



Forwarding a Request: An Interlanguage and Cross-cultural Study of Pashto and Saraiki Speaking ESL Learners in a Pakistani University

Muhammad Farooq Alam, Lecturer, Department of English Language & Literature, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan

Aneela Gill, PhD, Assistant Professor, Faculty of English Studies, National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad

Rooh Ul Amin, PhD (Memphis), Associate Professor, Department of English, Dean, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, University of Sialkot

Abstract- This study seeks to answer the question as how learners of English language from diverse cross-cultural backgrounds accomplish the speech act of request and what dominant strategies Pashto and Saraiki ESL learners employ in the realization of such speech act(s). In addition, how learners tend to execute different strategies of in/directness in the realization of the speech acts of request. Data has been collected in an academic setting from learners belonging to different cultures and linguistic backgrounds which are the potential factors affecting their abilities during interlocution. Selected via purposive sampling, a total of fifty undergraduate ESL (having an equal number of Pashto and Saraiki speaking) learners participated in the study. A qualitative research paradigm and two data collection tools namely Written WDCTs and Oral Role Play have been used in both data collection and data elicitation from interlanguage pragmatics perspective. Grounded in Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) analytical framework of Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP), the findings illustrate several instances of cross-cultural variability during the realization of requests were carried out in English. With respect to Pashto speaking ESL learners, requesters are predisposed to make use of provisions of address, hearer-oriented terminology and religious-bound expressions while Saraiki participants appear to opt for modal items, speaker-oriented requests, imposition minimizers, and apologies. It was evident that Pashto ESL learners were found to be more indirect as compared to Saraiki participants who were more direct even in a higher status context. Thus, the present study offers a new avenue for EFL teachers to make learners understandable about the other aspects related to the realization of the speech acts of request.

Keywords: Interlanguage Pragmatics; Cross-cultural Pragmatics; Request Strategies; ESL Learners; Pragmatic Competence

I. INTRODUCTION

It is essential for ESL learners to carry out a thriving intercultural communication which encompasses an understanding of both the grammatical functions of language which mainly depends on the linguistic competence of a language user who can use it in a reasonably appropriate manner in actual life situation. Accordingly, teaching of English as a foreign language (henceforth, EFL) favors to mark learners as recognizable with the idea of communicative competence and thereby make a way to ascertain syntactic capabilities and pragmatic competence (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1995). Lately, dominant scholars (e.g., Aitchinson, 2003; Hu, 2014; Li, Suleiman & Szalanie, 2015; Ortactepe, 2012) have already documented that learners of English as a second language (henceforth, ESL) encounter numerous pragmatic challenges that hampers their ability to equip with the pragmatic competence of target language. Moreover, the inability to communicate effectively in diverse social discourse setting indicates their inappropriate use of language which poses a potential cause for communication breakdowns when asked to interact with native speakers as this pragmatic failure is viewed by them as true manifestations of superiority and impoliteness (Li, et al., 2015). Therefore, on this ground, it created an urge to examine the procedural improvement of pragmatic competence of ESL learners which is, undoubtedly, an attention-grabbing investigation.

Considering the debate on speech act(s) an expression (Searle, 1969) not only stands for a set of information (linguistic), but also endeavors to execute an act in the real-world social situation (Aitchison, 2003; Yule, 1996). In order to communicate effectively and suitably across diverse cultures, English language pedagogy must provide an accommodation for the learners' want to make them understand about language functions as well comprehension and an understanding for cross-cultural differences and variations (Jazeri & Nurhayati, 2019). In this connection, Searle (1969) acknowledges that speech acts create an impulse to comprehend the intention that frequently creates a difficulty for ESL learners. For example, "can you close the door?" doesn't need simply an answer of yes-or-no, but elaborates an indirect

request. Due to its critical function in the process of communication, exploring speech act of requests emerge as one of the chief concerns in research (Jazery & Nurhayati, 2019; Maros & Halim, 2018). Likewise, the speech acts of request has since long gained a grabbing attention of the researchers as this act is perceived to be a face threatening act. It is essential to have a discussion on the various ways in which the speech acts of request are realized in diverse language.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) have already proposed what is known as Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (henceforth, CCSARP) which was implicated to different languages (i.e., Danish, Hebrew, and German). The CCSARP have already established a classification for request strategy which is still in vogue as the significance of analyzing the speech acts of making requests in English language (Thuruvan & Yunus, 2017), the CCSARP still hold updated. Furthermore, this analytical outline also presents an essential direction to explore the speech acts of requests within or diverse cultures (Jalilifar, 2009; Yazdanfar & Bonyadi, 2016) both in ESL and EFL contexts (Cunningham, 2017; Daskalovska, et al., 2016; Nugroho, 2019). Moreover, the speech acts of request are viewed as a face threatening act and even English speakers do utilize a range of strategies either to fortify or alleviate their requests (Hu, 2014). Specifically, the CCSARP has broadly categorized the request strategies into three main sections, i.e., direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect (Blum-kulka & Olshtain, 1984).

