requests with different frequencies and percentages. Furthermore, the Chi-square test was conducted to investigate the differences or similarities in the use of external request modifications in M-M, M-F interactions with regard to direct head act of requests, and indirect head acts of requests. The result of the Chi-square test suggests that there is no significant difference in the use of external request modifications in M-M and M-F interactions. This means that external request modifications are very important component in making polite request in M-M and M-F interactions. The p value in situations 1, 2, 3 and 4 in M-M interactions is 0.822, 0.973, 0.988 and 0.836, $p < 0.05$, respectively. Furthermore, the p value in situation 1, 2, 3 and 4 in M-F interactions is 0.971, 0.917, 0.970 and 0.702, $p < 0.05$, respectively. Referring to the use of external request modifications, there seems to be a tendency that male participants in M-M and M-F interactions employed various external request modifications in their requests. The male participants employed external request modifications as politeness markers in Yemeni Arabic to mitigate and soften their requests.

Regarding direct head act of requests and indirect head of requests, in general, the male participants in M-M and M-F interactions have a great tendency to employ external request modifications with direct and indirect head act of requests. In particular, it can be observed from table 1 that the male participants prefer to use external request modifications with direct head act of requests more slightly than indirect head act of requests. It seems that the use of external request modifications in Yemeni Arabic with indirect head act of requests is obligatory, for example,

(1)	mumkin	tsalfini	folu:s			
*	can	lend- me	money			
	can you	lend me	money?			
(2)	<i>Law samahti</i>	<i>ja:fatima</i>	mumkin	tsalfini	folu:s	
*	<i>If you allowed me</i>	<i>hey fatima</i>	can	lend- me	money	
	<i>Excuse me</i>	<i>Fatima,</i>	can you	lend me	money?	
	<i>nisi:t</i>	<i>folu:si</i>	<i>fi</i>	<i>albeit</i>		
	<i>forgot</i>	<i>money-my</i>	<i>at</i>	<i>home</i>		
	<i>forgot</i>	<i>my money</i>	<i>at</i>	<i>home.</i>		

From the example (1) above, it can be observed that the indirect request is performed without external request modifications. In spite of the fact that the request is performed without external request modifications, it is considered as an acceptable request with familiar persons; however, it is not considered tactful and acceptable with strangers. In example (2), the indirect request is performed with various external request modifications at the beginning and the end of requests. It is considered as tactful request with familiars or strangers.

Furthermore, when directness is to be expressed in making requests, external request modifications are also obligatory in Yemeni Arabic, for example,

- | | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------|
| (3) | naḏii-li | maktab-i | | |
| * | clean-for me | office-my | | |
| | clean | my office. | | |
| (4) | <i>Law samaht</i> | <i>ja:ha:ḏg</i> | naḏif-li | maktab-i |
| * | <i>If you allowed</i> | <i>hey hajji</i> | clean-for me | office-my |
| | <i>Excuse me</i> | <i>Hajji,</i> | clean | my office. |

From the example (3) above, it can be observed that the direct request is performed without any external request modifications. It is considered in Yemeni Arabic as a harsh request but acceptable between close friends or the family member. However, in the example (4) the direct request is conveyed with various external request modifications to mitigate and soften the direct request and make it polite request. The direct request without any external request modifications is considered acceptable in Yemeni Arabic between members of the same family or close friends. However, when the direct request is performed without any external request modifications with strangers or person with high position, it is considered as impolite request.

From the examples above, it should be noted that the male participants' perception on degree of politeness they should behave seemed to reflect more on their use of external request modifications instead of direct or indirect request strategies selection. Since the amount of external request modifications increased along with both direct and indirect head act of requests.

In situations 5, 6, 7 and 8, the Chi-square test was applied to examine whether M-M and M-F interactions differ in their use of external request modifications according to directness and indirectness. The results reveal that there is no significant difference in the use of external request modifications in M-M and M-F interactions. The p value in situations 5, 6, 7 and 8 in M-M interactions is 0.500, 0.625, 0.836 and 0.823, $p < 0.05$, respectively. Furthermore, the p value in situation 5, 6, 7 and 8 in M-F interactions is 0.649, 0.984, 0.939 and 0.892, $p < 0.05$, respectively.

