

Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Competence: A Comparative Analysis of Request Speech Acts in Saudi ESL Learners and British English Speakers

Saeed Abdullah Alzahrani¹, Abdullah Saeed Alghamdi²

¹Department of Foreign Languages, College of Arts and Humanities, Al-Baha University, Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia

²Al-Baha University, Al-Baha, 65779, Saudi Arabia

Correspondence: Saeed Abdullah Alzahrani, Department of Foreign Languages, College of Arts and Humanities, Al-Baha University, Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia.

Received: November 12, 2025

Accepted: February 9, 2026

Online Published: June 17, 2026

doi:10.5430/wjel.v16n5p390

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v16n5p390>

Abstract

Why do proficient second language speakers still struggle to sound polite in everyday communication? This study examines the development of intercultural pragmatic competence in request speech acts by comparing Saudi English learners and British English speakers, with a focus on how sociocultural norms influence language use. While grammatical competence is often emphasized in second language instruction, pragmatic competence—the ability to communicate appropriately in context—remains an underexplored yet essential component. The study aims to identify differences in the use of request strategies and politeness markers across the two groups and to examine their implications for English language pedagogy. A total of 129 participants (65 Saudi and 64 British) responded to ten discourse completion task scenarios. A mixed-method approach was employed, combining statistical analysis of request strategies and politeness markers with thematic analysis of participant responses in formal and informal contexts. Results indicate that Saudi participants employed a direct strategy in 39.8% of cases, whereas British participants used it in only 24.2% of cases. British participants relied more heavily on indirect strategy (75.8%) and politeness markers, such as "please," "thank you," and hedging expressions. Saudi participants tended to use more direct strategies in informal settings but showed greater awareness of indirectness in formal settings. These findings highlight a pragmatic gap and underscore the need to integrate pragmatic competence training into English language curricula. The study concludes by recommending that educators explicitly teach context-sensitive strategies to enhance intercultural communication skills and suggests that further research be conducted into culturally responsive language instruction.

Keywords: British English speakers, cross-cultural pragmatics, ESL pedagogy, intercultural communication, pragmatic competence, request speech acts, Saudi English learners

1. Introduction

In a British classroom context, a Saudi student might say "Open the window" to a teacher. Even in a neutral context, the utterance can strike a British teacher as abrupt. The example also shows how communicative strategies grounded in culturally shaped assumptions can lead to mismatched expectations in intercultural contexts. The delegation of the window-opening task to the teacher is an example of a request in a second language that rests not only on appropriate grammar but also on an appropriate understanding of context, culture, and the relation between speakers. Within a framework of speech act theory, requests can be classified as face-threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Differences in how cultures mitigate imposition can lead to a pragmatic breakdown as learners carry over their first-language norms into English. Simultaneously, the breakdown shifts the communicative interaction to an ineffective channel. For example, a Saudi learner may formulate a request such as "Open the window" when addressing a teacher. While grammatically accurate, the request lacks mitigation and may be perceived as abrupt in British academic contexts. A pragmatically appropriate alternative would be "Could you please open the window?", which softens the imposition through modulization and politeness markers. Developing such awareness of intercultural norms is essential for communicative success, as cross-cultural pragmatic competence enables learners to balance linguistic accuracy with sociocultural appropriateness (Bardis, 2021).

Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language involves integrating pragmatic competence with the other communicative competencies. Learners of English as a second language may learn English vocabulary and grammatical structures. However, language use customarily in real-life interactions still poses a challenge. This issue is particularly prevalent among Saudi English Learners. However, the effectiveness of digital platforms, for example, Google Classroom, has been demonstrated in shaping students' attitudes towards collaborative learning and interaction in Saudi preparatory programs (Ahmed & Rehman, 2021). What may be a straightforward or polite request in Saudi Arabia could be deemed rude in the British context? Take, for example, a Saudi student saying to another, "Give me your notes." Such an insistence may sound rude in English, especially when "Could you please lend me your notes?" is a more polite request. This does not lead to a lack of understanding but to a lack of social appropriateness, with implications for interpersonal relationships in a work or school environment.

