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A Comparative Study of American Native Speakers of English and Moroccan EFL University Students' Production of the Speech Act of Request

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to investigate the production of request strategies, request sub-strategies, and request orientations by Moroccan EFL learners (MEFLLs) and American native speakers of English (ANSE). To achieve this objective, the researcher adopted a mixed approach by collecting data through a semi-structured interview and a discourse completion test. The DCT is composed of ten situations adopted from Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns project and modified by Khamam (2012). Thirty MEFLLs and thirty ANSE responded to the discourse completion test, while four MEFLLs and three ANSE were interviewed. Furthermore, to analyse said and unsaid requests, this study relied on Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) coding scheme and Marti's (2006) model. The results showed that MEFLLs differed from ANSE in several ways. MEFLLs were more direct than ANSE, as they used direct request strategies and hearer-oriented requests more than ANSE. However, the two groups preferred the conventionally indirect request strategy to the other request strategies. Regarding request sub-strategies, the two groups frequently selected the query preparatory strategy. Nevertheless, it was chosen by ANSE more than MEFLLs.

1. INTRODUCTION

Before Hymes' (1972) communicative competence (CC) birth, researchers were mainly concerned with learners' linguistic competence. After the emergence of CC, however, attention has been shifted from dealing solely with linguistic competence to a broad notion of CC. Within the field of pragmatics, researchers have started investigating various linguistic behavioural aspects, including conversational implicatures, deixis, speech acts, conversational structure, and presuppositions (Levinson, 1983). However, the focus on pragmatics has been largely restricted to the study of speech acts and conversational implicatures (Levinson, 1983, as cited in Bardovi-Harlig, 2010, p.219). Many previous studies on interlanguage pragmatics (Kasper & Rose 1999; Cohen 1996; Ellis 1994; Kasper & Blum-Kulka 1993; Khammari, 2021) concluded that L2 learners largely differ from native speakers of an L2 in how communicative actions are carried out. However, this area still needs further investigation in the Moroccan context.

In fact, to the researcher's knowledge, most Moroccan studies on the speech act of request focused solely on one component of this speech act. Firstly, Alaoui (2011) examined how requests are mitigated in English and Moroccan Arabic. Secondly, El Hiani (2015) studied how MEFLLs perform fourteen speech acts along with request, which indicates that the speech

act of request was not sufficiently investigated. Thirdly, Loutfi (2016) compared the average frequencies of direct and indirect request strategies used by ANSE and MEFLLs. Finally, Hammani (2019) examined request strategies in Moroccan Arabic and American English. Since all these studies focused only on one request component, this study aims at filling this gap by investigating and comparing the request main strategies, request sub-strategies, and request orientations used by MEFLLs and ANSE.

Many studies on interlanguage pragmatics found that, unlike English native speakers, non-native speakers of English are more direct in their production of certain speech acts (e.g., Kasper & Rose 1999; Cohen 1996; Ellis 1994; Kasper & Blum-Kulka 1993; El Hiani 2015; Yassin & Razak, 2018; Ezzaoua, 2021). In the Moroccan context, few studies have examined the use of requests by MEFLLs and ANSE. Therefore, this paper addresses the extent to which MEFLLs and ANSE differ in their production of the speech act of request.

This paper aims to investigate and compare the request strategies and sub-strategies that MEFLLs and ANSE produce when they make requests. In addition, it aims to examine the request orientations that each group employs. It is hypothesised that MEFL university students are more direct than ANSE.

This study is significant for two main reasons. First, to the researcher's knowledge, no comparative study has investigated all request realization patterns of MEFLLs and ANSE, including request strategies, sub-strategies, and request orientations. The current study, however, tackles all the request components mentioned above. Second, the research findings can be beneficial to both teachers and textbook designers, as they provide them with how MEFLLs and ANSE differ in their production of requests. Textbook writers, then, would be able to include the different request patterns employed by ANSE, while teachers would be able to provide their students with examples of appropriate and inappropriate requests. They would also be able to show their students when, with whom, and how to mitigate or aggravate their requests.

2. Theoretical Background

The study of speech acts has received considerable attention in pragmatics research. The speech act of request is one of the speech acts that still requires more investigation in the Moroccan context. Requests are "attempts to get hearers to do something" (Searle, 1976, p.3). It is an effort performed by a speaker to ask an addressee to either do or stop doing something. Moreover, in their book "Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use", Brown and Levinson (1987) consider the speech act of request as one of the face-threatening acts (FTAs). They classify this speech act as an FTA because the speaker imposes on the hearer's "freedom of action".

To soften the degree of imposition on the addressee and minimize the face threat, speakers utilize specific request strategies (see, Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). In their project "A Cross Cultural Study of Speech Acts Realization Patterns (CCSARP)", Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) divide the sequence of request into three parts, namely "Alerters", "Head Act", and "Supportive Moves". The aim of dividing the speech act of request into these three segments is to determine the utterance that includes "the nucleus of the speech act (Head Act)" (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 200). According to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), the Head Act is the part that can independently stand by itself. In the examples below, the requests are composed of an Alerter (Ali /Excuse me), the Head Act (could you close the door?), and the Supportive Move (It's noisy outside); the Supportive Move can either mitigate (It's noisy outside) or aggravate (I will punish you) a request force (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989):

1- Ali, could you close the door? It's noisy outside.

2- Excuse me, could you close the door? It's noisy outside.

3- Stop bothering your sister, or I will punish you.

