

## **Favor-Asking as Used by Jordanian University Students: A Socio-Pragmatic Study**

**Mahmoud A. Al-Khatib \*, Thær T. Al-Kadi, Rana Shawqi Haddad**

Department of English Language and Linguistics, Jordan University of Science and Technology, Jordan

**Received on: 30-8-2022**

**Accepted on: 12-3-2023**

### **Abstract**

This paper contributes to the existing literature on an important aspect of politeness by investigating the linguistic performance of the speech act of favor-asking as used by Jordanian university students. Specifically, it aims to explore the effect of gender and social distance on favor-asking performance. Data were collected from 100 Jordanian university students (50 males and 50 females) studying at two Jordanian universities: Jordan University of Science & Technology and Yarmouk University. The data were analyzed based on the speech act theory, using the content analysis model (i.e., the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) proposed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). Results demonstrated that the core strategy used in favor-asking among the students is significantly affected by gender and social distance. Conventionally indirect strategies (CISs) were found to be the most used category among all strategies; however, the female participants tended to use them much more often than the male participants.

**Keywords:** Favour-asking, Applied linguistics, Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, Jordanian society.

### **1. Introduction**

The Cambridge Dictionary (2021), defines “favor” as “a kind action that you do for someone.” The speech act of favor-asking can be seen as a subcategory of requests, as these two speech acts share the same illocutionary point (a speaker asks and expects the hearer to do something); however, intrinsically they might vary in terms of other aspects (Goldschmidt 1998). The difference between request and favor-asking is that a request is something we ask for, whereas a favor is something we ask people to do for us out of goodwill. This means that all acts of favor-asking are requests but not all acts of requests are favor-asking. Goldschmidt (1988, 133) argues that, unlike requests, favor-asking is extremely imposing, and “the addressee is not obligated by role to accomplish the task in question.” That is to say, favor-asking is characterized by their higher degree of imposition, that is a speaker would ask for an act that is beyond what is usual. Therefore, this type of request can be viewed as an important area of inquiry for several reasons. Firstly, although this topic has been a target of scholarly investigation during the last few decades (e.g., Althoff et al. 2014; Niiya 2015; Niiya and Ellsworth 2012; Al-Khatib 2021; Alshehri, 2020;

---

© 2023 JJMLL Publishers/Yarmouk University. All Rights Reserved,

\* Doi: <https://doi.org/10.47012/jjml.15.3.14>

\* Corresponding Author: [mahmoud@just.edu.jo](mailto:mahmoud@just.edu.jo)

Park et al. 2012; Flores-Salgado and Castineira-Benitez 2018; Ogiermann and Bella 2020), it is still an under-researched area of pragmatics in Jordanian Arabic. Secondly, the speech act of favor-asking, in general, is dominated by the socio-cultural norms and conventions of the society in which they are used (Niiya 2015); thereby, it is hoped that the insights that can be drawn from examining this socio-pragmatic phenomenon may help us in understanding the overlapping relationship between language and society. Thirdly, more information is expected to be highlighted about the socio-psychological functions of favor-asking from an Arab point of view, the socio-cultural constraints governing its use, and the motives underlying it.

### *1.1. Jordanian Arabic*

As this study is concerned with an important aspect of language use in Jordanian society (i.e., favor-asking), it is vital to provide some more information on the varieties spoken in Jordan as a means of grounding our discussion of this topic.

Jordanian Arabic is a member of the family of Levantine Arabic dialects used by people along the Eastern Mediterranean Coast of Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan (cf. Abu Kwaik et al. 2018). Like all other Arab speech communities, Jordanian Arabic shows two major varieties of Arabic: a spoken language (dialects) and a literary one (the classical language). In other words, the case of Jordan is characterized by "diglossia", namely, two forms of the language are identified in Jordan: Classical Arabic (CA) and its modernized variety Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), on the one hand, and Colloquial Arabic (i.e., the spoken dialects) on the other hand. These two forms, CA/MSA and Colloquial Arabic, are used in different social contexts to serve different sociolinguistic functions, resulting in a case of diglossia (Al-Khatib and Al-Sheikh Salem 2020).

Jordanian Arabic, which comprises a number of colloquial varieties, is the natively spoken language of all people in Jordan. As far as the colloquial varieties are concerned, there are three dialects spoken in the country: the Bedouin, the Fellahi, and the urban dialects (see Al-Khatib 1988). Although two of these three varieties form integral parts of what is referred to as the Syro-Palestinian family of dialects, they differ from one another in terms of certain aspects. The urban dialect, for example, is made up of the aspects of Arabic spoken by people who migrated from Palestine, Syria, and other urban parts of the Arab world. People born in rural areas speak rural Arabic. Different labels have been given by linguists in the Arab world to differentiate between the colloquial varieties, e.g., Nomadic-Sedentary, Urban-Rural, and Urban-Rural-Bedouin. Using the Nomadic-Sedentary criterion to differentiate between these three dialects, we find that while the Fellahi and the Urban dialects can be classified as sedentary (Celtic-dialects group), the Bedouin dialect can be considered nomadic (gelet-dialects group), although its speakers are Sedentary (cf. Palva 1976; Cantineau 1936 and Al-Khatib 1988).

### *1.2. Objectives and scope of the study*

Asking for a favor is considered the most face-threatening act of all kinds of requests (Goldschmidt 1989, 1996; Niiya and Ellsworth 2012). This is because much face-work is needed when asking for a favor as strategy and it's vital for a requester to minimize the level of imposition by employing

Favor-Asking as Used by Jordanian University Students:  
A Socio-Pragmatic Study

conventionally indirect strategies (Blum-Kulka et al. 1985). This research intends to add and contribute to the growing body of literature concerning politeness and speech acts in the Arab World. It examines the speech act of favor-asking as employed by Jordanian university students.

The aim of this work is two-fold: to provide a fairly detailed overview of how Jordanian university students ask for favor with particular emphasis on the processes involved in making and using a favor, and to consider several socio-cultural factors that might affect its use as a whole. Even though much work has been done on various types of requests (see, for example, Al-Khatib 2001, 2021), no previous studies explored this particular area of study. Favor-asking will be tackled here in terms of two social variables: gender and social distance. Specifically, this study attempts to identify the speech acts of favor-asking employed by males and females in terms of social distance and the power that the speaker wields on the addressees.

It is worth noting that the scope of this investigation will be limited to the performance and use of favor-asking and the analysis of the accumulated data in this study is limited within the boundaries of speech act theory.

### *1.3. Research questions*

Thus, much research is still needed to uncover the effects of the linguistic variables on favor-asking performance, response, and compliance. This study is intended then to enrich the literature and draw attention to the socio-pragmatic aspects of favor asking among Jordanian university students. To achieve this goal, the following research questions have been formulated:

- (1) How is favor-asking performed by Jordanian university students?
- (2) What type of favor-asking strategies does each gender group use and why?
- (3) Does the factor of social distance have an impact on the students' choice of favor-asking strategies and why?
- (4) Does the Directness level vary with the increasing imposition of requests for a favor-asking?

## **2. Theoretical background**

In the past few decades, the field of politeness research has expanded greatly both in the range of phenomena studied and in the number of settings dedicated to the relevant research. One such area is the speech act of request which has been dealt with from different perspectives (e.g., Al-Khatib 2021; Althoff et al. 2014; Niiya 2015; Flores-Salgado and Castineira-Benitez 2018; Ogiermann and Bella 2020; Alshehri 2020). The results of these studies have provided us with an unexploited avenue towards understanding the relationship between language and society appropriately and add to our understanding of practices and traditions involved in the process. As far as favor asking is concerned, this phenomenon has been investigated only in two different varieties of Arabic, namely Kuwaiti Arabic (Alrefai 1998) and Saudi Arabic (Alqahtani 2012). In both studies the researchers collected the data by using a written discourse completion test (DCT) in which a group of native speakers of Kuwaiti Arabic and Saudi Arabic

were asked to request a favor in different situations that varied in the degree of imposition. It has been observed that in both cases the core strategy and modification use in favor-asking were significantly affected by degree of imposition.