Till date, various cross-cultural pragmatic research has already been carried out diagonally among diverse languages and different cultures (Daskalovska, et al., 2016; Güneş & Ortaçtepe, 2019; Yazdanfar & Bonyadi, 2016). In addition, a few comparative studies (e.g., Nugroho, 2019; Sari, Raja, & Sudirman, 2015; Susilo, 2015) have been conducted to know as how non-native speakers realize speech acts of requests in English. Likewise, a considerably related research with regards to interlanguage pragmatics (e.g., Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2012; Woodfield & Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010), cross-sectional and cross-cultural request studies (e.g., Félix-Brasdefer, 2007; Lin, 2009; Ogiermann, 2009) focusing on different request perspectives have also been conducted.

Previous research also indicates that ESL learners also need to learn and understand the cultural aspect of the target language (henceforth, TL) as well. Much research has been conducted in the past exploring the Levels of directness in L2 English learners' (e.g., Daskalovska, et al., 2016) particularly exploring the realization of the speech acts of request in diverse contexts. Following this vein of thought, studies on the strategies employed in request within Pakistani ESL context is insufficient and this study attempts to fill this research gap. This study investigates the performance of the speech acts of request by Pashto and Saraiki speaking ESL learners. The researchers of the present study have made an attempt to add in such a research area which is not well explored in the context of ESL in Pakistan. It is noteworthy that the realization of speech acts and politeness realizations diverge across languages and cultures. This divergence is likely to cause face-loss or breakdowns in communication when learners have an opportunity to interact with native speakers. In a way, it paves the way to get deeper insights into the language learners' pragmatic competence (Chen, 2017).

The aforementioned studies have utilized Discourse Completion Task (henceforth, DCTs) to study the speech acts of requesting among EFL learners hailing from diverse cultures and linguistic backgrounds, nonetheless a need is felt to utilize more valid data elicitation tools in research on pragmatics such as Written Discourse Completion Tasks (henceforth, WDCTs) and Oral Role-plays to validate the results cross culturally and cross linguistically. Instead, the present study examines Pashto and Saraiki ESL learners' apprehensions for their selection of a particular requestive strategy. For that reason, this study is qualitative in nature and provides an analysis through thick and thin descriptions in order to pack the identified gap through available literature, and to know how Pashto and Saraiki speaking ESL learners do accomplish the speech acts of requests in English thereby investigating the tentative causes holding responsible for the implications of in/direct strategies.

Research Questions

The present study endeavors to addresses the speech act of making requests through answering following questions:

- 1) What are the frequently used request strategies which Pashto and Saraiki ESL learners employ in the realization of forwarding a request?
- 2) Why do the selected ESL learners employ different strategies in the realization of the speech acts of request?
- 3) How does the status (superior or equal) of a person affect the employment of request strategies in terms of the level of in/directness?

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is grounded in qualitative research paradigm and presents the analysis of the obtained data through descriptions. The principal aim of the study is to examine the strategies of in/directness among Pashto and Saraiki ESL learners' realization of request so as to trace out the reasons for employing such strategies. Fifty (50) undergraduate students, selected through purposive sampling, participated who were studying English language and literature, enrolled in four (4) year programme at a university in Pakistan. A proper consent was obtained from the participants. They filled the WDCTs; consisting of two different situations with their responses in the empty space given at the end. Thirty (30) out of them were selected for participation in the Oral Role Plays which were meant to be audio recorded and were later transcribed. The situations given in the WDCT were repeated in oral role plays to find out the difference between the two different modes of data.

Data Analysis

Situation 1: "A student's laptop broke down due to a mechanical fault the laptop wherein a help is sought from another peer of the same status to fix the issue."