In fact, as Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984: 200) assert, "the distinction between the Alerter and the Head Act is evident", but the difference between the Head Act and the Supportive Move is problematic. In the first example above, the Supportive Move supports the Head Act. However, this Supportive Move can stand by itself, too. That is, depending on the context, by just saying, "It's noisy outside", the addressee would clearly understand that the speaker is asking him to close the door. A Head Act is the core unit of a request sequence that can individually realize this speech act (e.g. Could you close the door?), while an Alerter is an opening of a request, which can be either an address term (e.g. Ali) or an attention-getter (e.g. Excuse me); a Supportive Move, on the other hand, modifies a Head Act of a request by either aggravating (e.g. I will punish you) or mitigating (e.g. It's noisy outside) its force (Blum-Kulka et al.,1989).

Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) suggest that the Head Act and Supportive Move can take the four following structures:

1. The minimal unit only:

Ex: Open the window.

2. Post-posed: Head act + supportive move:

Ex: Let me sleep, I'm awfully tired.

3. Pre-posed: Supportive move + Head Act:

Ex: I'm awfully tired. Let me sleep.

4. Multiple heads: there might be multiple units functioning as the head act:

Ex: I'm awfully tired. Let me sleep.

Furthermore, it has been claimed that a request can be realized from four different viewpoints: the hearer's viewpoint, the speaker's viewpoint, both participants' viewpoints, or avoiding any of these elements by just referring to the action to be performed (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 201). In this way, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) distinguish between the following four categories:

1. Hearer-oriented: Could you open the door?
2. Speaker-oriented: Do you think I could borrow your laptop?
3. Speaker and hearer-oriented: Could we please edit this paper?
4. Impersonal: It might be a good idea to open the window.

In the first example, there is an emphasis on the role of the addressee. In the second one, the focus is more on the speaker. In the third instance, the stress is on both the speaker and the hearer, whereas, in the last example, the emphasis is on the act itself. Since the speech act of request threatens the hearer's face, "any avoidance in naming the addressee as the principal performer of the act serves to soften the impact of the imposition" (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 203).

In their most prominent and comprehensive work, the CCSARP, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) define request strategy as "the obligatory choice of the level of directness by which the request is realized. By directness is meant the degree to which the speaker's illocutionary intent is apparent from the locution" (p. 278). The CCSARP project (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 18) describes nine strategy types ranging from the most direct to the greatest non-conventional indirect level, as follows:

Table 1

Request Sub-Strategies

Strategies	Examples
1- Mood Derivable	Ex: Give me your pen.
2- Explicit Performative	Ex: I am asking you to give me your pen.
3- Hedged Performative	Ex: I would like to ask you to give me your pen.
4- Obligation Statement	Ex: You will have to give me your pen.
5- Want Statement	Ex: I really wish you would give me your pen.
6- Suggestory Formula	Ex: How about giving me your pen?
7- Query Preparatory	Ex: Could you give me your pen?
8- Strong Hint	Ex: I have forgotten my pen.
9- Mild Hint	Ex: I do not know where my pen is.

Note. Adapted from Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies, by Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 279-280

Mood derivable refers to imperative, which clearly marks the illocutionary force of the speech act, while explicit performative is used when speakers explicitly name the illocutionary force. In addition, by opting for hedged performative, the speaker modifies the illocutionary act by adding particular modal verbs, whereas in the obligation statement, the speaker's intent is inferable from "the semantic meaning of the locution", as it states an obligation on the hearer (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 202). Besides, in the want statement, the speaker explicitly expresses their feelings, desires, and intentions about the illocution. By selecting the suggestory formula, the speaker suggests their intent to the addressee, while the query preparatory sub-strategy allows speakers to conventionally show their intent by using certain modal verbs. By choosing the strong hint as a sub-strategy to perform an act, speakers implicitly and partially refer to their request. Last but not least, mild hints are used when the speaker does not explicitly refer to their request; instead, they let the addressee interpret it from the context.

These nine sub-levels belong to three primary levels of directness: direct strategies (1-5), conventionally indirect strategies (6-7), and non-conventionally indirect strategies (8-9) (see Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). The first level of request strategies, the most direct level, contains imperative (e.g. Open the door) and other strategies that mark the act as a request such as explicit performative (e.g. I'm asking you to open the door) and hedged performative (e.g. I would like to ask you to open the door) (Searle, 1962; Fraser, 1975, as cited in Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 201). The second class, the conventional indirect request, recognizes a given act by simply referring to the prerequisite conditions that assist the addressee in interpreting the illocutionary force successfully. This level includes suggestory formula (e.g. How about opening the door?) and query preparatory (e.g. Could you open the door?) strategies (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 201). The third category, non-conventionally indirect request, is realized "by either partial reference to object or element needed for the implementation of the act"; it encompasses strong hints (e.g. It's noisy outside) and mild hints (e.g. I don't know where this noise is coming from) strategies. These strategies are likely to flout the maxims of manner and relation (Grice, 1975); however, they are considered to be the most polite ones, as they minimize imposition on the addressee (Bulm-Kulka &Olshtain, 1984).

Although this coding scheme is rich in strategies that speakers use in their performance of the act of request, it only deals with "said" responses but neglects "unsaid" responses (Marti, 2006). Therefore, in her study, "The Realisation and Politeness Perception of Requests Made by Turkish Monolingual Speakers and Turkish–German Bilingual Returnees", Marti (2006) argues that people's choice of strategies is not only limited to those mentioned by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), but they use other pragmatic strategies, which she describes as unsaid strategies, such as "deliberate choices of opting out, providing alternative solutions, and attempts at negotiation" (p.