With regard to the use of external request modifications in these situations, it can be observed that the male participants in M-M and M-F interactions tend to use various external request modifications in their requests in direct or indirect. The findings show that the male participants used various external request modifications to make

polite request. It seems that the external request modifications are very important in Yemeni Arabic and it is considered as the source of politeness in making request in Yemeni culture. They are used to mitigate and soften their requests.

Based on direct head act of requests and indirect head of requests, in general, the male participants in M-M and M-F interactions have a preference to employ external request modifications with direct and indirect head act of requests to make polite requests. In particular, from table 2, it can be observed that the male participants prefer to use external request modifications with direct head act of requests more slightly than to indirect head act of requests. However, it seems that the use of external request modifications in Yemeni Arabic with direct and indirect head act of requests is obligatory in making polite requests.

Further analysis was carried for situations 9, 10, 11 and 12 to investigate if the M-M and M-F interactions differ in the use of external request modifications according to direct head act of requests or indirect head act of requests. As shown in table 3, the findings of the Chi-square tests indicate that there is no significant difference in the use of external request modifications in M-M and M-F interactions according to directness or indirectness. The p value in situations 9, 10, 11 and 12 in M-M interactions is 0.911, 0.975, 0.865 and 0.998, $p < 0.05$, respectively. Furthermore, the p value in situation 9, 10, 11 and 12 in M-F interactions is 0.833, 1.000, 0.752 and 0.876, $p < 0.05$, respectively.

From the table 3 below, it should be noted that the male participants in M-M and M-F interactions tend to use various external request modifications in their requests in direct or indirect. The findings indicated that the male participants used external request modifications to mitigate and soften their requests. It seems that the degree of politeness is reflected in the use of the external request modifications in instead of direct strategies or indirect strategies. Yemeni Arabic used various external request modifications to make polite request.

It is interesting to note that the male participants in M-M and M-F interactions conveyed the polite request by using external request modifications regardless of directness or indirectness. It can be observed from table 3 that the male participants prefer to use external request modifications with direct head act of requests and indirect head act of requests. It seems that the use of external request modifications in Yemeni Arabic with direct and indirect head act of request is obligatory.

4.2 Types of External Request Modifications Used in M-M and M-F Interactions

External request modifications are means by which the speaker tries to mitigate and soften the impact of requests. Sometimes external request modifications are used with the purpose of mitigating the requests. The most frequent external request modifications found in the data are as follows: preparator, grounder, getting a pre-commitment, apology, disarmer, imposition minimizer and gratitude (refer to table 1, 2 and 3). In the following subsection, external request modifications will be discussed in details in M-M and M-F interactions.

4.2.1 Preparator

Preparator is considered as external request modifications. It is used with the request head act or to ask about the availability of something to ask a permission of hearer to do the acts. It is considered as preparation for making request. In other words, the speaker prepares his or her request by letting the listener being aware that a request is anticipated. As shown in the table 4, external request modifications of preparator are the first preferred utterance among the participants. It occurred across twelve situations with different frequency. The overall use of external request modifications of preparator across twelve situations in M-M interactions is (36% [n= 728]), whereas, the overall use of external request modifications of preparator across twelve situations in M-F interactions is (35% [n= 715]). According to the data, it can be observed that the male participants use external request modifications of preparator in M-M interactions more than in the M-F interactions. The function of these external request modifications of preparator is to introduce the request, prepare hearer for an upcoming request and draw the hearer's attention. The data of the current study identifies different external request modifications of preparator that often occurs at the beginning of request. They can be observed in the examples below:

	Preparator		Request		
(5)	<i>ja:-abn-i</i>	<i>ʔana moħtaḏʒ moṣaʕta-k</i>	ʔʕti	mennak	
*	<i>hey-son-my</i>	<i>I need help- your</i>	want	from you	
	<i>My son I need your help</i>		I want	your	
		<i>ʔlmaħmu:l</i>	<i>lmødat</i>	<i>sa:ʕah</i>	
		laptop	for	an hour	
		laptop	for	an hour	
	Preparator	Request			
(6)	<i>ja:-mobafer</i>	ʔdi-li	ʔlfaturah		
*	<i>hey waiter</i>	give-to me	bill		
	<i>Waiter,</i>	give me	the bill.		
		Preparator	Request		
(7)	<i>Law samaħti</i>	<i>ja:ħa:ḏʒah</i>	naḏifi-li	maktab-i	
*	<i>If you allowed</i>	<i>hey hajji</i>	clean-for me	office-my	
	<i>Excuse me</i>	<i>Hajji,</i>	clean	my office.	
	Preparator		Request		
(8)	<i>ʔiḏa samaħt</i>	<i>ja:aostaḏ</i>	momkin tidi-li	kitab-ak	ʔktob
*	<i>If you allowed</i>	<i>hey teacher</i>	can you give me	book-your	write
	<i>Excuse me</i>	<i>teacher,</i>	can you give me	your book	to do
	<i>wʔḏʒib-i</i>				
	homework-my				
	my homework.				

	Religious plea (preparator)		Request		
(9)	<i>ʔallah jaḥfōik</i>	<i>ja:aosta:ḏah</i>	ʔokob-li	risalat tawsjah	
*	<i>Allah preserve you</i>	<i>hey teacher</i>	write-me	letter recommendation	
	<i>Allah preserves you</i>	<i>my teacher,</i>	write for me	recommendation letter.	
	Religious plea (preparator)		Request		
(10)	<i>ʔallah jaḥfōak</i>	ja:ʕam salih	wasln-i	la-asu:q	
*	<i>Allah preserve you</i>	Hey uncle Saleh	take-me	to-market	
	<i>Allah preserves you,</i>	my uncle Saleh	give me a ride	to the market	
	ʔʕtari	fawakh	ʕndi	ḏoju:f	
	to buy	fruit	have-I	guests	
	to buy	fruit	I have	guests.	
	Preparator		Request		
(11)	<i>ʔiḏa ma:fi: maniʕ</i>	<i>ja:mōdirah</i>	mōmkin	tissmah-li	ʔrwiḥ
*	<i>If no objection</i>	<i>hey manager</i>	can	allow-me	leave
	<i>If there is no objection</i>	<i>my manager,</i>	can	allow me	to leave
	badri	ʔljaom			
	early	today			
	early	today?			
	Preparator		Request		
(12)	<i>min faḏlak</i>	<i>ja: aḫ-i</i>	ʔdi-li	ʔlfaturah	
*	<i>out of your bounty</i>	<i>brother-my</i>	give-to me	bill	
	<i>Please,</i>	<i>my brother,</i>	give me	the bill.	
	Preparator		Request		
(13)	<i>min faḏlik</i>	ʕiran-i	māḥmulik	lmodat	sa:ʕah
*	<i>out of your bounty</i>	lend-me	laptop-your	for	an hour
	<i>Please,</i>	lend-me	your laptop	for	an hour.

As can be seen from the examples above, the participants employed direct and indirect head request strategies with various external request modifications. For example, the terms of title ‘*ja:-ʔabn-i*’ (my son) and ‘*ʔana mōḥtaḏʕ mōsaʕta-k*’ (I need your help) in (5) are external request modifications and form part of the expected politic behaviour in this type of verbal interaction. Furthermore, the terms of title such as ‘*ja:mōbaʕer*’ (waiter) in (6), ‘*ja:ḥa:ḏʕah*’ (hajji) for female in (7), ‘*ja:ʔostʔaḏ*’ (teacher) for male in (8), ‘*ja:ʔostʔaḏah*’ (teacher) for female in (9), ‘*ja:mōdirah*’ (manager) for female in (11) and ‘*ja:ʔaḫ-i*’ (my brother) in (12) are external request modifications and considered as the expected politic behaviour. They can be interpreted as preparation of the hearer for an upcoming request and draw the hearer’s attention. The participants used other external request