The results show that English language learners (henceforth, ELL) opt for the use of a variety of in/direct strategies while realizing the speech acts of request in different situations. Additionally, both the groups have used more indirect request strategies to win over the hearer so to make an immediate compliance of the forwarded request. It was asserted firmly that learners from diverse linguistic background depend upon the sociolinguistic and sociocultural resources of their first language (henceforth, L₁) which enables the ESL learners to apprehend their pragmatic knowledge. Likewise, both the ESL learners' group' i-e the Saraiki speaking English language learners (henceforth codified as SSELL) have use it less than the Pashto speaking English language learners (henceforth codified as PSELL), and using the identical request strategies with members (senior in status) demonstrate discrepancies across contexts as it appears to favor an influence of the speaker over the listener.

On the whole results assert that the employment of different strategies by the respondents was highly guided and predisposed to their mother tongue sociocultural norms which are embedded in the realization of the speech acts of request. It brings forth several instances of the participants using conventionally indirect request strategies found among SSELL and PSELL group when the speech act is uttered in English. Consequently, the employment of conventionally indirect request strategies resulted in the use of such expressions that does not even match to the recognized patterns of English language. The reason for this could be the manipulation of L₁ social norms which are associated with the target language when they are asked to accomplish a task in English. It was asserted that the participants of both groups mostly engaged the strategy of using head act in forwarding a request which indicates the use of indirect strategy. The results showed that the use of various strategies and levels of directness also depends on holding individual status; that is, they differ in the status which the requestee must comply in order to equip the utterance with a requestive intent (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989).

It was evident from the obtained data that level of indirectness in the realization of request is associated to its politeness that is elated from their L₁. Following the mechanism of analytical framework of request, five sub-strategies availed by the respondents of this study can be analyzed as both in/direct request strategies. Most importantly, there was a frequent usage of forewarns or alerters, i.e., "Dear friend", "dear fellow" opted as a strategy by the respondents of both the groups all together to attain the true objective of the set request at the end of the hearer to make him believe about the decency of the matter and to bind him with the compliance of the forwarded request.

The subsequent most indirect sub-strategy which have been employed approximately with identical amount by the respondents of both the participant groups is the utilization of explicit performative request in which the illocutionary meaning is plainly conveyed by the speaker, with a relevant illocutionary verb, such as a participant from SSELL responded in this manner: *I humbly request you, my dear friend to please fix my laptop*. Consequent upon the utility of this strategy of request, the SSELL group members employed it more than the PSELL group which indicates that a particular emphasis is made at receivers end for the fulfillment of the forwarded request. In a way, the use of modal verbs collocates much larger procedure, and also recommends to support the assumption at the end of the requestee that the person is holding a superior authority with deference to the use of modal auxiliaries, for instance, a participant from SSELL expressed: *Can you please fix the issue occurred to my laptop?* In other words, the selection of such performative verbs is vigilantly preferred carrying a strong intent force to create a decent and well-mannered outcome. As a result, such request structure most likely transmits more graciousness with a strong requestive intent delivered through an indirect strategy. Among the other conventionally indirect sub-strategy, the SSELL respondents employed more performative verbs usually

customized by a modal verb, for instance, *SSELL* documented her response thus: *Would you please help me?* In such instance, the modal verb, *would you please* subsequently create intensity in the intent of the illocutionary force that makes the request indirect because the use of modal verb is always alleged a direct form of request. In other words, the *SSELL* respondents repeatedly employed hedged performative more frequently than the *PSELL* group.

So far use of the Goal statement as a request strategy, the respondents from both the groups have briefly stated by describing the desired state of affairs, or goal. For example, *SSELL* a female participant responded in such manner: *My laptop has suddenly stopped working and there is an assignment meant to be submitted. I will be very thankful if you could fix the issue.* This indirect conventional strategy of Goal statement extends certain assurance that the requestee would definitely comply with the forwarded request, thus, reflects a certain relative degree of positive politeness. In contrast, a participant from *PSELL* group augmented: *Can you please extend a favour to me?* This pattern illustrates that the participant by all means has submitted his/her request to achieve the set goal of the request that can be realized by means of an appropriate modal verb. Similarly, the force of Want statements as indirect request strategy has used more by *SSELL* group than the *PSELL* group. To add here, the specific use of Want statements as strategy is perceived as imposition on face which is considered as a violation of core values or fundamental set of values in the respondents of *PSELL* culture, and are seen as badly chosen because it is assumed in the *PSELL* respondents speech community that such speaker oriented requests which leaves no room for the hearer not to comply with the request, on the other hand, it is viewed as more appropriate in the culture of *SSELL* group as they go beyond the requestive intent and become flexible which develops a social distance.