1836). To illustrate, deliberate choices of opting out occur when speakers choose not to perform the speech act. The following opting out strategy is an example found in the pilot testing of the discourse completion test (DCT) used in this study. Instead of asking someone living in the same street to give her a ride home, the participant chose not to do the act because she has never talked to that person before.

Ex: "I would never ask strangers, who I have never spoken to, for a ride" (female ANSE participant).

In addition, to avoid making requests, speakers might choose to provide an alternative solution. For instance, instead of deliberately asking a grocery to change a bill, Marti (2006) found in her data that some participants "initiated a small purchase (such as chewing gum) to obtain change" (p. 1855). Finally, speakers attempt to decrease the impact of their requests by using the strategy of negotiation. That is, instead of imposing and explicitly asking the addressee to do an act, speakers might negotiate with them about the potentiality of doing the act or try to "establish common ground" before making the request (Marti, 2006, p. 1855). The results of the pilot testing of the DCT used in this study revealed the use of this strategy. In the eighth situation, where participants were required to ask a student to deliver his/her presentation a week earlier than scheduled, an American female participant responded, "How's your presentation coming along? I would really like it if you could present it a week earlier. Do you think that would be doable?" In her utterance, the participant tried to know how the student is going with his/her presentation and showed her willingness to have the presentation delivered a week earlier. Instead of imposing her request on the student, she chose to negotiate with him/her the possibility of doing the presentation a week earlier. Such examples show that speakers are equipped with various strategies for which they opt under the given contexts. As already mentioned in the research objectives, the researcher analyses the data gathered by adopting Blum-kulka et al.'s (1989) coding scheme and Marti's model by focusing on request main strategies, sub-strategies, and request orientations.

2.1. Previous Studies

A plethora of studies have been concerned with investigating the request strategies used by native and non-native speakers of English (Scarcella & Brunack, 1981; Carrell & Konneker, 1981; Schmidt 1983; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1986; House & Kasper, 1987; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; Ellis,1992 among many others). Scarcella and Brunak's (1981) study of request strategies used by beginners and advanced Arab EFL learners found that both groups chose more direct request strategies. More specifically, they found that requests made by beginners were the most direct ones. Moreover, they noticed that both groups used negative politeness more than American native speakers. In addition, in their study of Japanese ESL learners' perception of requests, Tanacka and Kawade (1982) concluded that compared to native speakers, Japanese ESL learners used few politeness strategies. That is, they opted for direct strategies more than non-conventional indirect strategies.

In the same vein, Cook and Liddicoat (2002) found that "native English speakers made similar number of expected interpretations for direct, conventional indirect and non-conventional indirect request strategies" (p. 28). Likewise, more proficient learners performed well in the direct and conventional indirect request. However, less proficient learners had problems with interpreting indirect and non-conventional indirect requests. Besides, Takahashi and DuFon (1989) concluded that the more proficient Japanese learners of English become, the more target-like realization patterns they choose.

In the Moroccan context, Loutfi (2016) conducted a study on "Pragmatic Transfer in Moroccan EFL Learners Request", in which he compared the request strategies employed by native speakers of English, second and third-year students of English at the university; he found that the three groups produced different request strategies. More precisely, his research showed that Moroccan learners of English (both second and third-year students) chose direct request strategies, as opposed to native speakers who infrequently opted for these strategies. Last but not

least, El Hiani's (2015) study on "Performing Speech Acts among Moroccan EFL Advanced learners" showed that only 41% of the students were able to produce appropriate requests, which indicates that Moroccan EFL learners' pragmatic competence is unsatisfactory.

3. METHODS

3.1. Research Design

As stated before, this study investigates ANSE and MEFLLs' request realization patterns. It aims at describing and comparing the request strategies employed by these two groups. In this single-moment study, the researcher attempts to examine whether and to what extent MEFLLs differ from ANSE in their production of the speech act of request. To explore this pragmatic aspect and elicit request patterns from the two groups, this research adopts a mixed-methods approach by collecting data through interviews and DCT. The latter is composed of ten situations, which were adopted from Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) CCSARP project and modified by Khamam (2012), while the interview was mainly used to examine participants' choice of request patterns. In addition, to analyse data and answer the research questions, this study used both Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) coding scheme and Marti's (2006) model.

3.2. Research Questions

The current study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How do MEFLLs´ use of request strategies compare to that of ANSE?
2. How do MEFLLs´ use of request sub-strategies compare to that of ANSE?
3. How do MEFLLs´ use of request orientations compare to that of ANSE?

3.3. Research Participants

The target population of this study included two groups, namely MEFLLs and ANSE. Each group comprises 30 informants. MEFLLs were aged between 19 and 40 years old, whereas ANSE were aged between 20 and 45 years old. Half of the participants from both groups were females. In addition, MEFLLs were randomly selected from different Moroccan universities, including Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Ibn Zohr University, Moulay Ismail University, Mohammed First University, and Ibn Tofaïl University. As they asserted, these participants have never lived in any English-speaking country.