Pragmatic failures in requests can have significant consequences, ranging from interpersonal friction to negative impressions of the speaker's competence (Taguchi, 2018). Research has consistently shown that Saudi learners often transfer direct requesting habits from Arabic into English (El-Dakhs et al., 2023). While such directness may be culturally acceptable in Arabic, it can come across as brusque or impolite to native English speakers. Conversely, British English norms emphasize indirectness and politeness strategies, even in informal situations, where requests are commonly softened with modal verbs, hedges, or expressions of gratitude. Without explicit awareness of these differences, Saudi learners, particularly those studying abroad or working internationally, may find their communication less effective or unintentionally face-threatening. For instance, a Saudi learner addressing a professor might say, "Give me an extension for the assignment," intending neutrality rather than imposition. However, within British academic pragmatics, such direct phrasing may be interpreted as demanding or discourteous. A pragmatically aligned formulation, "I was wondering if it might be possible to request an extension," demonstrates mitigation, deference, and contextual awareness. Such mismatches illustrate how pragmatic misunderstanding arises not from linguistic deficiency but from sociocultural transfer.

Despite the growing body of research on interlanguage pragmatics, several critical gaps remain. First, many studies examining Arabic-speaking learners' request strategies have been conducted in learner-only contexts, without systematic comparison with native English-speaking baselines. As a result, cross-cultural pragmatic contrasts remain insufficiently specified. Second, prior research has often focused primarily on strategy frequency without integrating politeness markers, hedging devices, and sociocultural interpretations within a unified analytical framework. Third, while some comparative work exists, few studies have employed controlled elicitation instruments administered identically across cultural groups, limiting interpretive reliability. Finally, mixed-methods approaches combining quantitative distributional analysis with qualitative socio-pragmatic interpretation remain underutilized in Arabic-English pragmatic research. The present study addresses these gaps through a controlled cross-cultural design comparing Saudi ESL learners and British English speakers across strategy type, mitigation devices, and sociocultural explanatory factors. Specifically, the problem addressed in this study concerns how culturally conditioned request strategies, particularly levels of directness, mitigation, and politeness marking, may produce pragmatic misunderstanding when Saudi learners interact with British English speakers in academic and social settings.

This study addresses that gap by systematically comparing how Saudi ESL learners and British English speakers perform speech acts of requesting. Using a discourse completion task (DCT), it elicits naturalistic request formulations from both groups under the same conditions, providing a controlled cross-cultural comparison. This research aims to achieve three objectives. The first is to identify and contrast the request strategies (whether direct, indirect, polite, or informal) used by Saudi learners with those of British speakers. The second is to scrutinize the sociocultural contexts that inform the use of such strategies. The third is to propose pedagogical interventions to help Saudi learners develop their pragmatic competence.

This research offers two important contributions. First, it adds to the limited body of comparative work examining pragmatic request strategies between Saudi learners and British English speakers. This pair has received little attention in the scholarship of pragmatics. For instance, in the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (1984) by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, the focus was on the contrast between Arabic and English, leaving the cultural interface underexplored. The second contribution lies in the integrative application of a mixed-methods framework to examine both quantitative strategy distribution and qualitative sociocultural interpretation within a unified design. In this case, the analysis of request strategies and politeness is quantitative, while that of sociocultural factors is qualitative. This enables the researcher to document and explain the discrepancies in a given account, thus providing a more comprehensive account of the pragmatic problems faced by Saudi learners. Two research questions guided the analysis:

RQ1: In what ways do Saudi ESL learners differ from British English speakers in the realization of request speech acts (e.g., directness level, phrasing, and use of politeness markers)?

RQ2: What sociocultural factors underlie the differences in how Saudi ESL learners and British English speakers perform request speech acts?

In answering these questions, the study contributes to both theory and practice. From the theoretical perspective, it enriches intercultural pragmatics by offering comparative data from an understudied setting. From a practical perspective, it offers actionable guidance to ESL practitioners and curriculum developers. For instance, the fact that Saudi learners underuse some politeness strategies, "please" and "thank you", for instance, points to specific areas for focused teaching. Including more explicit pragmatics training in Saudi EFL programs would ultimately help learners to communicate more effectively in the global academia and the workforce. This study reinforces the importance of pragmatic competence as a central component of intercultural communication, highlighting its role alongside grammatical proficiency. Specifically, the study investigates how culturally shaped variations in request directness, politeness marking, and mitigation strategies may lead to pragmatic misunderstandings in Saudi-British intercultural communication contexts.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Pragmatic Competence