SSELL group frequently used non-conventionally indirect requests (hints), the sub-strategies of indirect requests compared to that *PSELL* group participants used. Moreover, the distinction between strong and mild hints seems to focus on the aspect of propositional intelligibility delineating to as how explicitly it transmits, and what it is that the speaker is requesting from the hearer, simply put, speaker is asking for a help. Further, it points out the form of an interrogative utterance that serves initially the functions of a request, but could not be labeled as a request form. The strategy of question hints in forwarding a request do not necessarily transmits through requestive force which is bound to remain context dependent and context specific due to its virtue of formal properties. Here is an example for the strategy of question hints, like, *PSELL* responded: *Will you fix my laptop, please!* The hearer, thus, realizes the urgency of the matter that the requestee is looking for an immediate help in the form of taking his laptop for a couple of days or the issue occurred to laptop might be fixed. To sum up here, it is demonstrated that the word 'dear' is as a term for getting the attention of the hearer thereby realizing the urgency of the matter at the end of the speaker.

Situation 2: "A student forwards a request to other peers to be quiet as they were making noise due to laughter and the speaker could not concentrate on reading".

An equal status is shared by the interlocutors with respect to social distance. The use of alerters as a requestive strategy such as "dear class fellow" "dear friend", is employed as an indirect strategy by the respondents of both groups at the same time to attain the consideration of the hearer, and to let the hearer be acquainted with the decency or urgency of the request. The sole purpose behind the use of these alerters is just to enhance the interest of the hearer that what the requester wants the requestee to do. Likewise, a member elaborated as, *PSELL* *Dear friends, you know all. it's a place for reading books. You see I am studying an important book but due to your noise.... [sic].* It has been observed that the respondents were less inclined to the use of imperatives which is viewed as an offense rather sustained a considerate politeness by employing indirect discourse strategies to convince the requestee for the compliance with the request. Look at this instance, *SSELL* *Hello friends! With a great apology, please! Boys! I am here to finish an important work [sic]?*

The most common non-conventional indirect strategies were equally used by both the participants of both the groups. Moreover, an emphasis was observed that was due to integration of L1 cultural and social elements into the target language mother, thus, intensifies the urgency of the matter at the requestee end for an instant agreement with the requestive act. These ESL learners were closely observed integrating mother tongue input into the output of the target language which also creates a convenience in the learning process. It was analyzed from the obtained data that the participants were more indirect in forwarding request to the same status interlocutor as in the example, *PSELL* asserted: *Dear friends, Will you please be quiet?* Thus, it facilitates the ESL learners with a reasonably precise idea that certain degree of politeness was observed among the respondents of both groups used as an indirect strategy to reduce the special effects of the requestive intent, on behalf of, *SSELL* forward his response thus: *Wouldn't you*

mind please to stop making noise? Similarly, it develops an emphasis using the modal verb, *would you mind* on the illocutionary obligation of the performative verb, as a result makes the request more indirect. Among the other requests strategies, the use of query preparatory as requestive strategy with the use of modal verb further indicates an emphasis on the illocutionary intent and exigency of the matter. Most important to mention here that preparatory strategy was frequently employed by the respondents of the study, such as: *PSELL responded: Would you? Good boys! I will appreciate if you keep quiet?* Following the aforementioned example of request, the speaker thinks it necessary to understand the condition obligatory for the request if truly meant to be fulfilled. While accomplishing the speech act, a modal verb has been used to give emphasis to the force keeping into view the urgent nature of the occurred issue. It can be inferred here from the obtained results that situational differences might not have a marked outcome while utilizing the preparatory strategy. For instance, a participant from *SSELL* pointed out briefly: *hey! I am sorry to say that I can't focus on my reading due to your noise. I will be grateful if you please keep your voices a little down? Thank you all! [sic].* Likewise, intensity is associated with the utterance primarily to achieve the status of a request appropriately, and to get deeper consideration must be paid to what the speaker wants him to do? To sum up the above discussion, it can be inferred that mostly indirect strategies were used simultaneously by both the groups to mitigate upon their forwarded requests. Moreover, the level of indirectness revealed the influence of mother tongue culture and prevailing social norms which badly affects the ability of the ESL learners. It was evident from the data that *PSELL* group respondents were found more polite and indirect keeping in view the status of the interlocutors in two different situations which entails a requestive intent.

Oral Role Plays

Situation 1: "A student's laptop broke down due to a mechanical fault the laptop wherein a help is sought from another peer of the same status to fix the issue." The situations given in WDCTs were repeated in oral role plays to validate the data obtained through the written mode.