3.3. Research Instrument

This study adopted a DCT because it was proved to give researchers insightful information about the strategies used by groups under investigation in many different studies (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1982; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; House & Kasper, 1987; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; Rintell & Mitchell, 1989; Beebe & Cummings, 1996; Marti, 2006; Khamam, 2012; Loutfi, 2016, Khammari, 2021). The rationale behind using this tool lies in the fact that it could effectively help the researcher collect data from both MEFLLs and ANSE in a limited period of time. Furthermore, the choice of the DCT as the main instrument was not only motivated by its faculty to enable the researcher to answer the study's questions, but it was also inspired by its potential to be administered online. The DCT used in this study was adopted from Blum-Kulka et al.' (1989) CCSARP project and modified by Khamam (2012). This DCT is composed of ten different situations, describing the setting, social distance, and the relative status between interlocutors (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Participants were required to carefully read the situations and make requests as they do in their real-life interactions. Not only did this study rely on the DCT, but it also adopted a semi-structured interview based on the situations in the DCT. The researcher chose this interview

type due to its faculty of assisting the researcher to get more information about the respondents' motives behind their choice of certain request strategies, sub-strategies, and orientations.

3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

Following Khamam (2012), the researcher analysed the collected data by using both Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) coding scheme for said responses and Marti's (2006) model for unsaid responses as references for request strategies. Furthermore, to analyse the data and answer the research questions, the researcher opted for the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS). The frequencies and percentages of the requests strategies employed by the two groups were calculated and tabulated. Moreover, since data were categorical, the Chi-square test ($\chi 2$) was utilized to measure the extent to which ANSE and MEFLLs differ in their production patterns of the speech act of request.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Request Strategies

In order to analyse the data obtained from the DCT and compare the use of requests strategies in the given situations, the researcher opted for the Chi-square test, as data in this study are categorical. Therefore, the researcher presents the frequencies and percentages of the employed main request strategies in the form of tables and interprets those results by showing whether or not the MEFLLs and the ANSE displayed any significant differences in their use of request strategies.

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Requests Strategies Used by the MEFLLs and the ANSE in all Situations

		Request Strategies				
		DR	CIR	NCIR	UR	Total
Groups	ANSE	83	179	17	21	300
		27.7%	59.7%	5.7%	7%	100%
	MEFLLs	100	171	26	3	300
		33.3%	57%	8.7%	1%	100%
Total		183	350	43	24	600
		30.5%	58.3%	7.2%	4%	100%

Note. ANSE = American native speakers of English, MEFLLs = Moroccan EFL learners, DR = direct request, CIR = conventionally indirect request, NCIR = non-conventionally indirect request, UR = unsaid request.

From the table above presenting the frequencies and percentages of the main requests strategies used by the ANSE and the MEFLLs subjects, one can notice that the conventionally indirect request strategy was the most frequently selected by both groups (ANSE 59.7% vs. MEFLLs 57%), whereas the unsaid request was the least utilised by the two groups (ANSE 7% vs. MEFLLs 1%). More interestingly, the MEFLLs were direct more than the ANSE (33.3% vs. 27.7%). Furthermore, the non-conventionally indirect request strategy was slightly used by the MEFLLs more than the ANSE (8.7% vs. 5.7%). The use of this strategy lies in the fact that it allows speakers to deny their requests. Consequently, they used it by just referring to the act being intended. These remarkably significant differences were confirmed by the Chi-square test results ($\chi 2 = 17.14$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.001$). From these results and compared to the ANSE, one can conclude that the MEFLLs were more likely to impose on their addressees by performing their requests baldly (following Grice maxims). Since requests are "face-threatening acts" (Brown & Levinson, 1987), respondents of both groups extensively opted for the conventionally indirect strategy to mitigate the intensity of their requests and have their intended act successfully interpreted by their addressees.

Similarly, the interviewees of both groups heavily opted for the conventionally indirect request, which they considered as the most polite strategy in various contexts. However, the non-conventionally, unsaid, and direct strategies were rarely used by the two groups. For instance, the unsaid request strategy was chosen by only one ANSE and two MEFLLs interviewees in the second and the last situation. Finally, the MEFLLs interviewees were direct in their requests more than the ANSE. That is, the direct request strategy was chosen seven times by the MEFLLs, while it was selected by the ANSE on only two occasions.

"Please, *can you make me a cup of coffee*? I would really appreciate it." (Conventionally indirect request) (An MEFLL participant)

"*I would just make my own coffee*; I don't need someone to make me a drink no matter how senior my job role is."(Unsaid request) (An ANSE participant)

"*I would never ask strangers, who I have never spoken to, for a ride*" (Unsaid request) (ANSE interviewee)

4.2.Request Sub-Strategies

Since each main request strategy includes certain sub-strategies, this section presents the sub-strategies the two groups used in the given situations. Furthermore, to investigate whether the MEFLLS and the ANSE displayed any remarkable differences in their sub-strategies choice, the Chi-square test result of the overall situations is presented.

Table 3:

Frequencies and Percentages of Requests Sub-strategies Used by the MEFLL s and the ANSE in all Situations

		Request Sub-Strategies												
		IMP	EP	HP	OS	WS	QP	SF	SH	MH	OO	AS	NG	Total
Groups	MEFLs	50	5	7	18	20	170	1	24	2	2	1	0	300
		16.7%	1.7%	2.3%	6%	6.7%	56.7%	0.3%	8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.3%	0%	100%
	ANSE	48	3	8	11	13	178	1	17	0	11	8	2	300
		16%	1%	2.7%	3.7%	4.3%	59.3%	0.3%	5.7%	0%	3.7%	2.7%	0.7%	100%
Total		98	8	15	29	33	348	2	41	2	13	9	2	600
		16.3%	1.3%	2.5%	4.8%	5.5%	58%	0.3%	6.8%	0.3%	2.2%	1.5%	0.3%	100%

Note. MEFLLs = Moroccan EFL Learners, ANSE = American native speakers of English,
IM = imperative, EP = explicit performative, HP = hedged performative, OS = obligation statement, WS = want statement, QP = query preparatory, suggestory formula, SH = strong hint, mild hint, OO = opting out, AS = alternative solution, NG = negotiation.