The theoretical framework for the current study is based on the speech act theory as developed by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969, 1975). The British philosopher J. L. Austin (1962) introduced the basic ideas of speech act theory (SAT) based on the assumption that “words are deeds.” Austin (1962) introduced the notion of performatives; thus, a speaker can act by uttering a sentence such as giving orders, commands, or making promises. He divided speech acts into three major acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. **Locutionary act**, in the case of spoken language, refers to the words, phrases, or sentences that are being uttered. In other words, it refers to the physical mechanism of producing a particular sequence of vocal sounds that are attached to a particular meaning (in the case of written language, it refers to the written symbols meant to convey meaning). **Illocutionary act** has to do with the speaker’s intention/desire and the function he/she wants to attain, which leads to Grice’s cooperative principle and the maxims of conversation (1975) that will be discussed later in this section. **The perlocutionary act** pertains to the potential effect of an utterance on the addressee and his/her recognition of the intended meaning (function) to be accomplished by the speaker in the first place. Austin (1969) and Searle (1975) elucidated that the locution that is uttered does not necessarily denote or determine the illocutionary force (the intended speech act).

Thereafter, Searle (1969) revised and developed Austin’s ideas introducing a broader vision and a deeper understanding of SAT. In an attempt to revise and develop Austin’s work on the theory, Searle argued that language itself is a form of a ruled behavior we apply in our daily interactive life to fulfill a particular purpose in the communication process. He (1969,1975) further improved the felicity conditions of speech acts contending that issuing flat imperative sentences or explicit performatives is not acceptable because they violate politeness requirements of ordinary conversation, namely why people tend to accomplish their illocutionary purposes indirectly. Searle (1979) suggested a typology of speech acts by their function. Namely Representatives, Directives, Commissive, Expressives, and Declarations.

Directives are speech acts through which the speaker tries to commit the addressee to do something that may be wanted by the speaker in the first place, such as requests, favor asking, etc. These are of great importance to the current study because favor asking as a speech act falls under the category of directives. Trosborg (1995, 14-15) clarified that there are minor differences between types of directives. She argues:

In performing directives, the speaker tries to get the hearer to commit him/herself to some future course of action (verbal or non-verbal) ... directives are attempts to make “the world match the words”. Cost and benefit vary concerning different illocutionary points, e.g., the purpose of a request is to involve the hearer in some future action that has positive consequences for the speaker and may imply costs to the hearer.

Studies on the speech act theory about the effect of gender and social distance on language use are many (e.g., Holmes 1995; Blum-Kulka et al. 1975; Xia 2013; Alqahtani 2012; Chen 2012; Alshehri 2020; Park et al. 2012); consequently, different approaches and theories emerged. The most popular

Favor-Asking as Used by Jordanian University Students:  
A Socio-Pragmatic Study

theories are the dominance theory introduced by Lakoff (1975) and the difference theory extensively investigated by Tannen (1990). Lakoff (1975), for example, hypothesized that men are more dominant than women. He stated that women's use of tag questions is not attributed to politeness purposes, but to the fact that they are seeking an excuse to make sure they are right. From another point of view, Tannen (1990) stated that this could be because males use language to prove their dominance, independence, or efficiency in problem-solving. In contrast, women use language to support ideas, seek intimacy, or as a means of expressing feelings.

In exploring the speech acts use between people on interactions, previous research showed that speech act performance is governed by a number of principles of politeness (Held 2005; Ide 1989; Brown 1987; Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987; Blum-Kulka 1989). Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) model is one of the most well-known works on linguistic politeness. Brown and Levinson's model is based on three notions: face, face-threatening acts (FTA), and politeness strategies. Politeness theory posits that individuals in any culture have positive and negative face wants. They argue that politeness involves us showing an awareness of other people's face wants because in normal situations, individuals use different strategies to avoid the bad effect of FTAs either to hearers (H) or speakers (S) (Xiaoning 2017). Politeness strategies are speech acts that express concern for others and minimize threats to face in certain social situations. The weight of a face-threatening act, according to Brown and Levinson, is affected by three social variables: power, distance, and rank of imposition, which are context dependent in the sense that their value changes according to the situation even if S and H remain constant. Brown and Levinson believed that some speech acts such as offering, thanking, requesting, and so on are intrinsically face-threatening and were often referred to as FTAs (Al-Khatib 2021). By making a request, the speaker may threaten the hearer's negative face by intending to impede the hearer's 'freedom of action,' (Brown & Levinson 1987, 65) and run the risk of losing face, as the requestee may refuse to comply with the requester's request. Requests are directive acts and they are "attempts on the part of a speaker to get the hearer to perform or to stop performing some kind of action" (Ellis 1994, 167). The researchers classified the requestive strategies into three main categories in decreasing order of directness and impact. These are: direct (impositives), conventional indirect, and non-conventional indirect. Brown and Levinson (1978 and 1987), Leech (1983), and Searle (1975) proposed that the more indirect the request is, the more polite it is.

### **3. Methodology and the corpus**

This section provides the details of the research methods for the current study. The model used as a framework for the study is based on the speech act theory as suggested by Austen (1962), and Searle (1969, 1975). As said earlier, the main issues that will be addressed in this study are (1) the favor-asking strategies as used by Jordanian university students in the selected data, particularly, the most frequent ones; and (2) the effect of gender, social distance, and power on the speakers' choice of favor-asking acts. This section comprises two main parts, where the first part discusses the procedures involved in sampling

and data collection, the second part introduces the process of data coding, and a description of data analysis, covering how data are classified into strategies.

### *3.1. Sampling and data collection*

Purposive sampling was employed in this study for the identification and selection of the sample. Purposive sampling is defined by Frost (2022) as “a non-probability method for obtaining a sample where researchers use their expertise to choose specific participants that will help the study meet its goals. These subjects have particular characteristics that the researchers need to evaluate their research questions.” Al-Khatib (1988) contends that since Jordanians in general are very suspicious of outsiders with whom they are not acquainted or who have not, at least, been introduced to them through a third party, in this present study a random selection of participants was neither possible nor available. Thus, the only possible way for us was to use the method employed by Al-Khatib, (1988), in which he followed the “social network” model suggested by Milroy and Milroy (1978) and approach the participants in the capacity of “a friend of a friend” or in some cases “a friend of a friend of a friend”.

The data of the current study were collected from 50 Jordanian students studying at Jordan university of Science & Technology, and 50 Jordanian students studying at Yarmouk University, who are evenly distributed by gender (i.e., 50 males and 50 females). The participants were between the age range of 20-29 years, most of whom (70%) were in their early twenties. The rationale behind choosing the sample from the two universities is to diversify the sample by specialization. That is, the participants of this study were of different specializations: engineering, medicine, nursing, arts, English language, science, economy and so on. The equilibrium of these variables facilitates testing the effect of other variables on strategy and modification use when asking for a favor. The instrument (DCT) used for collecting quantitative data in this study is a modified copy of the Discourse Completion Test (DCT)<sup>1</sup>, employed earlier by Blum-Kulka et al. (1984). The rationale for modifying Blum-Kulka et al.’s (1984) DCT is to serve the purposes of the current study.

A total number of 1025 tokens of favor-asking were collected for this investigation. A few numbers of them (i.e., almost 10%) were collected through personal observations. It is worth noting that our observations involve the use of our sensory systems to record the student’s behavior, attitudes, and other issues relevant to the aims of this study. By doing so, we were able to make judgments about the occurrence of favor-asking, its frequency, and its duration. Additionally, from the outset, we planned to vary the collected tokens of favor-asking according to several sociolinguistic factors such as gender, social distance, and power.