The status of the interlocutor is equal. The result obtained through oral form illustrates significant results from their written responses. Both the groups have used indirect strategies but stand true when these participants have used the strategy of explicit performative request wherein the speaker intended meaning is categorically mentioned in the illocutionary intent. In the use of this feature for request, the *SSELL* group has employed indirect request strategies frequently than the *PSELL* group. Thus, such kind of request form almost certainly asserts more politeness and indirectness, for instance, a respondent from *PSELL* group asserted: *Buddy I am in urgent need of your help. I will be thankful to you very much.* Therefore, it critically examines an accurate account for notion of the level of indirectness conveyed through the use of indirect strategy.

In contrast, a respondent from *SSELL* argued thus: *I was preparing a project, but my computer has suddenly stopped working. So, give me your laptop for some days.* In ability or permission as requestive strategy, the speaker seeks certain condition mandatory for fulfilling the request. This strategy is mostly used by the participants of *SSELL* group than the *PSELL* group as the later are culturally bound to abide by the request of the requestee. Hence, it is true that requests for permission containing the modal verb could rationally be treated as an interrogation about the hearer's agreement which resultantly places the speaker quite evidently in a subordinate situation to the hearer. In this highly context-specific situation, the hearer, hence, inferred that the requestee is whole heartedly interested to settle down the emergent issue by all means. It is worth mentioning here that it is the hearer who feels mortification in receiving a request from the same status interlocutor that renders to lessen the amount of the imposition. For instance, *PSELL* emphatically uttered: *Buddy! Could you please fix this issue just occurred to my laptop?* Furthermore, the influence of the both groups' native language and culture was evident, for which an apparent reason is the participants particularly, the participants of *PSELL* group who were moving frequently between the cultural norms of two languages. As a result, it causes pragmatic failure for the most part that occurs due to the subjects' misapprehension and less deliberation in terms of social status and distance with requestee.

In nutshell, it can be concluded that the employment of request strategies with interlocutors holding high status varies that is alleged as a severe offense on face because it tends that the requester is holding somehow and somewhat social and cultural supremacy greater than the hearer. Similarly, the results tended that the presentation of the respondents was exaggerated by the prevailing social and cultural norms of L1 while realizing the speech acts of request further entrenched into the target language. Likely, the data is evident to several instances for the occurrence of the phenomenon of sociopragmatic transfer as the purposively selected respondents were found frequently utilizing sociopragmatic norms of the

SSELL and PSELL respective mother tongue and culture when producing the speech act in English that falls apart from the already established norms are of the target language.

Situation 2: “A student forwards a request to other peers to be quiet as they were making noise due to laughter and the speaker could not concentrate on reading”.

The obtained results from this situation revealed that there is a frequent usage of alerters such as “dear class fellow, dear fellow, dear friend” and “hi” as a strategy used concurrently by the respondents, for the reason, to divert the concentration of the hearer so as to make him/her conscious about the implication of the request. There is also an obvious reason in the use of alerters and attention getters used by both the groups to boost the inquisitiveness of the hearer to fulfill the requestive intent. A participant articulated in these words, *PSELL Excuse me my dear fellows, it's a library meant for reading purposes but due to your noise, I can't contemplate. So, be quiet!* The hearer, therefore, inferred that the requester has some serious concerns conveying a message either to keep silence or better leave the library immediately. The peculiar emphasis is made to build up a concern at the hearers end for an instant agreement. In the use of direct sub-strategy, the SSELL respondents utilized more performative verbs usually customized by the use of a modal verb, for instance, *SSELL Hello friends, can you please be quiet?* Thus, it indicates much larger form, and points out that the speaker of an utterance is sharing an equal status of authority to a greater extent with the hearer.

In the use of indirect strategy of obtaining permission in requests, the SSELL participants employed more conveniently than the PSELL participants. Among these strategies, the most common strategy employed by Pashto and Saraiki speakers was the preparatory one, for instance, *PSELL Can you.... fellows! Can you be quiet?* Similarly, *SSELL* responded: *Could you please be quiet? I will highly appreciate that.* Such types of request always require the speaker understand the true nature of the request meant to be fulfilled. The data is evident in this regard that both the groups reasonably used a modal verb to highlight the illocutionary force and importance of the issue. The results obtained from the data illustrated that the presentation of the participant is badly exploited by the social norms associated to their respective mother tongue culture. Nonetheless, it has indicated on multiple occasions the occurrence of sociopragmatic transfer as asserted from the responses of the respondents were more likely appeared to offer the use of sociopragmatic norms while learning English as a second language.

III. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

From a detailed analysis of the data, it was found that remarkable request strategies were displayed in their apprehension of the speech acts of request; likewise, the respondents of the study were guided and aggravated by their mother tongue's sociocultural capital duly entangled into the target language evident from their responses in English. In the same manner, the study identified and suggested several instances of indirect strategies. Further, it was found that the respondents from both the groups while utilizing intermittently pragmalinguistic transfer as a strategy very scarcely when Islamic compliment and sacred appealers were concerned in their responses to WDCT. Besides, sociopragmatic transfer has been utilized by the respondents with a kind of blunt digression from the existing social and cultural norms of the target language. The realization of the speech acts of request of the two ESL learners' group was sharply compared and contrasted provided to ascertain cross-cultural and most noteworthy, to examine interlanguage variations. It was found that the respondents of the study were found more inclined to the employment of an indirect strategy than a direct one in making requests to an interlocutor holding the same-status. Despite all, the PSELL group was found to be indirect in forwarding a request to a friend.

The PSELL respondents were more indirect as compare to the respondents of the SSELL group who were traced out to be more direct in making a request even to a higher status interlocutor. In sharp contrast, the respondents were found to be more indirect in initiating a request even to the person whom is holding same or equal status. It was found from the results of the oral role plays that the PSELL respondents remained more indirect as compared to the SSELL respondents in making a request to an interlocutor holding a relatively higher status. Interestingly, the PSELL respondents were pointed out and appeared as more direct in making a request to the same status interlocutor; surprisingly, the SSELL respondents remained indirect in forwarding their requests even to an intimate friend.

Although there were several similarities in the accomplishment of the speech act under study but there were also some considerable differences found in the realization of the speech acts of request. The differences can be rightly attributed to the participants' diverse cultures and linguistic backgrounds. Such instances specify the learners' construction in the target language which is exploited by the mother

tongue interference in the entire process of learning English as a target language. In addition, the content of forwarding request also varied which reflected the participants' culture. This occurred when a request was forwarded to an interlocutor of equal status but with outlying relationship as manifested from their responses to the English WDCTs. To conclude, it was found that although various strategies of indirectness were employed during the execution of the speech acts of request. Likewise, it was also found that the recognition and apprehension of the speech acts of request is highly context specific wherein the status of the interlocutor also depends. To put simply, the findings of the study illustrate those sociocultural norms of mother tongue which influences the realization of the speech acts of request resulting as an outcome in the form of negative sociopragmatic transfer.

IV. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND THE WAY FORWARD

In the selection of strategy meant to be employed in the realization of the speech acts of request, the respondents displayed and marked significant similarities and differences. The respondents opted frequently for the implication of conventionally indirect strategies in the realization of the speech acts of request. It is evident from the findings that both groups concurrently used indirect requests repeatedly. Although the PSELL respondents employed definite and specific direct sub-strategy (the Want statement) more repeatedly as compared to the respondents of the SSELL group. Nevertheless, the participants did not administer effectively to prefer a suitable strategy over the other when their capability to do so relied mainly on receptiveness to the advancement of interaction. Most importantly, the respondents were found occasionally choosing a strategy with respect to social variables which were perceived as inappropriate at that meticulous idea during the development of the communication. Additionally, the requesting aptitude of the selected respondents pointed out numerous repercussions for the provision of interlanguage pragmatic behaviour. Most obviously, it strengthens further the debate with the studies of (Kasper 1992). This study also revealed an important emergence of negative transfer from the LI with respect to PSELL respondents. This prominent aspect tends to obtain modest consideration in the studies conducted in the field of ILP (Kasper 1992). The native-like choice of the respondents query preparatory request strategy is most likely reasonable by transfer of LI comprehension and understanding. The ability of the participants varied in the use of request strategies suitably be attributed mainly to transfer of LI knowledge about the appropriacy or non-appropriacy of given request types in given contexts; in terms of either LI knowledge or universal knowledge illustrated in CCSARP findings (Blum-Kulka & House 1989) stating that variation is found in their selection of request strategy among native speakers that differ across languages and cultures. It appears that the Pashto learners of English have utilized more alerters so to get the notice of the requestee than Saraiki speakers in forwarding requests. The non-native speakers' tendency to the use of alerters approves firmly the studies conducted so far in the area of interlanguage pragmatics (Trosborg, 2011) who demonstrated that native speakers of English employ further politeness indicators than non-native speakers, who were found to be more direct in the realization of the speech acts of request. In this manner, the learners' frequent usage in the implication of alerters in requests stand identical and goes in same vein with the findings of the studies conducted in the recent past, and can be ascertained most evidently as an outcome of learners' interlanguage. The execution of speech acts of request in a cross-linguistic and culture background determines the prototype of strategies during construction and comprehension in the target language.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) classified the strategies of request at the level of in/directness, the researchers have assumed that the selected ESL learners were repeatedly employing conventionally indirect request reflected in their responses to the WDCT and Oral Role-plays. Considering the findings, the current study demonstrates that Pashto and Saraiki ESL learners' preference of request strategies is significantly predisposed to the social distance and cultural backgrounds of the interlocutors. It was evident that the Pashto and Saraiki speaking ESL learners were guided and motivated by the social and cultural norms of their L1 found during the realization of the speech acts of requests in English. This evidence approves the finding of Nugroho (2019) who approves in this manner that the respondents of PSELL group have a propensity to use more polite words in forwarding a request, particularly to a person holding relatively greater social status. Thus, this study illustrates the frequent usage and implications of conventionally indirect request in approximately all situations developed for WDCT and Oral Role-plays.