The table above presents the overall use of the request sub-strategies by the MEFLLs and the ANSE. It was found that the query preparatory sub-strategy was the most frequently chosen. However, it was selected by the ANSE more than the MEFLLs (59.3 vs. 56.7%). Next, imperatives were selected by the two groups with almost the same proportion (MEFLLs 16.7% vs. ANSE 16%), whereas the explicit performative sub-strategy was rarely used by both groups (MEFLLs 1.7% vs. ANSE 1%). Besides, a percentage of 2.3% of the hedged performative sub-strategy was employed by the MEFLLs, while it was used by the ANSE with a rate of 2.7%. More importantly, both the obligation and want statement requests were selected by the MEFLLs more than the ANSE. The former was used by the MEFLLs with a percentage of 6%, whereas it was produced by the ANSE with only a proportion of 3.7%. On the other hand, the

latter was utilised by the MEFLLs with a rate of 6.7%, while it was selected by the ANSE with only a percentage of 4.3%.

Furthermore, the suggestory formula sub-strategy was produced by the two groups with the same percentage (0.3%). Concerning the non-conventionally indirect request sub-strategies, the strong hint request was preferred by the MEFLLs more than the ANSE (8% vs. 5.7%), while the mild hint, sub-strategy was only used by the MEFLLs with a small rate of 0.7%. Moreover, as it was mentioned in Table 2, the ANSE opted for the unsaid strategy more often than the MEFLLs. From Table 3, we notice that opting out was the most preferred unsaid sub-strategy by the ANSE (3.7%), whereas it was used by the MEFLLs with only a proportion of 0.7%. In addition, the alternative solution sub-strategy was also employed by the ANSE more than the MEFLLs (2.7% vs. 0.3%). Finally, none of the MEFLLs informants chose to negotiate with their interlocutor about the probability of fulfilling their request, whereas this sub-strategy was rarely selected by the ANSE (0.7). By and large, the differences that the MEFLLs and the ANSE displayed in their overall requests sub-strategies use were statistically significant ($\chi 2 = 20.83$, df = 11, p = 0.03).

Following the DCT results, the interview's findings showed that the query preparatory was the most preferred sub-strategy by the two groups. Further, the imperative requests were selected by the MEFLLs more than the ANSE interviewees. The alternative solution sub-strategy was chosen by the MEFLLs two times, whereas it was only selected once by an ANSE interviewee. Last but not least, strong hints were only selected by two MEFLLs in their response to the third situation (see Appendix).

"I'm sorry to say this, but....*you have to clean up the kitchen*." (Obligation statement sub-strategy) (An MEFLL interviewee)

"Hey man! I came last night after work, and I saw so many dishes in the kitchen. *Do you mind cleaning it up before you go to bed?*" (Query preparatory) (An ANSE interviewee)

"Hi! I want to apply for the job you advertised. *Can you please give some information concerning the job?*" (Query preparatory) (An MEFLL interviewee)

4.3. Request Orientations

As mentioned previously in the review of literature, the speech act of request can be realized from four different viewpoints (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 201). First, speakers can use hearer-oriented request by referring to the addressee (e.g. Can you clean up the kitchen?). This is the most direct type of request. Second, by being less direct, speakers can avoid mentioning the second-person pronoun by using that of the speaker (e.g. Can I have another extension on my seminar paper?). Third, to mitigate their requests and show a sort of solidarity with their addressee, speakers choose speaker and hearer-oriented requests (e.g. Can we clean up the kitchen?). Finally, speakers use impersonal requests by only referring to the intended act without addressing the hearer (e.g. The kitchen is in a total mess). This section presents and compares the overall use of these four request orientations by the MEFLLs and ANSE.

Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages of Request Orientations Used by the MEFLL and the ANSE in all Situations

		Request Orientations				
		HO	SO	SHO	IM	Total
Groups	MEFLLs	238	32	1	26	297
		80.1%	10.8%	0.3%	8.8%	100%
	ANSE	196	55	0	28	279
		70.3%	19.7%	0%	10%	100%
Total		434	87	1	54	576
		75.3%	15.1%	0.2%	9.4%	100%

Note. MEFLLs = Moroccan EFL learners, ANSE = American native speakers of English, HO = hearer oriented, SO = speaker oriented, SHO = speaker and hearer oriented, IM = impersonal.

The results revealed that the MEFLLs used request orientations more than the ANSE. This is because, as presented earlier, the ANSE opted for unsaid requests more than the MEFLLs (7% vs. 1%). The MEFLLs extensively used hearer-oriented requests more than the ANSE. That is, 80.1% of their said requests were from the hearer viewpoint, whereas 70.3% of the ANSE's said requests involved this type. The ANSE, however, chose speaker-oriented requests more than the MEFLLs (19.7% vs. 10.8%). Similarly, 10% of the ANSE´s said requests involved impersonal requests, while only 8.8% of the MEFLLs' said requests were from this type. Moreover, the ANSE did not use speaker and hearer-oriented requests at all, while they were rarely employed by the MEFLLs (0.3%). The differences that the two groups displayed in their use of request perspectives were statistically significant ($\chi 2 = 10.10$, df = 3, p = 0.008). These results, again, confirm what has been found in the analysis of main requests, where the MEFLLs were direct in their requests' production more than the ANSE subjects.