Data were analyzed following the mixed-method approach (including quantitative and qualitative together). Data were statistically analyzed using both the **Excel software and the SPSS**. Frequencies of participants’ requestive behavior (i.e., level of directness, favor orientation, and accompanied modifications) were examined; and the influence of the contextual variables was investigated. In addition, statistical tests were conducted to reveal statistical significance between the variables, strategy choice, and accompanied modifications.

Favor-Asking as Used by Jordanian University Students:  
A Socio-Pragmatic Study

3.2. *Data Coding*

Data analysis was carried out by the researchers themselves. Following many researchers, we use the content analysis model (i.e., the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), proposed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). The scale of directness as a way of minimizing the effect of imposition can be categorized according to three major categories. These are direct strategies (made explicitly as requests, such as imperatives), conventionally indirect strategies (referring to contextual preconditions necessary for its performance as conventionalized in the language), and non-conventionally indirect strategies (hints). Thus, to identify the three major levels of directness, we used Kulka and Olshain's (1984) model (See also Al-Khatib 2021, 12-13).

Accordingly, in this study, favor asking strategies are basically of nine different types classified into direct strategies (DS), conventional indirect strategies (CIS), or non-conventional indirect strategies (NCIS) as illustrated in the following table.

**Table 1:** Favor asking strategies (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989).

Type	Strategy	Explanation
DS	1. Mood derivable	The grammatical mood of the verb (imperative) indicates the illocutionary force as a subcategory of requests.
	2. Explicit performative	The illocutionary force is explicitly said using a pertinent verb.
	3. Hedged performative	The verb denoting the illocutionary force is modified by hedging (another verb or modal)
	4. Locution derivable	The illocutionary force is directly derivable from the statement of the obligation on the part of the hearer.
	5. Want a statement	Using verbs indicating the speaker's desire that the favor is successful, and the hearer carries out the act
CIS	6. Suggestory formula	Suggesting the illocutionary force in the form of a suggestion
	7. Query preparatory	Using a modal verb to check possibility, willingness, or ability
NCIS	8. Strong hint	Partial reference to an element needed for the illocutionary act. More effort is needed on the part of the hearer to infer the intended illocutionary force
	9. Mild hint	No reference to the intended illocution. The illocutionary force is reached through context (indirectly pragmatically implying the act)

Two new strategies were also detected by the researchers in the analyzed tokens. These are GIVING OPTIONS and SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS which will be presented in table (2) below.

**Table 2:** New favor-asking strategies detected by the researchers

Type	Strategy	Explanation
NCIS	Giving options	The illocutionary force is introduced in a form of two or more options from which the addressee can choose.
	Social media post	The speaker introduces the needed favor through an electronic medium of communication using a social media platform to avoid face-to-face communication and reduce social anxiety.

Favor asking strategies can be oriented in different perspectives and this is an important variable that must be discussed as it might add sociocultural meanings to the performed favor (Al-Momani 2009). According to the CCSARP framework, the acts of favor-asking in this study are oriented in four different ways as follows:

1. *Speaker-oriented favors* (e.g., “Could I copy your notes?”)
2. *Hearer-oriented favors* (e.g., “Could you give me a copy of your notes?”)
3. *Inclusive* i.e., speaker and hearer-oriented favors (e.g., “Can we study the notes together?”)
4. *Impersonal* (e.g., “The notes are really important and needed to understand this topic?”)

As mentioned earlier, speakers usually apply linguistic modifications to the head act of favor asking either to mitigate or aggravate it. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) stated that these modifications are either INTERNAL (within the head act itself) or EXTERNAL (before the head act, after the head act, or combinations of both are possible). Modifications are illustrated in the following tables.

**Table 3:** Internal modification strategies (Adopted from Blum-Kulka et al. 1989).

		Internal modification strategy	Explanation
Downgraders	Syntactic downgraders	1) Interrogative	Asking for a favor in the form of a question. e.g., Can you hand me the book?
		2) Negation	To indicate that the speaker is pessimistic or hesitant about the outcome of the favor being asked. e.g., Could(not) you hand me the book?
		3) Past tense	Distancing elements are used to soften the perlocutionary effect of the utterance on the hearer. It is usually in the past tense was the present time reference. e.g., I wanted to ask for a vacation
Downgraders	Other downgraders	4) Embedded ‘if’ clause	The speaker distances his/her favor being asked from reality by hedging it with a conditional clause. e.g., I would appreciate it if I could get a vacation.
		5) Consultative devices	An element used by the speaker seeking to involve the hearer and trying to gain his/her cooperation. e.g., Maybe you wouldn’t mind helping me.
		6) Understraters	A modifier used by the speaker to minimize parts of the proposition. e.g., Can you speak up a bit please.
		7) Hedges	Elements through which the speaker avoids specification regarding the illocutionary point of the utterance. e.g., May I ask you to do me a favor.
		8) Downtoners	Devices indicating the possibility of non-obedience on the part of the hearer to mitigate the impact of the favor being asked. e.g., Perhaps you could help me in doing my assignment.
		9) Politeness marker	A device was utilized to encourage the hearer’s cooperative attitude. e.g., Hand me the book please!
		10) Appealer	A lexical item is used to appeal to the addressee’s agreement/ understanding. e.g., Set him up in here before we start. Is that alright?
Upgraders		Intensifiers	Lexical items are used by the speaker to over-signify a reality conveyed in the asked favor. e.g., You really must open the door.
		Expletives	Intensifiers through which the speaker explicitly conveys negative emotional feelings and thoughts regarding the asked favor. e.g., You still haven’t cleaned up that bloody mess!

Data analysis has also indicated that a number of new modification strategies are used by the speakers for face-saving purposes, as shown in the following examples. It should be noted here that upon performing a face-saving act or face-threatening act, three important sociological variables come into



Favor-Asking as Used by Jordanian University Students:  
A Socio-Pragmatic Study

play. These are related to the ‘weight of the act’ which has got three interrelated factors such as ‘power, distance and rank’. ‘Power’ is related to the power dynamics between the participants.

Through our analysis of the data, we have also noticed that participants tended to use a number of other new internal modification strategies as downgraders for the same purpose. Among these are pluralization, formal type of language and some sarcastic expressions, the use of which is determined by a variety of context-internal and context-external factors. One of the context-internal factors is the nature of the request. The requester’s need for a particular favor affects the choice of request formula (Blum Kulka, 1989) and intensification of request force. Consider the examples below (Table 4) for illustration.

**Table 4:** New internal modification strategies detected by the researchers.

Type	Internal modification strategy	Explanation	Example
Downgraders	Pluralization	A speaker refers to himself/herself as a plural entity.	“law samaht tsaʕidna bihallabtub wetnazililna ilbaramidʒ iða bidak muqabil ʔana dʒahiz” “Could you help us with this laptop and download the programs for us? And if you want anything in return, I’m ready”
	formal language	Using the formal variety of Arabic in some parts of the favor-asking rather than the local Jordanian Arabic.	“duktør, ʔardʒu:k sʕidqan kan ilwaqt qalil dʒiddan, hal min ilmumkin ʔinnak taʕtʕina waqt ʔidʕafi?” “Professor please, the given time was not sufficient. Is it possible to give us extra time?”
	sarcastic expressions	Expressions used to show that the speaker is joking or showing humor sense to decrease the tension of imposing on the hearer.	“ʔahmad ʔana mali:f yeirak. ʔasʕli ʕawiz flous ja xouje, ʔitʕʕalab ʔilmuʕtad w rabbak bjifridʒha” “Ahmad, I’ve no one except you (to help). I need some money brother [using another dialect]. You know, the usual request, may Allah show us a way out.”

We have also observed that some of the participants tended to choose or support the speech act of favor-asking by external modification, the use of which does not affect the way they ask for a favor, but rather the context in which it is embedded. In this way a considerable number of the participants attempted to indirectly modify the illocutionary force of their requests.