Effective communication in a second language requires more than knowing the grammar; pragmatic competence entails the ability to use language appropriately in a given situation. In speech act theory, making a request constitutes a face-threatening act (FTA) and imposes on the listener. Therefore, it may threaten the listener's negative face, the desire not to be made an imposition. Thus, the politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) suggests that speakers mitigate the imposition and soften the request by avoiding a direct ask to sustain social distance in the situation. For instance, "please" and other indirect request forms diminish the impact and soften the request to preserve the

autonomy of the hearer. The classic works in interlanguage pragmatics explain that learners of a second language must master not only linguistic interrelations but also the language's associated cultural background. Identifying the components of a grammatically correct sentence is not sufficient; the speaker must also identify the context when and how to articulate the components (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). This view complements the pragmatic principles proposed by Leech (1983), which hold that politeness and cooperation are the foremost criteria governing the communicative appropriateness of an utterance.

One of the most important requests for speech acts is to study pragmatic competence. As directive speech acts, requests require speakers to balance the negotiation of power relations, politeness, and face value. On a continuum from most indirect to most direct, Trosborg (1995) identified several request strategies comprising unconventionally indirect hints, conventionally indirect hearer-oriented (e.g., "Could you...?"), conventionally indirect speaker-oriented (e.g., "I would like you to..."), and direct requests. Ironically, more indirect, conventionally polite expressions tend to be considered more appropriate for minimizing the imposition of the request. For instance, a direct request might be "Give me your notes." A conventionally indirect request would take the form "Could you lend me your notes?" while a non-conventionally indirect hint might be expressed as "I missed the lecture yesterday." Each reflects increasing levels of pragmatic mitigation.

Research in cross-cultural pragmatics, for instance, the CCSARP project (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) has demonstrated that, as a means of maintaining a balance, conventionally indirect strategies tend to dominate across a considerable number of cultures. However, the directness, indirectness, and politeness markers used are contextually determined. This is a clear case of pragmatic transfer, where learners inappropriately carry their first-language norms into the second language.

2.2 Cross-Cultural Pragmatics of Requesting

Data from cross-cultural studies demonstrate that requests perceived as polite differ across cultures. For example, Fukushima (1996) notes that while Japanese speakers were more indirect than British English speakers, British communicators still used indirectness, even if it was English-specific. Such differences emphasize the influence of cultural norms on perceptions of appropriateness. First-language transfer in pragmatics is common. German speakers, for example, may use the Arabic request structure when speaking English. The intent may portray understandability; however, the request is likely to come off as blunt. According to Taguchi & Roever (2017), pragmatic failures are those in which the denial of 'meaning' is understood when the request is likely anticipated. For example, the admission of "Open the window" from a Saudi Arabian speaking in English to a teacher is likely viewed as an audacious Arabic border. However, it is seen as inappropriate in English culture. British English requires more polite mitigated forms, for example, "Could you please open the window?" Such differences are likely unnoticed without explicit teaching. The need for such explicit teaching is evidence for Karpava's (2025) assertion that the socio-cultural aspects of the learners' first language determine their overall pragmatic awareness and use of English as a second language.

2.3 Pragmatic Challenges for Arabic-Speaking English Learners

El-Dakhs et al. (2023) studied Saudi learners and noted that they use direct and polite strategies in requests and transfer Arabic requests into English. Ghazzoul (2019) noted that Arabic learners also encounter difficulties in producing requests that adhere to politeness norms, as the politeness norms in Arabic and English do not align. Requests are also influenced by social hierarchy, as in the Arabic-speaking world. Al-Gahtani & Roever (2022) documented that Saudi learners, like speakers in other cultures, modify the strategies they use to make requests depending on the addressee's social role. In Arabic culture, respect can be conveyed through intonation or the use of specific honorifics. In contrast, in English, it is conveyed through indirect speech and politeness devices, which primarily comprise indirect words or phrases.

2.4 Influence of Proficiency and Exposure on Pragmatic Ability

The relationship between linguistic capability and pragmatic ability is intricate, and higher pragmatic deficits can accompany greater linguistic ability, as Al-Shakhi (2019) described. Overestimation of one's capability and translation from Arabic may explain why advanced Saudi ESL learners make the same pragmatic errors as beginners. The lack of English-speaking environments is significant. Al-Theeby (2018) demonstrated that Saudi learners who studied abroad conformed more closely to British English norms than those educated exclusively in Saudi Arabia. This immersion seems to foster the development of pragmatic competence. More recent studies show that, when combined with awareness, proficiency enhances pragmatic competence. Al-Shraah et al. (2024) asserted that higher-ranking Saudi learners use more hearer-oriented inclusive request forms. In contrast, lower-ranking learners tend to use more direct strategies, contrary to Al-Shakhi's findings. This disparity may be attributed to the context, instruction, and exposure, as these are instrumental in determining the final shape.