modifications such as ‘*Law samaḥti*’ (excuse me) for female in (7), ‘*ʔiḏa samaḥt*’ (excuse me) for male in (8), ‘*ʔiḏa ma:fi: maniʕ*’ (If there is no objection) for male or female in (11), ‘*min faḏlak*’ (please) for male in (12), ‘*min faḏlik*’ (please) for female in (13) as politic behaviour. They act in these types of interaction as a form of politeness payment to soften the negative impact of the requests. The religious plea is also used as external request modifications to mitigate and prepare hearer for request, such as ‘*ʔallah jaḥfḏik*’ (may Allah protect you/Allah preserves you) for female in (9) and ‘*ʔallah jaḥfḏak*’ (may Allah protect you/Allah preserves you) for male in (10). These religious words and utterances are used as devices to soften the threat of an act (Nureddeen, 2007). The participants used external request modifications to introduce the request and to prepare the hearer for an upcoming request. As shown in the examples above, external request modifications were utilized to introduce the head act by means of direct and an indirect request.

4.2.2 Grounder

Grounder is another example of external request modifications which is used with the request head act to provide reasons, explanations or justification for the requests. As shown in table 4, it is the second preferred external request modifications among the male participants. This external request modification is used to mitigate the requests and to smooth the conversational interaction. It occurs across eleven situations with different frequencies and either precedes or follows the head act. The overall use of external request modifications of grounder across eleven situations in M-M interactions is (23% [n= 463]), whereas, the overall use of external request modifications of grounder across eleven situations in M-F interactions is (23% [n= 470]). It can be observed that there is no difference in the choice of external request modifications between M-M interactions and M-F interactions. It is preferred by male and female participants to mitigate their requests. External request modifications of grounder can be observed in some of the examples below:

				Request
(14)	ʔiḏa takarramt		ja:modir	ʔʃti ʔmʃi
*	If you be generous enough		hey manager	want go
	Please		my manager,	I want to go

Grounder (reason/justification)

badri	ʔljaom	<i>maʕ-i</i>	<i>mawʕid</i>	<i>mʕa</i>	<i>tabib alasan</i>
early	today	<i>have-I</i>	<i>appointment</i>	<i>with</i>	<i>dentist</i>
early	today,	<i>I have</i>	<i>an appointment</i>	<i>with</i>	<i>a dentist.</i>

Grounder (reason/justification)

(15)	<i>hasalt ʕala</i>	<i>minhah</i>	<i>lldirasah fi: alʕa:ridʕ</i>	ja:aosta:ḏ
*	<i>have got</i>	<i>scholarship</i>	<i>Study in abroad</i>	hey teacher
	<i>I have got</i>	<i>scholarship</i>	<i>to study abroad</i>	my teacher

	Request					
	wa-ʔfti	toktob-li		risalat	tawsjah	
	and-want	write-me		letter	recommendation	
	and I want you to write for me			a recommendation letter.		
		Grounder (reason/justification)				Request
(16)	ʕafwan	ja:modir	<i>sja:ra:t-i</i>	<i>moʕtalah</i>		mumkin
*	sorry	hey manager	<i>car-my</i>	<i>broken</i>		can
	I am sorry	Manager,	<i>my car</i>	<i>is broken</i>		can I
		Grounder (reason/justification)				
	ʔstʕir	sja:ra:t-ak	<i>awasil</i>	<i>ʔax-i</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>almahtah</i>
	borrow	car-your	<i>lift</i>	<i>brother-my</i>	<i>from</i>	<i>station</i>
	borrow	your car	<i>to lift</i>	<i>my brother</i>	<i>from</i>	<i>station?</i>
		Request				
(17)	Law samahti	ja:fatima	mumkin	tsalfini		fölu:s
*	If you allowed me	hey fatima	can	lend- me		money
	Excuse me	Fatima,	can you	lend me		money?
		Grounder (reason/justification)				
	<i>nisi:t</i>	<i>fölu:si</i>	<i>fi</i>	<i>ʔlbeit</i>		
	<i>forgot</i>	<i>money-my</i>	<i>at</i>	<i>home</i>		
	<i>forgot</i>	<i>my money</i>	<i>at</i>	<i>home.</i>		