**Table 5:** Alerter modifiers (address terms) (Adopted from Blum-Kulka et al. 1989).

Alerter	English example	Arabic Example
1. Title/ role	Professor/ Sister	duktør
2. Surname	Haddad	haddad
3. First name	Rana	Laila
4. Nickname	Toto	Toto
5. Endearment term	Dear	habibti
6. Attention getter/ greeting	Excuse me/ Hello	marhaba
7. Swearing and cursing	Animal	haywaneh
8. honorific term	Your honor	had <sup>r</sup> ritak

As seen above, address terms (alerters) are external modifiers. These are words or phrases that are used to address someone (in written or spoken language). They are used in formal and informal contexts; moreover, they are used for different purposes (Nordquist 2019).

**Table 6:** External modification strategies

External modification strategy	Explanation
1) Preparator/checking on availability	Using a phrase that prepares the addressee for the forthcoming request seeking his/her availability or asking his/her permission
2) Grounder	Stating the reason(s) for the request
3) Getting a pre-commitment	Stating what the speaker needs of the hearer before stating the head act as an attempt to commit him/ her
4) Disarmer	Showing awareness of a potential offense trying to avoid possible refusal
5) Sweetener	Expressing exaggerated appreciation of the hearer's ability to comply with the request
6) Cost minimizer	Showing his/ her awareness of the cost and trying to minimize it to the hearer.
7) Promise of reward	Offering a reward to the hearer to get his/ her compliance to the favor being asked.
8) Appreciation and thanking <sup>2</sup>	Expressing appreciation for the hearer's compliance before the favor needed is performed.
9) Apology	Apologizing before performing the favor needed for the hearer's time, effort, or cost.
10) Self-introduction <sup>1</sup>	Before making any request, the speaker introduces him/herself to the hearer.
11) Affective appeal <sup>2</sup>	Trying to invoke the hearer's emotions to convince him/ her to comply with the asked favor.
12) Small talk <sup>2</sup>	Establishing a social bond with the hearer as an introduction to the forthcoming request.
13) Oath-taking <sup>2</sup>	Offering an oath assuring the truthfulness of what is being said.
14) Softener	Decreases the force of the request and possible loss of face.
15) Cajoler	Words or phrases are used to enhance harmony between the speaker and the hearer.
16) politeness marker	A linguistic device that is used to show politeness that is used externally.
17) religious terms	Words or phrases that are committed to religion.

N.B. The explanation given in (1) above is adopted from (Al-Momani 2009, 75); and the ones given in 8,12,13 are adopted from (Alrefai 2012, 33).

It is worth mentioning that we also detected in our data new external modification strategies that are listed and clarified in the following table.

Favor-Asking as Used by Jordanian University Students:  
A Socio-Pragmatic Study

**Table 7:** New external modification strategies detected by the researcher.

External modification strategy	Explanation	Example
Customized expressions	Expressions derived from the Jordanian customs or traditions (a common saying)	/ʔilak willa lalði:b/ Literally meaning “May I resort to you or the wolf?” which means may I ask you for a help or ask the wolf? (Expecting him to be more generous than a wolf) <sup>2</sup> .
Beneficial outcome	Convincing the addressee that performing the asked favor is of a benefit to him/ her	/minu bitsaiʕidna wminu btiksab ʔadzir/ In this way, you do two things in once, helping us and gaining a reward from God (some good deeds).
Late preparator	The use of an expression by the requester seeking the addressee’s availability or asking his/her permission at the end of the favor sequence.	/bidi masʕari ʔana mihtadz 300 dinar btiqdarʔ/ “I want some money, I need 300 JDs, can you?”

As seen in the above examples, each favor asked for was integrated into its components; the head act and any accompanied modifications (internal/ external/ alerter). Favor-asking orientation was also taken into consideration as well. It is evident that the speakers in the above examples tend to use some external modification strategies as ‘supportive moves.’ The rationale behind doing so is to prepare the addressee ahead of the request and offer reasons and explanations for the request. These are referred to as ‘supportive mitigating moves’ (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2008, 115). Consider the following example of favor-asking summarizing the procedure of data analysis in this study:

مثال: مرحبا عزيزتي ممكن ان استخدم اللابتوب تبعك دقيقة وحده لوسمحتي؟ عندي تقديم شفوي حالا، ولازم اعمل

تعديل بسيط على شفلي. ماراح اخذ وقت طويل.

**Example: “Hello dear, can I use your laptop for a minute, please? I have an oral presentation in a while, and I have to fix something with my work. It won’t take long.”**

Such acts of favor-asking would be coded as follows:

1. Address term (see table 4): - Greeting: ‘Hello’ - Endearment term: ‘dear’
2. Favor-asking perspective (orientation): Speaker-oriented: ‘I can ...’
3. Favor-asking strategy Query preparatory: ‘Is there any chance I can use your laptop?’
4. Downgrades: - Understrater: ‘for a minute’ - Politeness marker: ‘please’
5. Upgraders: none
6. Supportive moves: - Grounder: ‘I have an oral presentation in a while, and I have to fix something with my work’ - Imposition minimizer: ‘it won’t take long.’

Furthermore, accumulated acts of favor-asking (from the DCT and observation) were divided into analytical groups by the contextual variables of social distance (+D, -D) and gender orientation (i.e.,

addressee's gender ( $\rightarrow F$ ,  $\rightarrow M$ ,  $\rightarrow N$ ). These groups are listed below, and they were created in the first place to facilitate the statistical analysis.

- Group 1: (+D,  $\rightarrow F$ )      Group 4: (-D,  $\rightarrow F$ )
- Group 2: (+D,  $\rightarrow M$ )      Group 5: (-D,  $\rightarrow M$ )
- Group 3: (+D,  $\rightarrow N$ )      Group 6: (-D,  $\rightarrow N$ )

**4. Results and discussion**

Results of the study are presented and discussed under two main headings. These are: core strategy analysis, and modification analysis. Two types of modification analysis are also discussed, namely external analysis and internal analysis. Findings of the study are discussed in relation to the four research questions of the study. Statistical frequencies regarding core strategy and modification use with possible justifications in terms of the tested variables (participant's gender, social distance, and addressee's gender) are presented and discussed in order.

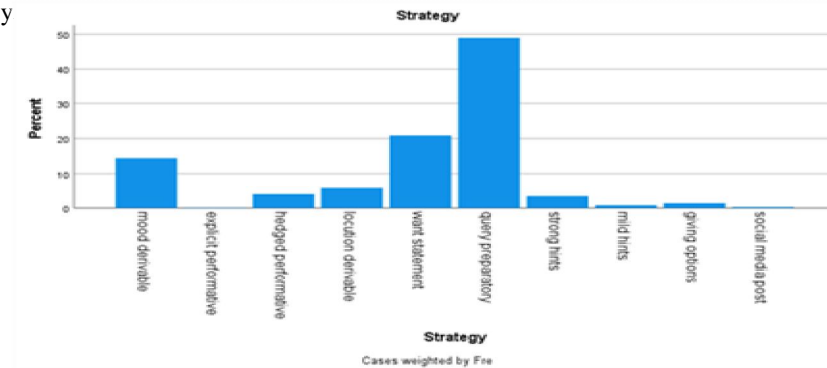
*4.1. Core strategy analysis*

Generally speaking, it was found that conventional indirect strategies CISs were the most recurrent category amongst the three types of core strategies used in 502 tokens out of 1025 responses. Direct strategies (DSs) were performed by the participants in 463 tokens out of 1025 responses, while non-conventional indirect strategies NCISs were the less frequent strategy used in 60 tokens out of 1025.