2.5 Importance of Pragmatic Instruction in EFL Contexts

Advocacy for pragmatic instruction has been successful worldwide, including the Middle East. Al-Hammad (2022) reported the greatest improvement in polite requests among Saudi students who were taught through explicit lessons. Al-Qahtani (2020) built on this by incorporating pragmatic competencies into EFL through role plays, discussions, and awareness-raising activities. Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) documented the success of using authentic materials, while Lyster and Saito (2010) emphasized the importance of corrective feedback. Non-English majors in the EFL setting also lacked essential pragmatic competencies (Yang, 2015), underscoring the need for explicit instruction in pragmatic competencies. Lessons on the culture of pragmatics teach students competencies beyond the

textbook. The instructor is still responsible for teaching polite requests in the absence of culture.

2.6 Sociocultural Influences on Request Behavior

Generosity, hospitality, and communal responsibility influence the dominant request behavior patterns among Saudi learners. According to Al-Qahtani (2022), requests in Saudi culture can indicate proximity and trust. Religious blessings or reciprocity promises, as noted by El-Dakhs et al. (2023), are integral to Arabic requests but absent in English. Expectations are shaped by culture and social constructs. Regarding power distance, Hofstede (2001) observed that Saudi Arabia, like other Arab nations, has a high power distance. While formality is expected in dominant-subordinate relationships, one can be direct in peer relationships. In contrast, the British culture values autonomy and politeness in communication even among peers. This explains the perception of British politeness as direct as observed by Al-Kahtani (2005) in Saudi Arabia. Saudi descriptive interaction patterns in Evason (2024) provide evidence of respect, solidarity, and indirectness that have become normative in complex communication.

2.7 Gaps in the Literature and Rationale for the Present Study

While prior research has examined request strategies among Arabic-speaking learners, fewer studies have undertaken systematic cross-cultural comparison with native English speakers. Building on the gaps outlined in the Introduction, the present study extends this scholarship through an integrated comparative design. Al-Theeby (2018) compared Saudi and British speakers but included both requests and refusals, leaving requests underexplored. This study addresses the gap by directly comparing Saudi ESL learners and British English speakers using identical discourse completion tasks. By analyzing both strategy choice and sociocultural influences, the study provides empirical evidence of differences and practical insights for pedagogy. The findings are expected to contribute to intercultural pragmatics theory and to inform curriculum design that better equips Saudi learners for global communication.

Despite the growing body of research on interlanguage pragmatics, several gaps remain. Prior studies have often examined Arabic learners' request strategies in isolation, without systematic comparison with native English-speaking baselines. Moreover, limited research has integrated strategy distribution, politeness marking, and sociocultural interpretation within a unified analytical framework. The present study addresses these gaps through a controlled comparative design examining Saudi ESL learners and British English speakers across both quantitative and qualitative dimensions

3. Method

The study employed a comparative cross-sectional design. The cross-sectional design enabled this study to obtain and compare data from two participant groups at one time point: Saudi ESL learners (SEL) and British English speakers (BES). The mixed-methods approach used quantitative methods to examine the various types (direct and indirect) and levels of politeness for each documented request formulation within each group, which were summarized and compared using counts, percentages, and chi-square tests. The qualitative data for analysis comprised participants' responses and comments, which, together with the sociocultural contexts arising from a follow-up questionnaire and the phrasing patterns, were used to illuminate the strategies employed. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data on pragmatic behaviors and their use expanded understanding. For this type of research, it is reasonable to use a complementary approach. For example, quantitative data may point to a significant difference, such as a 40% versus 20% difference in direct requests. In contrast, qualitative data may reveal other discrepancies in the context, such as the absence of a contextual frame or politeness. A mixed-methods approach was considered methodologically appropriate for this investigation, as it enabled the quantification of request strategy patterns alongside qualitative interpretation of sociocultural pragmatic meanings.