As show in the examples above, the male participants used external request modifications with both direct head act request strategies and indirect head act strategies to mitigate and soften the requests. For example, as it is observed in the examples above, the requests can be interpreted as an FTA (face threatening act) not only to the hearer's face but also to the speaker's face. The male participants used external request modifications with direct head act strategies such as '*maʕ-i mawʕid mʕa tabib ʔlasnan*' (I have appointment with a dentist), in (14), '*hasalt ʕala minhah lldirasah fi: ʔlxa:ridʕ*' (I have got scholarship to study abroad) in (15). The male participants also used them with indirect request strategies such as '*sja:ra:t-i moʕtalah*' (my car is broken) and '*ʔwasil ʔax-i min ʔlmahtah*' (to lift my brother from station) in (16), and '*nisi:t fölu:si fi ʔlbeit*' (I forgot my money at home) in (17). These external request modifications represent politic behaviour in social interaction. They can be interpreted in the examples above as an attempt by the speaker to protect his face and the hearer's face by making justification for his requests. At the same time, they are considered as polite and tactful strategy to make the hearer accomplish the request. It can be concluded that external request modifications are used with requests to mitigate and smooth negative impact of requests head act. In addition, it can be observed that external request modifications occur in Yemeni Arabic before or after request head act. The participants use

external request modifications of grounder to make the hearer very active with their requests.

4.2.3 Getting a Pre-Commitment

Getting a pre-commitment is an external request modification that is used to mitigate and soften a request. It is used to increase the probability of the hearer's assent to the speaker's request. The speaker tries to get the listener's promise in advance before he/she issues a request to avoid refusal. Reiter (2000: 133) states, "Getting a pre-commitment helps the speaker feel s/he has a 'safer' ground for uttering his/her request". As shown in the table 4, external request modification of getting a pre-commitment is the third preferred utterance among the respondents. It occurs across eleven situations with different frequencies. The use of this external request modification of getting a pre-commitment is not employed in M-M interactions in situation two. The overall use of this external request modification across eleven situations in M-M interactions is (14% [n= 286]), whereas, the overall use of external request modification of getting a pre-commitment across eleven situations in M-F interactions is (14% [n= 285]). It can be observed that the participants used this external request modification in M-M interactions more than in the M-F interactions. Edmondson (1981) states that external request modification of getting a pre-commitment fall into the group of commitment-seeking devices. External request modifications of getting a pre-commitment mean that the requester tries to prepare the addressee for what could be as a favour. Below are some of the examples of external request modification of getting a pre-commitment taken from the data:

	Getting a pre-commitment		Request
(18)	<i>momkin atlob mennak xidmah</i>	ja:austaḏah	ʔʃt-i
*	<i>possible I-request from you help</i>	hey teacher	want-I
	<i>Can I ask you to help me</i>	my teacher,	I want
	ʔastaʃi:r kitab-ik		
	borrow book-your		
	to borrow your book.		
	Getting a pre-commitment		Request
(19)	<i>ʔiḏa ma:fi: maniʃ momkin xidmah</i>	ja:mudir	ʔaʃti
*	<i>If no objection possible help</i>	hey manager	want
	<i>If there is no objection can you help me</i>	my manager,	I want
	sja:ra:t-ak awasil ʔax-i min almaḥtah		
	car-your lift brother-my from station		
	your car to lift my brother from station.		
	Getting a pre-commitment		Request
(20)	<i>tiqdari tsaʃidini</i>	ja:fatima	ʔʃt-i tsalfini
*	<i>able-you help-me</i>	hey fatima	want-I lend- me

<i>Can you help me?</i>		Fatima,	I want you	to lend me
fölu:s	nisi:t	fölu:si	fi	ʔlbeit
money	forgot	money-my	at	home
money?	I forgot	my money	at	home.