**Table 8:** Strategy distribution among all acts of favor-asking.

	Strategy	N	%
CISs	mood derivable	148	14.4%
	explicit performative	1	0.1%
	hedged performative	41	4.0%
	locution derivable	59	5.8%
	want statement	214	20.9%
	query preparatory	502	49.0%
	strong hints	35	3.4%
	mild hints	8	0.8%
	giving options	14	1.4%
	social media post	3	0.3%
NCIS			

*Note.* DS = Direct strategy, CIS = Conventionally indirect strategy, NCIS = Non-conventionally indirect strategy



**Figure 1:** Strategy distribution across all favors

Favor-Asking as Used by Jordanian University Students:  
A Socio-Pragmatic Study

Directiveness and politeness of any act of favor-asking are tightly related. This was clarified by the politeness definition introduced by Blum-Kulka (1989) in which she stated that politeness is the achieved balance between the need for pragmatic clarity and the need to avoid coerciveness. Moreover, she clarified that this balance can be achieved by performing the act of favor-asking using a CIS because this type of strategy attains pragmatic clarity and avoids coerciveness; hence, direct strategies can be perceived as impolite as they might threaten face. Likewise, non-conventional indirect strategies (hints) can be perceived as impolite because they are unclear, pragmatically speaking. Brown and Levinson (1987) also argued of the importance of a number of choices and strategies available to the speaker for doing FTAs. Five different strategies of politeness were suggested by them, i.e., bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off record and do not do face-threatening act as well. They classified the strategies into five categories, arranged from the least polite to the politest in politeness degree.

The above results indicate that most of the participants appear to be aware of the importance of using polite formulae in making their favor requests. As mentioned earlier, the more indirect a request is, the more polite it seems to be. Thus, the above results show evidence of how most university students have a polite request form upon asking for a favor. By doing so, the participants attempted to achieve two goals simultaneously: a desire to give the addressee an option not to perform the act by being indirect, and a desire to go on record. This is attained by using the conventional indirectness in which phrases and sentences have contextually unambiguous meanings which are different from the literal meanings they have.

The question here is: what determines strategy choice? and how do different socio-pragmatic factors such as gender, social distance, etc. affect strategy choice when performing a favor? These are to be answered throughout this section.

To see what gender group is more polite in favor-asking and why, results have shown, as seen in table 9 below, that females appear to be more polite than males, as they tend to ask for favors indirectly. A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to determine gender distribution and significance in strategy use as illustrated in the following tables.

**Table 9:** Strategy use distribution by male and female respondents in all acts of favor-asking.

		Females		Males		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Strategy	DS	215	40.3%	248	50.5%	463	45.2%
	CIS	293	54.9%	209	42.6%	502	49.0%
	NCIS	26	4.9%	34	6.9%	60	5.9%
Total		534	100.0%	491	100.0%	1025	100.0%

*Note.* DS = Direct strategy, CIS = Conventionally indirect strategy, NCIS = Non-conventionally indirect strategy.

The relation between participant's gender and strategy was proven significant as  $X^2 = (2, N=1025) = 15.698, p = .000$ . This means that strategy choice and participants' gender are dependent on each other. These results appear to be in line with those of Xia (2013) who argued that females tend to be indirect in their speech contrary to males who would rather be direct to the point when they speak. That is, females' requests appear to have more politeness indicators than those of males.

The following examples are indicative of the way female participants ask for a favor, where they tend to employ conventional indirect strategies much more often than direct strategies as seen in table 9 above. It is also evident that the direct strategies used were primarily hedged performatives and want statements as seen below:

1. لو سمحت دكتورة، معظمتنا مش فاهمين ممكن من فضلك تعيدلنا الشرح؟

“duktōra law samaḥti ʔyḻabijjitna miḥ fahmi:n mumkin law samaḥti tʕi:di:lna iʃʃariḥ?”

“If you please doctor, most of us don’t understand. Could you please [politeness marker] explain this point again? [*Query preparatory*]”

(Situation 5, Male participant. No. 25)

2. بعرف اني غلبتك دكتورة وعدتي اكثر من مرة بس والله مش واصليتي المعلومة ممكن لوسمحتي تعديها مرة تانية؟

“duktōra.. baʕrif ʔini ʔalabtik w ʕidti: aktar min mara bas walla miḥ wasʕli:tni mumkin tʕi:di:ha kamman marra law samaḥti?”

“Professor, I know I caused you a lot of problems as you have repeated it more than once, but I swear to God I couldn’t get the point. Could you please repeat it once more? [*Query preparatory*]” (S5, F, #30).

Considering the contextual variable of social distance between the interlocutors, accumulated data (from the DCT and observation) were divided into two groups +D favor-asking and -D favor-asking. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between social distance and strategy use. The relation between these variables was significant.  $X^2 = (2, N=1025) = 109.410, p = .000$ . In -D favor-asking participants were significantly more direct (DS use = 63%) than in +D situations (DS use = 31%). In contrast, in +D situations, the respondents were significantly more conventionally indirect (CIS use = 63%) than direct (DS use = 31%). Moreover, the percentage of using NCIS is rather low in all acts of favor-asking (6%) with almost equal frequency in both -D and +D favor-asking which gives no significance to social distance in NCIS use.

When it comes to the addressee’s gender i.e., gender orientation, accumulated cases of favor-asking were divided into three groups; female-oriented favor-asking (àF), male-oriented favor-asking (àM), and non-specified gender-oriented favor-asking (àN) in which the participants ask for the needed favor regardless of the gender of the addressee. It has been observed that conventionally indirect strategies were the most frequent amongst all performed acts of favor-asking; a chi-square test output in table (9) showed that →F and →N acts of favor-asking were parallel to the general result as they showed the highest percentage in CIS use; however, this was not the case in →M which showed a remarkable tendency towards direct strategy use (58%) rather than CIS/ NCIS use.

It has also been noticed that favor-asking was performed in one of four orientations. That is, the highest frequency of cases of favor-asking (56%), for example, were those cases oriented towards the addressee and the lowest frequency (2.6%) were the inclusive ones.

Here are some examples of each type of favor-asking orientation in the accumulated data:

3. ممكن دكتور لوسمحت تعطيني فرصة لبكة؟

“duktōr mumkin law samaḥt taʕtʕi:ni fursʕa labukra?”

Favor-Asking as Used by Jordanian University Students:  
A Socio-Pragmatic Study

“Professor, could you please give me a time extension until tomorrow?” [*Hearer-oriented*] (S1, M, #2)

شباب بحاجة لمساعدة, حدا بيقدر يساعد ؟ 4.

“Jabab bihadzih lamusaʿadih hada bjigdar jisaʿid?”

“Hey guys, anyone can help?” [*impersonal*] (S9, M, #28)

صباح الخير دكتور... انا هيك صار معي وماقدرت امتحن في مجال امتحن تكميلي ؟ 5.

“sʿbah ilxeir duktur.. ?ana heik sʿar mʿi w ma gdir amtahin fi: majal amtahin takmili?”

“Good morning professor, this is what happened to me ,and I couldn’t take the exam. Can I take a make-up exam?” [*Speaker-oriented*] (Q11, F, #11)

بسرعه تعالي نعدل هل كم شغله ماضل معي وقت ومافيه قدامي غيرك 6.