There were 129 participants, consisting of 65 SEL and 64 BES. The participants were all Saudi ESL learners: 65 Saudi Arabian speakers completing undergraduate English Language programs. The sample consisted of 40 males and 25 females aged 18 to 24, with a mean age of approximately 21.3 years. All participants had intermediate to upper-intermediate proficiency (as indicated by IELTS scores ≥ 5.5 , verified by self-reported scores and records). Most people learned English formally in Saudi classrooms with limited exposure to English-speaking countries. British English Speakers (BES): 64 native British English speakers (35 males, 29 females; age range 18–24; mean age ≈ 20.9 years), undergraduates in UK universities across various majors (no linguistics specialists to avoid bias). All were born and raised in the UK, using English as their primary language, and they represent native request norms. Inclusion Criteria: SEL: Saudi nationals in English programs with IELTS ≥ 5.5 . BES: UK natives without extensive non-English influences (e.g., long abroad residence excluded). All individuals aged 18–24 and undergraduates were included to control for the effects of age, maturity, and education on pragmatic competence. Exclusion Criteria: SEL with IELTS < 5.5 (or TOEFL equivalent) to avoid proficiency barriers. BES with significant cross-cultural exposure (e.g., multilingual upbringing). Both groups excluded linguistics/pragmatics trainees to elicit naturalistic responses. Groups were comparable in terms of gender and age, thereby minimizing the impact of these variables on the results. Sample size (65 SEL, 64 BES) was below ideal (96/group for 95% confidence, 0.1 margin of error) due to constraints, but sufficient per post-hoc power analysis (power ≈ 0.8 for medium-large effects, acceptable in social sciences). This reliably detected notable strategy differences.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Participants

Group	Gender (M/F)	Age Range	Mean Age	Education Level
SEL (n=65)	40 M, 25 F	18–24	21.3	Undergrad (English majors)
BES (n=64)	35 M, 29 F	18–24	20.9	Undergrad (various majors)

Note. The table presents the demographic distributions of Saudi ESL learners (SEL) and British English speakers (BES) by gender, age range, mean age, and educational level, to ensure group comparability.

Near-equal gender and overlapping ages ensured differences stemmed from cultural/linguistic backgrounds. Undergraduate focus equated education and life stages. The SEL average IELTS score was 6.2 (range 5.5–7.0), confirming intermediate to upper proficiency in DCT comprehension (scenarios explained in Arabic if needed) and English responses, thereby isolating pragmatic choices from language deficits. Two instruments were used to collect data: Appendix A (DCT) and Appendix B (questionnaire), which were refined based on pilot feedback. Appendix A (DCT): Primary tool with 12 written scenarios eliciting requests in everyday situations varying by formality (formal/informal), status (requester/requestee differences), and imposition (favor/inconvenience level). Participants wrote the exact phrasing post-scenario. Examples: requesting an assignment extension from a professor (formal, low-to-high status, high imposition); borrowing notes from a classmate (semi-formal, equal status, moderate imposition); a ride from a friend (informal, equal status, low imposition). Scenarios were culturally neutral/adaptable. SEL received English descriptions with Arabic clarifications; responses in English. BES: English only.

Table 2. Example Scenarios from the DCT and Expected Request Style

Scenario (summary)	Formality	Status Relationship	Imposition Level	Typical Native Strategy
Asking a professor for an extension on a project deadline.	High (formal)	Lower (student) to Higher (Professor)	High imposition (significant favor)	Very indirect, apologetic; use of politeness markers (e.g., "Excuse me, Dr. X, I was wondering if I could get an extension...")
Asking a classmate to borrow their notes from a lecture you missed.	Medium (semi-formal)	Equal status (peer to peer)	Moderate imposition	Could be indirect or somewhat direct, depending on the relationship; often a polite request or question form (e.g., "Hey, could I borrow your notes from yesterday's class, please?")
Ask a close friend to give you a ride home from campus.	Low (informal)	Equal status (friend to friend)	Low imposition (small favor)	More direct and casual; minimal politeness needed among friends (e.g., "Can you drop me home later?" possibly with an informal tone)

Note. The scenarios illustrate varying levels of formality, status relationships, and imposition to elicit context-sensitive request realizations across participant groups.