From the examples above, it can be observed that the male participants used external request modification in indirect strategies to mitigate the illocutionary force of a request and to smooth conversational interaction. In addition, it can be observed that the participants used external request modification of getting a pre-commitment to get the hearer's promise in advance before they issue a request to avoid refusal. The participants used direct and indirect head act requests with external request modification of getting a pre-commitment such as '*mömkün ʔtlob mennak ʔidmah*' (Can I ask you to help me), in (18), '*ʔiða ma:fi: maniʔ mömkün ʔidmah*' (If there is no bother can you help me) in (19), and '*tiqdari tsaʔidini*' (Can you help me?) in (20). These external request modifications are used in excess of what is necessary to maintain the politic behaviour of an interaction, so they are considered or evaluated as polite utterances, and they soften the negative impact of the requests.

4.2.4 Apology

Apology is an external request modification that is used as opening and preparing for request and to mitigate the requests. The participants used apology as 'strategic disarmers' (Trosborg, 1995: 384) for face threatening act to apologize for bringing troubles, disturbing or interrupting the hearers that the speaker's request causes. As shown in the table 4, apology is the fourth preferred utterance among the participants. It occurs across twelve situations with different frequencies. The overall use of external request modification of apology across twelve situations in M-M interactions is (9% [n= 190]), whereas, the overall use of external request modification of apology across twelve situations in M-F interactions is (11% [n= 217]). It can be observed that the respondents used external request modification of apology in M-F interactions more than in the M-M interactions. External request modification of apology can be observed in some of the examples below:

	Apology		Request	
(21)	ʔafwan	ja:austaða	ʕiran-i	kitab-ik la-jaom waħid
*	sorry	hey teacher	lend-me	book-your for-day one
	I am sorry	teacher,	lend me	your book for one day.
	Apology		Request	
(22)	ʔafwan	ja:austa:ðaħ	ʔaʔt-i	tuktobi-li
*	sorry	hey teacher	want-I	write-me
	I am sorry	my teacher,	I want you to write for me	
	risalat	tawsjah		
	letter	recommendation		
	a recommendation	letter.		

	Apology			Request			
(23)	<i>ʕafwan</i>	Law samaḥti		ʕiran-i			
*	<i>sorry</i>	If you allowed me		lend-me			
	<i>I am sorry</i>	and excuse me,		lend me			
	daftara-k	ʔʕti	ʔswir	almuḥaḍarat	ʔili	kunt	ʕaijbha
	notebook-your	want	copy	lectures	which	was	absent
	your notebook.	I want	to copy	the lectures	which	I was	absent.
	Apology			Request			
(24)	<i>ʕafwan</i>	ja:awɣt-i		momkin ʕiran-i	daftari-k	ʔorid	
*	<i>sorry</i>	sister-my		can lend-me	notebook-your	want	
	<i>I am sorry</i>	my sister		can you lend me	your notebook	I want	
	ʔswir	almuḥaḍarat					
	copy	lectures					
	to copy	the lectures					

As shown in the examples above, the respondents used the external request modification of apology to minimize and mitigate the impact of request and attract the hearer's attention. It can be observed that direct and indirect head request strategies were modified and accompanied by apologies such as 'ʕafwan' (I am sorry) in (21, 22, 23 and 24). It also helps the requester to save his face and the addressee's face. The apology in the examples above is interpretable as an example of politic behaviour. It is meant to be heard as a mitigator of request.

4.2.5 Disarmer

Disarmer is "a linguistic expression which appeals to mutual knowledge shared by participants, or support and solidarity from participants" (Watts, 2003:169). Reiter (2000:93) states that by choosing disarmer in requests, the speaker "provides reasons to 'disarm' the addressee from the possibility of refusal". In other words, the speaker tries to avoid refusals by ruling out any possible objections in advance that a listener's may propose. It is considered as a solidarity marker. As we can see from table 4, external request modification of disarmer is the fifth preferred utterance among the male participants. It occurs across eleven situations with different frequencies. In situation eleven, however, external request modification of disarmer is not employed in M-M interactions. The overall use of external request modification of disarmer across eleven situations in male-male interactions is (9% [n= 164]), whereas, the overall use of external request modification of disarmer across eleven situations in male-female interactions is (8% [n= 145]). It can be observed that there is no difference in the choice of external request modification of disarmer between male-male interactions and male-female interactions. External request modification of disarmer can be observed in some of the examples below:

	Disarmer		Request
(25)	<i>ʔiða ma:fi: ʔizʕdʒ</i>	<i>ja:aosta:ðah</i>	ʔaft-i toktobi-li
*	<i>If no bother</i>	<i>hey teacher</i>	want-I write-me
	<i>If there is no bother</i>	<i>my teacher,</i>	I want you to write for me
	risalat tawsjah		
	letter recommendation		
	a recommendation letter.		

	Disarmer		Request
(26)	<i>ʔana dari ʔnak mafʕu:l</i>	bass	mumkin tiwasiln-i
*	<i>I know you busy</i>	but	can lift-me
	<i>I know you are busy</i>	but	can you lift me
	la-ʔsu:q		
	to-market		
	to the market?		

	Disarmer		Request
(27)	<i>ʔiða ma:fi: maniʕ</i>	<i>ja:mödir</i>	tiqdar tissmañ-li
*	<i>If no objection</i>	<i>hey manager</i>	can you allow-me
	<i>If there is no objection</i>	<i>my manager,</i>	can you allow me
	ʔrwiñ badri aljaom		
	leave early today		
	to leave early today?		

As show in the examples above, the participants used external request modification of disarmer to mitigate the illocutionary force of the requests. It also can be observed that direct and indirect head act request strategies were modified and accompanied by external request modification of disarmers such as ‘*ʔiða ma:fi: ʔizʕdʒ ja:ʔosta:ðah*’ (if there is no bother my teacher) and in (25). In addition, indirect head act request strategies also were modified with external request modification of disarmer such as ‘*ʔana dari ʔnak mafʕu:l*’ (I know you are busy), in (26) and ‘*ʔiða ma:fi: maniʕ ja:mödir*’ (if there is no objection my manager) in (27). The external request modification of disarmer is considered as a part of politic behaviour in the examples above. They help the participants to show and express their solidarity or camaraderie with hearers.

4.2.6 Imposition minimizer

Imposition minimizer is used as a linguistic expression to weaken the illocutionary force of upcoming requests. The male participants to reduce the imposition of the requests on the hearers use this type of external request modifications. As shown in the table 4, the external request modification of imposition minimizer is the sixth preferred utterance among the participants. It occurs across nine situations with

different frequencies. In addition, in situation eleven, the external request modification of imposition minimizer is not employed in male-male interactions. The overall use of this the external request modification of imposition minimizer across nine situations in M-M interactions is (7% [n= 143]), whereas, the overall use of it across nine situations in M-F interactions is (7% [n= 148]). It can be observed that there is a great preference in male-female interactions to use this external request modification of imposition minimizer more than in the male-male interactions. They employed it to reduce imposition, mitigate their request, make request smooth and to protect the speaker's face and hearer's face. Below are some examples of the external request modification of imposition minimizer as used by the respondents

			Request		
(28)	ʔallah jɔba.rik fi:k	ja:ħa:dʒ	ʔaʃtik	tnaðif	maktab-i
*	Allah bless you	hey hajji	want you	clean	office-my
	Allah blesses you	hajji,	I want you	to clean	my office.

Imposition minimizer

<i>ma: jħtaɖʒ</i>	<i>ila-sawjat</i>	<i>tnnðif</i>
<i>not need</i>	<i>only-little</i>	<i>cleaning</i>
<i>It needs</i>	<i>only a little</i>	<i>cleaning.</i>

		Request			
(29)	ja:-moħamad	mumkin tsi:r	ʔila	albaqa:lah	tʃtari
*	hey Mohammed	can go	to	grocery	to buy
	Mohammed,	Can you go	to	grocery	to buy

Imposition minimizer

<i>ħðrawa:t</i>	<i>ma: btaħð</i>	<i>ħams</i>	<i>dqʔaq</i>
vegetable	<i>not take</i>	<i>five</i>	<i>minutes</i>
vegetable.	<i>It doesn't take</i>	<i>five</i>	<i>minutes.</i>