So far, an answer to first research question is concerned, the respondents of Pashto and Saraiki ESL learners' preferences conveyed by means of conventionally indirect strategy in nearly all situations of WDCT and Oral Role-plays tends to boost the influence of sociopragmatic variety in the articulation of the produced acts of request. It was noticed predominantly in this study is the overuse of modal verbs "can" and "could." by Pashto and Saraiki ESL learners, goes in same vein to some previous researches (Susilo, 2015). The result of Güneş and Ortaçtepe's (2019) who elaborated that native speakers repeatedly utilize

a variety of analogous statements to convey conventionally indirect requests which were successfully embedded in their request expressions by Pashto and Saraiki respondents. It is pertinent to mention here that ESL learners typically learn the knowledge of foreign cultural norms from the setting of the target language, including the classroom (Echcharfy, 2019).

Thus, there is a call for Pakistani EFL teachers to provide the ESL learners with the comprehension of language forms to have a practical aptitude so that the learners can think about the linguistic perspective ever transliterating their production into English. Consequently, acquiring a reasonable and balanced pragmatic competence in English requires encouraging the learners to employ additional relevant terminology in the realization of any speech acts, in general, but also the realization of requests in particular. In this regard, the findings are encouraging for English pedagogues in all kind of academic background but needs certain implication to develop the ESL learners' understanding of actual pragmatic. Despite the fact that He (2019) proclaimed that pragmatic competence cannot be repeatedly acquired; instead, it mandates for a procedure of learning in its true sense, ranging from the initial phase of language learning. In terms of teaching English as a foreign language in Pakistan, the essence and outcomes of this research may considerably add to the area of teaching pragmatic competence to ESL learners. The Pakistani ESL learners can be benefitted from the findings of the study, and can shun communication breakdown by the acquired knowledge about the request strategies across diverse contexts. To conclude here the above discussion, educational policy makers as stakeholders of the present study are equally accountable for scheming for the curriculum of English who can surely utilize the findings of this study and other identical researches to construct certain mostly needed changes in the completion of language teaching by introducing strategies that clearly focuses on the improvement of the learners' pragmatic competence.

Based on the aforementioned facts and findings, it is evident that Pashto and Saraiki ESL learners recurrently opted for the usage of conventionally indirect strategy in the accomplishment of the speech acts of request. In addition, the result of WDCT explores that their selection of specific request strategies are the marked influence of the respondents diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and depends mainly on social distance maintained by the interlocutors. The over repeated use of such a strategy across diverse situations tantamount that Pashto and Saraiki ESL learners are to some extent responsive of the concern of pragmatic procedure in the appropriate interaction. Thus, the study found with an emphasis to develop ESL learners' pragmatic knowledge so to be a proficient speaker. Last but not the least; let us hope that the findings of this study may not correspond to the pragmatic competence of Pashto and Saraiki ESL learners in general which could not be applicable to all the respondents of the selected speech communities. Therefore, the researchers strongly recommend that a longitudinal study involving greater number of respondents can be conducted to explore the procedural development of ESL learners' pragmatic competence.