Furthermore, in the interview, neither speaker and hearer-oriented nor impersonal requests were selected. The interviewees' requests, however, included only speaker-oriented and hearer-oriented requests. On the one hand, the MEFLLs' said requests only involved speaker-oriented type. On the other hand, the ANSE used hearer-oriented requests in only two situations, whereas all of their remaining requests were from speaker's viewpoint.

"I had to miss class the other day, could *I* borrow your notes and make a copy? Thanks!" (Speaker-oriented) (An ANSE respondent)

"Would *you* mind stop smoking here?" (Hearer-oriented) (An MEFLL respondent)

"Hi. Would *it* be possible to get a ride home? I live next door." (Impersonal) (An ANSE response)

"Hi, I think we are neighbors, is it a problem if *we* catch up while you driving home." (Speaker and hearer-oriented) (An MEFLL respondent)

Discussion

The two groups significantly differed in their request strategies in only three situations, namely the second situation (coffee), the fourth situation (ride), and the eighth situation (presentation). Moreover, the MEFLLs and the ANSE displayed remarkable differences in their choice of request sub-strategies in four situations, including the aforementioned scenarios and

the sixth situation (police). More interestingly, the great social power that the speaker has over the hearer is what characterises all these situations, except the fourth scenario. In the other situations, however, the interlocutors either share equal social power or the hearer is more socially powerful than the speaker.

Concerning the main request strategies, the MEFLLs preferred the direct strategy over the other request strategies in the sixth situation (police), eighth situation (presentation), and the tenth situation (street). In the sixth and eighth situations, the speaker is socially powerful than the hearer, while, in the last situation, both interlocutors share equal social power. These findings indicate that the MEFLLs prefer the direct request strategy when they have a sort of dominance over their interlocutor. Their overuse of this request strategy in the tenth situation suggests that MEFLLs are likely to directly ask people bothering them to stop misbehaving without paying much attention to politeness. In fact, in the Moroccan culture, it is inappropriate to pester women. Therefore, when Moroccan women are confronted with such a situation, they do not consider the notion of politeness. The ANSE, however, overused the direct strategy in the sixth situation (police) and the tenth situation (street). Like the MEFLLs, the ANSE viewed that politeness is not important in such contexts, as the addressee breaks the law.

When speakers use the direct request strategy, they follow Grice's (1975) cooperative principle; in Brown and Levinson's (1987) term, they choose the bald-on-record strategy**.** In other words, by being clear in their requests, people choose to ask their addressee in the most direct way. This clarity and directness can be achieved by five direct sub-strategies, namely imperative, explicit performative, hedged performative, obligation statement, and want statement. Although these sub-strategies help in making one's request transparent to the addressee, they are considered impolite when they are used in inappropriate contexts. Given the fact that they are highly imposing sub-strategies, by using them, speakers threaten their addressees' negative face**.** Hence, speakers avoid these sub-strategies when they aim at saving their interlocutors' negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

In the first situation (kitchen), the MEFLLs were more direct than the ANSE, and most of their requests involved direct sub-strategies. More precisely, the majority of their direct requests were imperatives, and few of them were obligation statements. Since, in this context, there is equal social power and no social distance between the interlocutors, MEFLLs paid less attention to their interlocutor's negative face. These MEFLLs viewed that it's obligatory for their roommate to clean up the kitchen after using it. Therefore, they did not consider indirectness. However, being direct does not necessarily mean impolite. That is to say, when speakers belonging to a certain group use direct strategies to ask each other for something, they may still be polite, especially when they opt for less imposing strategies such as want statements. As a matter of fact, by using direct strategies with some address terms to convey in-group membership, speakers may satisfy their interlocutors' positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). What was observed in the first situation is the overuse of the politeness marker (please). The latter was employed to soften the request and make it more acceptable by the addressee. Compared to the MEFLLs, the ANSE used the direct strategy with a small proportion, and all of their direct requests, in this situation, were imperatives.

In the sixth situation (police), the ANSE outperformed the MEFLLs in their use of the direct strategy, and they varied their use of direct sub-strategies between imperative, explicit performative, hedged performative obligation statement, and want statement. Obligation statement was the most preferred direct sub-strategy by the ANSE, whereas the MEFLLs preferred the imperative sub-strategy over the other sub-strategies. As Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) state, in such situations where the speaker is obliged to make such a request, face-saving is not required, as the request is not imposing, no matter how it is conveyed (p.146). Since it is forbidden to park in non-parking zones, the police officer has the right to order the driver to

move their car with no consideration to his/her face. In this regard, Labov and Fanshel (1977, as cited in Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) contend that when the speaker has the right to ask the hearer, the latter is obliged to comply; therefore, indirectness is less important. What is said about this situation is also applicable to the tenth situation (street), in which both groups extensively used the direct strategy. What is more interesting in the findings of this situation is the absolute use of the imperative sub-strategy. Due to the addressee's violation of the social values and principles, the majority of the MEFLLs and the ANSE made their request baldly with no regard for politeness.

