Politeness in Request Strategies Used by Native Speakers of Jordanian Arabic at Irbid National University

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to investigate politeness in the requests produced by a sample of Jordanian students. The study deals with how they request, the main and supportive strategies and the influence of status, degree of imposition and the difficulty of the task between the requester and the requestee on selecting request expressions and strategies whether it is that of equal/equal or lower/higher or higher/lower. Furthermore, the study sheds light on cultural implications related to request behaviors. The impact of gender on the choice of a certain strategy is also discussed. The researchers designed a questionnaire to collect the data from thirty undergraduate male and female students at Irbid National University (Irbid-Jordan). The findings of the study revealed that the majority of respondents resorted to the use of extra explanation while requesting.

INTRODUCTION

A request is essentially a discourteous act in which the speaker (S) imposes on the hearer (H) to achieve the S's goal through communication (Leech 1983; Brown & Levinson 1978). It is a dynamic action because S needs to change H's condition in order to achieve his goal. Searle and Vanderveken (1985: 199) postulate that requests have a rather polite mode of achievement (See also Green 1975: 121). Grammatically, requests are distinguishable by the possibility of attaching "please" at the beginning or end of the request. They also permit an "if you will" tag. They are also reported with "ask" rather than "tell" or "demand" (See Holdcroft 1977: 72).