REFERENCES

1. Aitchinson, J. (2003). *Words in the mind: An introduction to the mental lexicon*, (3rd ed). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
2. Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (1989). Investigating cross-cultural pragmatics: An introductory overview. *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies*, 31, 1-34.
3. Blum-Kulka, S., & Olshtain, E. (1984). Requests and apologies: A cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns (CCSARP). *Applied linguistics*, 5(3), 196-213.
4. Celce-Murcia, M., Dörnyei, Z., & Thurrell, S. (1995). Issues in applied linguistics authors model with content specifications. *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, 6(2), 5-35.
5. Chen, I. J. (2017). Face-threatening Acts: Conflict between a teacher and students in EFL Classroom. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 7(2), 151-166.
6. Cunningham, D. J. (2017). Methodological innovation for the study of request production in telecollaboration. *Language Learning & Technology*, 21(1), 76-99.
7. Daskalovska, N., Ivanovska, B., Kusevska, M., & Ulanska, T. (2016). The use of request strategies by EFL learners. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 232, 55-61.
8. Echcharfy, M. (2019). Intercultural learning: A promising pedagogy in the new millennium. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 4(3), 361-377.
9. Economidou-Kogetsidis, M. (2012). Modifying oral requests in a foreign language: The case of Greek Cypriot learners of English. In: M. Economidou-Kogetsidis, and H. Woodfield (Eds.), *Interlanguage Request Modification*, (pp. 163-201). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
10. Félix-Brasdefer, J. C. (2007). Pragmatic development in the Spanish as a FL classroom: A cross-sectional study of learner requests. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 4(2), 253-286.

11. Güneş, Ç., & Ortaçtepe, D. (2019). Conceptual socialization in EFL contexts: A case study on Turkish EFL learners' request speech acts realization. *Dil ve Dilbilimi Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 15(1), 376–399. <https://doi.org/10.17263/jlls.547766>.
12. He, B. (2019). Culture and Pragmatic Competence Development. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, Volume 319 (ICHSSR). <https://doi.org/10.2991/ichssr-19.2019.46>.
13. Hu, Z. (2014). Study on developing Chinese college EFL learners' pragmatic competence in relation to language proficiency and overseas experience. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 5(2), 391–398. <https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.5.2.391-398>.
14. Jalilifar, A. (2009). Request Strategies: Cross-Sectional Study of Iranian EFL Learners and Australian Native Speakers. *English language teaching*, 2(1), 46–61.
15. Jazery, M. & Nurhayati, D. A. W. (2019). Cross-cultural communication: communication accommodation experiences of Pattani students with Javanese students at IAIN Tulungagung. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 4(3), 379–393.
16. Kasper, G. (1992). Pragmatic transfer. *Interlanguage studies bulletin (Utrecht)*, 8(3), 203–231.
17. Li, R., Suleiman, R. R. R., & Sazalie, A. (2015). An investigation into Chinese EFL learners' pragmatic competence. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 15(2), 101–118. <https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2015-1502-07>.
18. Lin, Y. H. (2009). Query preparatory modals: Cross-linguistic and cross-situational variations in request modification. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41(8), 1636–1656.
19. Maros, M., & Halim, N. S. (2018). Alerters in Malay and English speech act of request: A contrastive pragmatics analysis. *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature*, 24(1), 69–83. <https://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2018-2401-06>.
20. Nugroho, A. (2019). Request Realizations of Indonesian ESP Lecturers. *Celtic: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching, Literature & Linguistics*, 6(1), 1–13.
21. Ogiemann, E. (2009). Politeness and in-directness across cultures: A comparison of English, German, Polish and Russian requests. *Journal of Politeness Research*, 5(2), 189–216.
22. Ortaçtepe, D. (2012). *The development of conceptual socialization in international students: A language socialization perspective on conceptual fluency and social identity (advances in pragmatics and discourse analysis)*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
23. Sari, R. P., Raja, P., & Sudirman, S. (2015). Politeness and request strategies in act of request by EFL students. *UNILA Journal of English Teaching*, 4(7), 1–10.
24. Searle, J. R., & Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge University Press.
25. Susilo, W. H. (2015). Requests in EFL: Interlanguage pragmatic study on Indonesian learners of English. *Kajian Linguistik dan Sastra*, 27(2), 77–88.
26. Trosborg, A. (2011). *Pragmatics across languages and cultures*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
27. Woodfield, H., & Economidou-Kogetsidis, M. (2010). 'I just need more time': A study of native and non-native students' requests to faculty for an extension. *Multilingua*, 29(1), 77–118.
28. Yazdanfar, S., & Bonyadi, A. (2016). Request strategies in everyday interactions of Persian and English speakers. *SAGE Open*, 6(4), 1–11.
29. Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. New York: Oxford University Press.