“bsurʿa bsurʿa tʿali nʿadil halkam jaylih ma dʿal maʿi wagit w ma fi: guddami yeirik”

“Hurry up, Hurry up! Come on, let us make some modifications. I don’t have enough time, and there is nobody else can help except you.” [*Inclusive*] (S6, F, #31)

The question here is: Do the socio-pragmatic factors examined in this study affect the perspective of the performed acts of favor-asking? Statistical chi-square tests for independence were conducted to answer this question by examining each contextual variable. The relationship between the participant’s gender and favor-asking orientation was found to be significant.  $X^2(3, N = 1025) = 2.464, p = .000$ , which means that the orientation of the favor-asking depends on the participant’s gender noticing that hearer-oriented favor-asking were the most frequent among both males and females. Another chi-square test of independence showed that there was a significant association between social distance and favor-asking orientation,  $X^2(3, N = 1025) = 67.512, p = .000$ . The highest percentages were of those cases of favor-asking oriented towards the hearer in both +D and -D cases of favor-asking; however, it is greater in -D favor-asking (70.8%) than in +D (45.4%). The last chi-square test of independence that was performed examining favor-asking orientation showed a significant relationship between the addressee’s gender and favor-asking orientation  $X^2(6, N = 1025) = 77.974, p = .000$

Statistically, the relation between the contextual variables and strategy choice and orientation was proven significant. Conventionally indirect strategies were the most frequent by both male and female participants. Females tended to be rather indirect compared to males who showed a greater tendency toward using direct strategies. In addition, it was revealed that in -D favor-asking DSs were the most frequent by the participants contrary to +D favor-asking in which CISs were the most frequent strategies. In female-oriented cases of favor-asking, CISs were the most frequently opposing to male-oriented favor-asking in which DSs were the most frequent. NCISs were rather of low frequency in all situations; nevertheless, they were of a higher frequency in →N favor-asking.

4.2 Modification Analysis

Modifications are devices used to soften the impact of requests as FTAs. Put differently, modifications are seen as supportive moves that precede or follow the head act and affect the context in which the actual act is found. Supportive moves are used either to mitigate or intensify the force of the request. Modifications that accompany the head act of the speech act of favor-asking are of two types: External modification and internal modification. According to Faerch and Kasper (1989), the former type of modification is achieved through devices within the same head act, while the latter are localized not within the head act but within its immediate context. A discussion of the two types of modification is in order.

4.2.1 External modification

Speakers could modify the strategy of their acts of favor-asking externally by using both supportive moves (SM) and/or 'alerters' (address terms). As expected, it was found that females used external modifiers more than males. The following figure represents the distribution of SM. It is obviously noticed that grounders were the most used supportive move in all favors. Beneficial outcomes and cajolers both are the least used strategies amongst supportive moves in all cases of favor-asking.

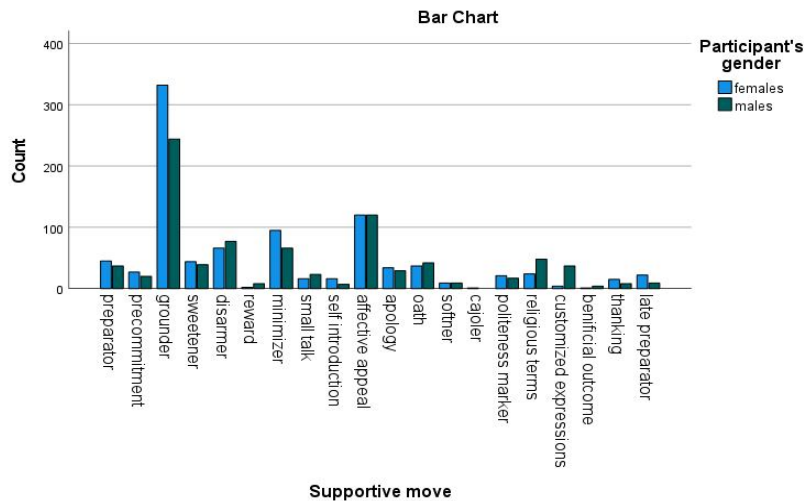


Figure 2: Supportive moves distribution across all favors

Different studies, according to Trosborg (1995), showed a similar result for grounders to be the most frequent supportive move used of all supportive moves, (e.g., as speakers tend to justify their needs.

Talking of address terms, the most frequent term used by the respondents was title/role (37.5%) which denotes deference politeness (Chen 2001). First name, nickname, and swearing and cursing were the least frequent (0.6%) (0.5%) and (0.4%) respectively. Attention getters and greetings were of a high frequency as well and this can be related to the socio-cultural norms followed in Jordan as an Arab country.

In order to examine the effect of the contextual variables on external modifiers use, a chi-square test was performed. The following table presents the results.



Favor-Asking as Used by Jordanian University Students:  
A Socio-Pragmatic Study

**Table 10:** Supportive moves distribution by groups

Groups	Participant's gender				Total	
	Females		Males		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
+D/ →F	272	25.4%	213	17.0%	485	20.9%
+D/ →M	105	9.8%	85	6.8%	190	8.2%
+D/ →N	123	11.5%	136	10.9%	259	11.2%
-D/ →F	192	17.9%	199	15.9%	391	16.8%
-D/ →M	318	29.7%	541	43.2%	859	37.0%
-D/ →N	60	5.6%	78	6.2%	138	5.9%
Total	1070	100.0%	1252	100.0%	2322	100.0%

*Note.* D = social distance, →F = Female-oriented favor-asking, →M = Male-oriented favor-asking, →N = Non-specific gender-oriented favor-asking.

The statistical results indicated that there is a significant association between the social variables and supportive move choice,  $X^2(5, N = 2322) = 56.381, p = .000$ . Even though the females were found to use SM more than males; interestingly, males significantly changed their use of supportive moves employing significantly more supportive moves especially in (-D/ →M) favor-asking (43.2%). Moreover, in +D favor-asking males employed more supportive moves in (+D/→F) favor-asking (17%). Conversely, female participants in -D favor-asking tended to employ more supportive moves when the act of favor-asking is oriented towards the contrary gender (male addressee) (29.7%); however, in +D favor-asking females used more supportive moves when the act of favor-asking was oriented towards the same gender (female addressee) (25.4%). Taking a broader look at table (10), it is made clear that both female and male participants used more supportive moves in -D favor-asking rather than +D favor-asking.

One more chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between gender, social distance, and Address terms use. Interestingly, the relation between these variables was insignificant,  $X^2(5, N = 1001) = 9.305, p = .097$  which means that the Address terms use was independent of social variables of social distance and addressee's gender.

For illustration, the following examples show different types of external modifications by both male and female participants:

7. مرحبا لو سمحت بدي خدمه منك, بدي تحديث لجهازي وانت معروف عنك انك ماشاء الله كثير شاطر.

“marhaba law samaht bididi tahdi:θ ladzihazi w ?inta maʃru:f ʃannak ?innak ma ʃaʔallah kti:r ʃatʕir”

“Hello [*greeting*], I need a favor from you. Please [*politeness marker*]. [*preparator*] I want to update my laptop and you are proficient in software updating [*sweetener*], God bless you [*religious terms*].” (S7, F, #4

8. "الك والا للذيب"

“?ilak willa lalð:i:b? (بدي 300 دينار) bididi 300 leirah”

“Is it to you or the wolf? [*customized expression*] I need 300 JDs.” (S3, M, #11

Using some customized expressions like the one indicated above in example 8 can be seen in Jordanian society as an encouraging genuine motive for making people enter into the spirit of challenge and enhancing them to perform the requested action.

4.2.2. *Internal modification*

Internal modifiers are used either to mitigate or aggravate the favor being asked for. In general, upgraders are used to intensify the speech act being performed and downgraders are used to reduce its force and raise its chance of success. Requests, in general, are not the type of speech acts that speakers usually tend to aggravate (Al-Momani, 2009); nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that upgraders were minorly detected in the accumulated data as seen in the example below:

لوسمحتي ممكن اللابتوب تبعك شوي الموضوع ضروري ومالناش غيرك 9.

“law samaḥti mumkin labtubbik fʷaj mawdʷuʃ dʷaruri w malnaʃ ʕeyrik”

“If you will please, is it possible to borrow your laptop for a little bit? We have nobody to help except you.”)S6, M, #43

As for downgraders, they are usually moves used to weaken or mitigate an utterance in order to make it more acceptable. An examination of the data shows that females employed downgraders (54.29%) much more often than males (45.71%) as seen in table (11) below. The syntactic downgrader ‘interrogative’ was the most common of all downgraders by both genders; however, females’ utilization of questions was of a greater frequency (34%).