In general, the MEFLLs used the direct strategy more than the ANSE. These findings are in conformity with many previous studies that revealed that non-native speakers tend to use direct strategies more than native speakers (Altheeby, 2018; Loutfi 2016; Hutz 2006; House & Kasper, 1987; Beebe et al., 1990). In this regard, many studies found that learners' L1 pragmatic knowledge largely influences their pragmatic production and perception in L2 (Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Rose & Kasper, 2001; Loutfi 2016; Yassin et al., 2020). By comparing these results with the findings of some studies in the Moroccan context that concluded that Moroccan Arabic is more direct than English (Ezzaoua, 2021; Hammani, 2019; Loutfi 2016; El Hiani, 2015), one can deduce that the MEFLLs' overuse of direct strategies is due to their negative transfer of the Moroccan Arabic pragmatic knowledge to English.

The findings of this study show that the conventionally indirect request strategy (query preparatory) is the most frequently utilised by the two groups. Indeed, this request strategy was heavily selected in the majority of the given situations. It was extensively chosen by the MEFLLs in six situations, including the first (kitchen), the second (coffee), the third (notes), the fourth (ride), the fifth (phone), and the seventh (extension) situation. Likewise, the ANSE considerably relied on the conventionally indirect strategy in all the given scenarios except the sixth (police) and the tenth (street) situation. However, in their overall use of this strategy, the ANSE outperformed the MEFLLs. These results are consistent with those of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) who confirm the universality of the conventionally indirect strategy. In their CCSARP project, they found that the conventionally indirect strategy is frequently used across different languages, including Hebrew, German, Canadian French, Australian English, and Argentinean Spanish.

The extensive use of the conventionally indirect strategy, especially the query preparatory strategy, lies in its faculty of allowing speakers to minimise the face-threatening effect on the hearer by satisfying his/her negative face wants (Brown & Levinson, 1987). That is, instead of imposing on their addressees to do a certain act, they choose to give them the option of not doing the act. The extensive use of conventionally indirect request strategy by the ANSE more than the MEFLLs, then, suggests that ANSE tend to satisfy their interlocutors' negative face more than MEFLLs. In fact, in English, conventionally indirect requests are the most utilised strategies in various contexts, even between equals, whereas direct requests are rarely used (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.248).

The non-conventionally indirect request received less attention than direct and conventionally indirect strategies. This strategy was rarely used by the two groups across all the situations. The results showed that its remarkable use was only observed in the ninth situation (smoking), where the MEFLLs used this sub-strategy twice more than the ANSE. By the same token, in their overall use of request strategies, the MEFLLs selected the non-conventionally indirect request more than the ANSE. More specifically, most of their non-conventionally indirect requests were strong hints, and all of the ANSE's non-conventionally indirect requests were strong hints.

Weizman (1989, p.71) states hints are, by definition, "opaque" (p.71). That is, by using such hints, speakers can deny their intended meaning; therefore, they can avoid the responsibility of doing an FTA. This opacity also enables the hearer to ignore the request being intended by the speaker. In Grice's terms, by using hints, be they mild or strong, speakers violate the maxim of Relation and Manner, as they may be irrelevant and unclear to addressees. In this regard, Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that if a speaker's aim is to avoid the responsibility of conveying a certain act, he/she can do it off-record and let the hearer interpret it in his/her own way. Unlike Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983) who consider non-conventional indirect strategies as polite, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) found in their CCSARP project that non-conventionally indirect requests are not universally considered polite (p.92).

The least utilised request strategy is the unsaid request. It was scarcely used across the given scenarios. Its remarkable use was observed in only the second (coffee) and the fourth (ride) situations. In the second situation, 30% of the ANSE refused to make the request, whereas this strategy was used at a rate of 20% by the same group in the fourth situation. The MEFLLs did not select this strategy in either of the mentioned scenarios. The reason behind the use of this strategy by the ANSE is the higher degree of imposition of the requests. That is, due to the higher degree of imposition inherent in this kind of requests, the ANSE chose to opt-out, look for another solution, or negotiate with their addressee the possibility of doing an act. For instance, in the second situation, 20% of the ANSE decided to make the cup of coffee themselves, and 6.7% of their unsaid requests involved the opting out sub-strategy; and only 3.3% of their unsaid requests involved negotiation with the addressee. In their overall use of request strategies, the ANSE outperformed the MEFLLs in their use of the unsaid strategy.

These findings suggest that ANSE chose to avoid doing an FTA more than MEFLLs. Also, the motives behind avoiding an FTA differed between the two groups. On the one hand, in their comments on the fourth situation (ride), the MEFLLs interviewees claimed that the only reason that could make them avoid asking a stranger for a ride is their fear of getting kidnapped. On the other hand, the ANSE interviewees stated that the unfamiliarity of the addressee was the only reason for not doing the FTA, as they thought that such a request is likely to threaten both interlocutors' face.

Another significant difference between the MEFLLs and the ANSE was observed in their use of request orientations. Although the two groups showed a preference for hearer-oriented requests more than the other types, they significantly differed in their use of request orientations. The MEFLLs used hearer-oriented requests more than the ANSE, whereas the latter opted for speaker-oriented requests more than the MEFLLs. Also, the ANSE showed a preference for impersonal requests more than the MEFLLs. From these findings, one can conclude, once again, that MEFLLs are more direct than ANSE. Last but not least, these results are in line with those of Blum-Kulka et al., (1989) who found hearer-oriented requests as the most popular in Australian English, Canadian French, Argentinean Spanish, and Hebrew, whereas the second preferred request perspective by Australian English and Canadian French is speaker-oriented request.