As can be seen from the examples above, the male participants used this type of the external request modifications to eliminate the degree of imposition to convince the hearer to fulfil the requests. This type occurs with direct and indirect head act request strategies such as '*ma: jħtaɖʒ ila-sawjat tnnðif*' (it needs only a little cleaning) in (28). It is also used with indirect head act strategies such as '*ma: btaħð ħams dqʔaq*' (it does not take five minutes) in (29). The speaker attempts to reduce the imposition placed upon the hearer by his or her request by using the external request modification of imposition minimizer, which is considered as an appropriate politic behaviour in these particular situations.

4.2.7 Gratitude

Gratitude is used as appreciation to soften the request. As shown in the table 4, the external request modification of gratitude is the least preferred utterance among the respondents. It occurs across eleven situations with low frequencies. In situation

two, four and twelve gratitude is not employed in M-M interactions. The overall use of the external request modification of gratitude across eleven situations in M-M interactions is (2% [n= 32]), whereas, the overall use of it across eleven situations in M-F interactions is (2% [n= 36]). It can be observed that there is a great preference in M-F interactions to use gratitude more than in the M-M interactions. The function of the external request modification of gratitude is to show the appreciation to the hearers as closing. This type of the external request modification of gratitude is usually used at the end of the request utterance. Below are some of the examples taken from the data.

		Request			
(30)	ja:-mubafer	ʔʃti	mennak	tegi:b-li	ʔlfaturah
*	hey waiter	want	From you	give- to me	bill
	Waiter,	I want	you	to give me	the bill.

Gratitude

<i>w-mafku:ri:n</i>	<i>ʃala</i>	<i>ʔkla-kom</i>	<i>ʔlaði:ð</i>
<i>and-thank-you</i>	<i>for</i>	<i>food-your</i>	<i>delicious</i>
<i>And thank you</i>	<i>for</i>	<i>your delicious food.</i>	

			Request		
(31)	Law samahti	ja:modirah	mumkin	tidi-li	sja:ra:t-ik
*	If you allowed me	hey manager	can	give-me	car-you
	Excuse me	my manager,	can you	give me	your car

				Gratitude	
ʔwasil	ʔax-i	min	almahtah	<i>fakir</i>	<i>ʃawnkom</i>
lift	brother-my	from	station	<i>thank</i>	<i>help-your</i>
to lift	my brother	from	Station.	<i>And thank you for your help.</i>	

From the examples above, it can be seen that direct and indirect head act request strategies were modified by the external request modification of gratitude to mitigate and soften the requests such as ‘*w-mafku:ri:n ʃala ʔkla-kom ʔlaði:ð*’ (and thank you for your delicious food) and in (30) and ‘*fakir ʃawnkom*’ (thank you for your help) in (31). The use of the external request modification of gratitude show solidarity between the interlocutors and decrease the negative effects of requests. The speaker uses the external request modification of gratitude at the end of the request, which is interpretable as an example of politic behaviour. It is meant to be heard closing move of the interaction.

5. CONCLUSION

With regard to the male respondents, they generally showed greater use of external request modification to mitigate their requests. Seven external request modifications were identified in the data of the present study in M-M, M-F interactions. However, in M-M interactions, the number of external request modifications, which were identified in the data, was 2006. On the other hand, in M-F interactions the number

of external request modification was 2016. The findings reveal that Yemeni males showed greater use of the external request modification when interacting with females more than to males.

Regarding the use of the external request modifications according to direct head act of requests and indirect head of requests, in general, the male participants in M-M, M-F interactions have a great tendency to employ the external request modification with direct and indirect head act of requests. It seems that the use of the external request modification in Yemeni Arabic with indirect head act of requests is obligatory to mitigate and soften requests and make it polite request. In other words, it is interesting to observe that male participants convey polite request by using the external request modification regardless of directness or indirectness. The result of the Chi-square tests suggests that there is no significant difference in the use of the external request modification in M-M, M-F interactions.

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