**Table 11:** Internal modifiers’ frequency according to participant’s gender

	Participant's gender				Total	
	females		males			
	N	%	N	%	N	
Downgrader	interrogative	278	34.0%	196	28.5%	474
	negation	43	5.3%	40	5.8%	83
	past tense	5	0.6%	1	0.1%	6
	embedded 'if'	66	8.1%	33	4.8%	99
	understrater	94	11.5%	97	14.1%	191
	hedges	43	5.3%	60	8.7%	103
	downtoner	26	3.2%	17	2.5%	43
	politeness marker	177	21.7%	143	20.8%	320
	appealer	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	1
	pluralization	81	9.9%	97	14.1%	178
	formal language	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	1
	sarcastic expressions	4	0.5%	2	0.3%	6
	Total	817	100.0%	688	100.0%	1505

As seen above, females were found more likely to use interrogative sentences to express themselves, moreover, they employed politeness markers more frequently than did the male participants. Females used ‘embedded if’ more frequently than males as they tend to be indirect. Interestingly, we have noticed that males preferred to refer to themselves in the plural rather than in the singular. We have also found that affective appeal, past tense, and formal language were the least used downgraders amongst all by both males and females.

Examples of the internal modifiers utilized by the participants:

10. لو سمحتي انت طالبة متميزة عنا في الشعبة ماشاء الله عنك لوتعطينا دفترنا نصوره بتكسبي فينا اجر 10.

“law samaḥti ʔinti tʷalbeh mutamajjizeh ʔinna fiʃʃuʃbih ma ʃaʔallah ʃannik.. law taʔʔi:na daftarik nsʷawruh btiksabi fi:na aḍʒir”

Favor-Asking as Used by Jordanian University Students:  
A Socio-Pragmatic Study

“Please, you are a distinguished student in our class. If you lend us a copy of your notebook, you will be rewarded by God. *[embedded if]*” (S2, F, #27)

11. لوسمحتي ممكن استخدم اللابتوب شوي

“law samahti mumkin ?astaxdim ?illabtub fwaj?”

“Please, can I use your laptop a little bit *[understrater]*, please *[politeness marker]*?”  
(S6, F, #20)

Digging deeper into participants’ acts of favor-asking performance by examining social variables’ influence on internal modifier choices, a chi-square test of independence showed that there was a significant relationship between internal modifier choice and the studied contextual variables (social distance and gender).  $X^2 = (5, N = 1832) = 11.872, p = .037$ . Most of the female participants stated that they feel more comfortable talking to the same-gender addressee; thus, in →M favor-asking females used more internal modifiers (N = 401) rather than in →F (N = 395). These results point to the impact of gender on the politeness strategies used by the speakers. Females speak more politely to males than to females as they tend to use more internal modifiers with them. A move indicating the impact of gender on the politeness strategies of the speakers.

It is also evident that the combination of -D, →F favor-asking caused males to overcome females’ utilization of internal modifiers as males showed a higher level of politeness when talking to an unfamiliar female addressee. Even though both female and male participants used more internal modifiers in -D favor-asking rather than in +D favor-asking, it was found that females used internal modifiers more frequently than males.

According to these results, males and females appear to act differently in terms of using modifiers. These findings substantiated the fact that female participants outperformed their male counterparts in using modifiers. Even though these differences could be attributed to several reasons gender-related, it is highly likely that women tended to use them in their speech as a coping strategy to avoid face-threatening acts. This is because, according to Holmes (1995, 6), “women’s utterances show evidence of concern for the feelings of the people they are talking to more often and more explicitly than men do.”

## Conclusion

The main objective of this investigation has been to contribute to a better understanding of the socio-pragmatic aspects of favor-asking amongst Jordanian university students of both males and females and to offer a response to the question of how culture manifests itself in making and using this type of communication. Unlike most previous studies in the Arab World, this work attempted to touch on the type of strategies employed by the participants in terms of gender and social distance. The first contribution this study makes is that it offers a scholarly and theoretically grounded perspective on the applicability of the speech act theory to the use of a politeness formula by a community of highly educated groups. Another important contribution of this study is that it has documented through

quantitative and qualitative data that favor-asking is a patterned and rule-governed process in which both males and females do that politely though to varying degrees.

In an answer to the first research question indicated above, it was observed that Jordanian university students do that in a systematic way, extending from setting the stage for the request to giving a reason for that and to ending by providing escape clauses. It was also noticed that conventionally indirect strategies (CISs) were the most used category among all strategies; however, the male participants were found to use them significantly less than the female participants. It was also noticed that in their request males tended to be more direct than females. This could be due to the fact that women tend to be more socially sensitive than men and as such using indirect request might help preserve their femininity and a shred of a surprise if the man actually picks up and act on the hints. There is also a considerable psychological theory that points to how indirect speech attenuates requests that might be perceived as inappropriate (Li, et al. 2022). Furthermore, female participants were found to employ internal modification more frequently than male participants. The higher level of modification employment on the part of female participants reflects a higher level of politeness and consideration.

Moreover, statistical analysis revealed that social distance is indeed influential in terms of strategy and modification choices. In -D favor-asking participants were significantly more direct than in +D favor-asking. In contrast, in +D situations, the respondents employed conventionally indirect requests in order to be free from the imposition of others and to show that they respected the others' rights to their own autonomy and freedom of movement or choice. Moreover, the participants employed more modifications (internal modification and external modification) in -D favor-asking rather than in +D favor-asking.

This study is hoped to be the first step towards a deep scientific knowledge concerning favor-asking in Jordanian Arabic. Future researchers are encouraged to investigate other FTAs of favor-asking handling a wider range of topics such as inviting, gift offering, thanking, and so on. Future researchers are also encouraged to replicate this study by using participants from other sectors of Jordanian society to assess the validity of this research.

## Notes

Is it to you or the wolf 'ولا للذئب؟' is a traditional Arabic saying that is used to ask for something. The origin of this saying is that there was a custom of some Arab tribes to send the person proposing marriage with a group of cattle to the wolf desert. Either the person returns with the cattle and hangs them in the middle of the village, or he returns empty-handed, and he asks: Is it for you or the wolf? If the answer is: "It's not for the wolf," the wedding ceremony begins, or if the answer is: "The wolf is faster," then he remains in the celibacy prison, (Alwatanvoice 2017).

## طلب الخدمة كما يستخدم من قبل طلاب الجامعات الأردنية دراسة اجتماعية - براغماتية

محمود الخطيب، ثائر القاضي، رنا شوقي حداد  
قسم اللغة الإنجليزية واللغويات، جامعة العلوم والتكنولوجيا الأردنية، الأردن

### الملخص

تسهم هذه الدراسة في تعزيز الدراسات السابقة حول جانب مهم من جوانب التهذيب من خلال البحث في الأداء اللغوي لطلب الخدمة بطريقة مهذبة كما يستعملها طلاب الجامعات الأردنية. على وجه التحديد، وتهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى استكشاف تأثير الجنس والمسافة الاجتماعية في أداء طلب الخدمة. ولقد جُمِعَت بيانات الدراسة من 100 طالب جامعي (50 ذكور و50 إناث) يدرسون في جامعتين أردنيتين مختلفتين. وحللت البيانات بناءً على نظرية فعل الكلام وباستعمال نموذج تحليل المحتوى (أي مشروع تحقيق قانون الكلام عبر الثقافات)، الذي اقترحه بلوم كولكا (1989)، ولقد ظهرت النتائج أن الاستراتيجية الأساسية المستعملة في طلب الخدمة بين الطلاب تتأثر كثيراً بالجنس والمسافة الاجتماعية. الكلمات المفتاحية: طلب الخدمة، لغويات تطبيقية، علم اللغة الاجتماعي، براغماتية، المجتمع الأردني.