The findings of this study suggest that MEFLLs' requests realisation strategies are quite different from those of ANSE. What is behind these deviations is the negative transfer from Moroccan Arabic into English, the inappropriate presentation of this speech act in the Moroccan textbooks of English used at the high school, and probably the lack of explicit instruction on the pragmatic aspect. In this regard, in an informative study of the way the speech act of request is taught for second-year baccalaureate, Latif (2014, as cited in Ezzaoua, 2021, p.207), asserts that "there is no further classification according to directness, formality, or politeness...the students were not given any clues on the relationship between the interlocutors. There is no picture to help the learners imagine the context". In this manner, learners would

not be able to produce this speech act appropriately, but they would rather produce one structure regardless of the contextual factors. Actually, when learners are not provided with sufficient information about the appropriate use of any speech act, they would certainly transfer their knowledge of L1 into L2. Since the production of speech acts is culturally bound, learners would find difficulties in producing them appropriately.

Since MELLs have limited exposure to English outside the classroom, it would be difficult for them to acquire the pragmatic aspect of the TL. In addition, teachers mainly focus on grammar and ignore the importance of pragmatics in teaching the language. In fact, the inclusion of pragmatics in teaching is of paramount importance. In this line, a variety of studies have shown the positive effect of explicit teaching of pragmatics on learners' pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Rose, 2005; Bardovi-Harlig & Griffin, 2005; Kondo, 2008; Ifantidou, 2013; Rajabia et al., 2015). These studies have revealed that explicit instruction of pragmatics raises students' awareness of the effect of contextual factors on speech acts strategies selection, as it enables them to perform different speech acts in a native-like manner. Hence, learners need to know both similarities and differences between L1 and L2. However, as Kasper (1997) and Kasper and Schmidt (1996) contend, explicit teaching of pragmatics does not necessarily mean imposing on students to adopt native speakers' norms, as the students may prefer to retain their own cultural identity.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The findings of this research showed that the MEFLLs request realisation patterns differ from the ANSE in several ways. MEFLLs were more direct than ANSE, as they used direct request strategies and hearer-oriented requests more frequently than ANSE. Moreover, both groups preferred the query preparatory sub-strategy over the other sub-strategies in various scenarios. Nevertheless, it was chosen by ANSE more than MEFLLs. This study provides both teachers and textbook designers with authentic data concerning request realisation patterns. It helps them obtain knowledge on how ANSE use a variety of strategies in accordance with various contextual factors. Besides, this research assists teachers in recognizing how MEFLLs differ from ANSE in their requests production. Moreover, this study assists Moroccan EFL teachers in understanding the various forms and strategies native speakers use in accordance with certain contexts. That is, it shows them that the ANSE do not only rely on hearer-oriented requests, but they also use speaker-oriented and impersonal requests. Furthermore, this research reveals that contextual factors affect the use of request strategies. Therefore, MEFLLs are required to be equipped not only with conventionally indirect sub-strategies but also with different direct sub-strategies and non-conventionally indirect sub-strategies. This study also shows that MEFLLs' awareness of the contextual factors that influence communication needs to be raised. If MEFLLs happen to communicate with ANSE, they may face communication breakdowns, as they may be perceived as rude.

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Appendix: Based on Khamam (2012)

Dear participants,

The goal of this study is to describe and compare the request strategies used by American native speakers of English and Moroccan EFL learners. In this survey, there are ten situations. You are kindly requested to carefully read and imagine yourself in these situations. Then, respond naturally as you would do in your daily interaction.

Gender:..... Education level.....
Age:..... Native language:.....
University:.....

Situation 1:
Situation 1: You and your friend are living in the same house. You want your roommate to clean up the kitchen he/she had left in a total mess the night before. Ask him/her to clean up the kitchen.
You:.....

Situation 2:
You are a manager in a company and you would like to have a cup of coffee, but the person who usually prepares the drinks is absent. Ask your secretary to make a drink for you?
You:.....

Situation 3:
You are a student and you want your classmate to lend you his/her notes because you missed the lecture. Ask your classmate to lend you his/her notes.
You:.....

Situation 4:
While you were in the market, you saw people living in the same street you live in but you have never spoken to before. Ask them to give you a ride home.
You:.....

Situation 5:
You are an applicant calling an agency for information on a job advertised in a newspaper. Ask the person who answers the phone about the advertised job.
You:.....

Situation 6:
You are a police officer and you want to ask a driver to move his/her car as no parking is allowed. Ask him/her to move the car.
You:.....

Situation 7:
You are a student and you want to ask your teacher for an extension on a seminar paper. The problem is that this is the second time you have asked for an extension. Ask your teacher for an extension.
You:.....

Situation 8:

You are a university professor and you want to ask one of your students to give his/her presentation a week earlier than scheduled. Ask your student to give his/her presentation a week earlier than scheduled.
You:.....

Situation 9:
You are a citizen waiting in a public hall where smoking is not allowed, and you want to ask the person sitting next to you to stop smoking. Ask him/her to stop smoking.
You:.....

Situation 10:
You are a young woman and you want to get rid of a man pestering you in the street. What would you say?
You:.....

Thank you for your cooperation

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