## References

- Abu Kwaik, Kathrein, Motaz Saad, Stergios Chatzikyriakidis and Simon Dobnik. 2018. Shami: A Corpus of Levantine Arabic Dialects. *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation (LREC 2018)*: 3645-3652. <https://www.aclweb.org/anthology/L18-1576.pdf>.
- Al-Khatib, Mahmoud and Dana Al-Sheikh Salem. 2020. Dialect and Cultural Maintenance among the Syrians of Jordan. *Grazer Linguistische Studien* 92 (Herbst 2020) S: 85-109 DOI: 10.25364/04.47:2020.92.
- Al-Khatib, Mahmoud. 2021. (Im)politeness in Intercultural Email Communication between People of Different Cultural Backgrounds: A Case Study of Jordan & the USA. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*: 1-23. DOI: 10.1080/17475759.2021.1913213
- Al-Khatib, Mahmoud. 2001. The Pragmatics of Letter-writing. *World Englishes* 20 (2): 179-200.
- Al-Khatib, M. 1988. Language change in an expanding urban context: A case study of Irbid city, Jordan. PhD diss., Durham University.
- Al-Momani, H. 2009. Caught between two cultures: The realization of requests by Jordanian EFL learners. PhD diss., Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA. Retrieved from Indiana University of Pennsylvania DSpace.
- Alqahtani, A. 2012. Favor asking in Saudi Arabic. M.A. diss., Oklahoma State University.
- Alrefai, E. 2012. Favor asking in Kuwaiti Arabic: Effects of power and distance on core strategies and modification. PhD diss., Oklahoma State University.
- Alshehri, Rana. 2020. The Effect of Age and Position on Favor Asking. *Education and Linguistics Research* 6 (1): 34. DOI:10.5296/elr.v6i1.16369.
- Althoff, Tim., Cristian Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil and Dan Jurafsky. 2014. *How to Ask for a Favor: A Case Study on the Success of Altruistic Requests*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262338007>
- Alwatan voice. 2017. “ʔilak willa laḏḏi:b. limaḏa ʔḏḏiʔib?” *Is it for you or for the wolf?* <https://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news/2017/02/08/1016944.html>
- Austin, John. 1962. *How to do things with words*. Oxford University Press.
- Blum-Kulka, Shoshana and Elite Olshtain. 1984. Requests and Apologies: A Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP). *Applied Linguistics* 5: 196-213.
- Blum-Kulka, Shoshana, Danet Brinda and Gherson Rimona. 1985. “The language of requesting in Israeli society”. In *Language and social situations*, ed. Joseph P. Forgas, 113-139. New York: Springer.
- Blum-Kulka, Shoshana and Juliane House. 1989. “Cross-cultural and situational variation in requesting behavior”. In *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies*, ed. Shoshana Blum-Kulka, Juliane House and Gabriele Kasper, 123–154. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Brown, Penelope. 2017. Politeness and impoliteness. *The Oxford handbook of pragmatics*, ed. Yan Huang, pp. 383–399, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Favor-Asking as Used by Jordanian University Students:  
A Socio-Pragmatic Study

- Brown, Penelope and Stephen Levinson. 1978. "Universals in language usage: politeness Phenomena." In *Questions and Politeness Strategies in Social Interaction*, ed. Esther N. Goody, 56–280, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, Penelope and Stephen Levinson. 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cambridge Dictionary. 2021. *A favor*. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/favour>
- Cantineau, Jean. 1936. Études Sur Quelques Parlers Nomades Arabes d'Orient. *AIEO* 2: 1-118.
- Chen, Chi-Fen Emily. 2001. "Making e-mail requests to professors: Taiwanese vs. American students." Paper presented at *the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Applied Linguistics*, St-Louis, MO. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 461 299).
- Economidou-Kogetsidis, Maria. 2008. Internal and External Mitigation in Interlanguage Request Production: The Case of Greek Learners of English. *Journal of Politeness Research Language Behaviour Culture* 4 (1): 111-137. DOI:10.1515/PR.2008.005
- Ellis, Rod. 1994. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Faerch, Claus and Gabriele Kasper. 1989. "Internal and External Modification in Interlanguage Request Realization." In *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*, ed. by Shoshana Blum-Kulka, Juliane House, and Gabriele Kasper, 221–247. Norwood, NJ: Ablex
- Flores-Salgado, Elizabeth and Teresa Castineira-Benitez. 2018. The Use of Politeness in Whatsapp Discourse and Move 'Requests'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 133: 79-92.
- Frost, Jim. 2022. *Purposive Sampling: Definition & Examples*. <https://statisticsbyjim.com/basics/purposive-sampling/>.
- Goldschmidt, Myra. 1989. For the Favor of Asking: An Analysis of the Favor as a Speech Act. *Working papers in educational linguistics* 5 (1): 35-49.
- Goldschmidt, Myra. 1996. "From the addressee's perspective: Imposition in favor-asking." In *Speech acts across cultures: Challenges to communication in a second language*, ed. Susan Gass and Joyce Neu, 241-256. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Goldschmidt, Myra. 1998. Do me a Favor: A Descriptive Analysis of Favor Asking Sequences in American English. *Journal of Pragmatics* 29 (2): 129-153.
- Haddad, R. Sh. 2021. Strategies of favor asking among Jordanian University Students. M.A diss. Jordan University of Science & technology.
- Held, Sachiko. 2005. "Politeness in linguistic research." In *Politeness in language: Studies in its history, theory and practice*, ed. Richard J. Watts, Sachiko Ide and Konrad Ehlich, 131-53. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Holmes, Janet. 1995. *Women, Men and Politeness*. London: Longman, pp. viii + 254, ISBN 0 582 063612.
- Lakoff, Robin. 1975. *Language and Women's Place*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Leech, Geoffrey. 1983. *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman.

- Milroy, James and Lesley Milroy. 1978. "Belfast: Change and Variation in an Urban Vernacular." In *Sociolinguistic Patterns in British English*, ed. Peter Trudgill, 16–36. London: Arnold
- Niiya, Yu. 2015. Does a Favor Request Increase Liking Toward the Requester? *The Journal of Social Psychology* 156 (2). DOI: 10.1080/00224545.2015.1095706.
- Niiya, Yu and Phoebe Ellsworth. 2012. Acceptability of Favour Requests in the U.S. and Japan. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (43): 273-285. doi:10.1177/0022022110383426
- Nordquist, Richard. 2019. *Terms of Address*. <https://www.thoughtco.com/term-of-address-1692533>.
- Ogiermann, Eva and Spyridoula Bella. 2020. An Interlanguage Study of Request Perspective: Evidence from German, Greek, Polish and Russian Learners of English. *Contrastive Pragmatics* 1 (2):180-209. DOI:10.1163/26660393-BJA10003
- Palva, H. 1965. *Lower Galilean Arabic*. Helsinki: Studia Orientalia, eidiidit societies orientalis Fennica, XXXII.
- Park, Hee, Sun, Eun\_Lee, Tatsuya Imai and Daniel Dolan. 2012. Repeating apologies, thanks, and both along with favour asking used to reduce the face threats made by favour asking *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 31(3), 263-289. DOI: 10.5296/elr. v6i1.16369
- Searle, John. 1975. Indirect Speech Acts, in Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics* Volume 3: Speech Acts, Academic Press, 59–82.
- Searle, John. 1979. *Expression and meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tannen, Deborah. 1990. *You just don't understand*. New York: William Morrow & Company.
- Trosborg, Anna. 1995. *Interlanguage Pragmatics. Requests, Complaints, and Apologies*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Xia, Xiufang. 2013. Gender Differences in Using Language. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 3 (8): 1485–1489.
- Xiaoning, Zhu. 2017. *Politeness Strategies in Requests and Refusals*. <https://semanticsarchive.net/Archive/DYzYWRiN/Request-Refuse.pdf>.