DCT captured context adjustments. BES is expected to favor indirect strategies (British norms), especially in formal settings; SEL, on the other hand, is indirect in formal settings but more direct in informal ones. Appendix B (Questionnaire): Pre-DCT demographic/background collection: age, gender, education. SEL: proficiency (IELTS/TOEFL), English learning years, and abroad exposure. BES: native status, inclusion checks (no abroad/long multilingualism). Both: open-ended pragmatic awareness questions (e.g., phrasing adjustments by interlocutor). Aimed to correlate factors (e.g., proficiency) with behavior and ensure sample fit. Responses anonymized via codes. ESL experts reviewed for validity: DCT for realism/cultural fairness; questionnaire for clarity. Data Collection Procedure: Two-phase per participant: questionnaire, followed by DCT, and then post-consent (confidentiality assured). Local (mostly SEL, some BES): quiet classrooms. Remote BES: email/secure online surveys (identical content). Instructions: natural real-life responses; SEL Arabic-clarified, English answers; BES English. Emphasized context-guided phrasing. Time: 30–40 minutes (pilot-informed; most ~30). Responses written: in-person on sheets (one scenario/page); online typed fields. All English; SEL Arabic queries allowed for clarification. Collection: immediate in-person; online downloads. Labeled by codes (e.g., SEL32). Handling: physical in locked cabinet; digital password-protected/encrypted cloud (team-only). Support was provided; the pilot refined the confusion, but the instructions ensured the collection of authentic/usable data. Pilot StudyPre-main: 10 participants (5/group, profile-matched, data excluded). Goals: clarity, realism, timing. Feedback: scenario naturalness/comprehension. Adjustments: neutral wording for cultures; rephrased formal for BES colloquial fit; time to 30–40 minutes (from 20). Confirmed strategy range (e.g., SEL direct in informal, tentative in formal). Ensured smooth, appropriate main collection via fine-tuning. Data Analysis: A structured quantitative/qualitative process. Preparation: Transcribed DCT (handwritten to spreadsheet; double-checked). Recorded demographics/proficiency. Coding: Per Trosborg (1995): Direct (imperatives/demands); Conventionally Indirect (modals/questions, e.g., query/hearer-oriented "Could you...?" or suggest "I was hoping..."; grouped); Non-Conventionally Indirect (hints/problem statements). All request responses were independently coded by two trained raters using the established classification framework. To ensure coding reliability, an inter-rater agreement analysis was conducted using Cohen's Kappa coefficient. The analysis yielded a Kappa value of 0.87, indicating a high level of agreement, consistent with conventional reliability benchmarks. Discrepancies were subsequently discussed and resolved through consensus.

Table 3. Coding Scheme for Request Strategies with Examples

Request Strategy	Description	Example from DCT (paraphrase)
Direct	Explicit request or demand with no mitigation; the speaker states the request plainly.	"Give me your notes from the class."
Conventionally Indirect	Polite or indirect phrasing using modal verbs, questions, or conventional politeness forms.	"Could you please lend me your notes from class?"
Non-Conventionally Indirect	Hinting is implied rather than stated outright, relying on context.	"I missed class yesterday, and I am worried about the exam." (implying a request for notes)

Note. Request strategies were coded based on Trosborg's (1995) classification framework, including direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect forms.

Although the DCT instrument comprised 12 scenarios, only 10 were retained for final analysis. Two scenarios were excluded because they

did not consistently elicit request realizations suitable for pragmatic strategy coding. The final dataset, therefore, reflects 10 comparable request responses per participant. Group frequencies calculated. Quantitative: SPSS descriptive (percentages per category/group). A chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine differences in the use of request strategies between Saudi ESL learners and British English speakers. Strategies were grouped into direct and indirect categories (including both conventional and non-conventional indirect forms), yielding a 2 × 2 contingency table (group × strategy). Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

Table 4. Chi-square Test Information

Request Type	χ^2	p-value
Direct Request vs. Indirect	15.62	0.001

Note. Chi-square analysis compares the overall distribution of direct versus indirect request strategies between groups.

Politeness markers tallied (e.g., "please," "thank you," softeners); averages/percentages per group/scenario. SEL correlations: Pearson (IELTS vs. indirect %); age/gender exploratory (balanced but small subgroups). Descriptive/comparative focus; no advanced inferential. Qualitative/Thematic: Reviewed requests/comments for themes (e.g., SEL Arabic translations, BES softeners). Incorporated questionnaire sociocultural inputs (e.g., SEL viewing over-indirect as insincere among friends). Themes: "respect for authority" (both deferential, but SEL formal titles/apologies, BES "please"/indirect); "friendliness vs. politeness among peers"; "imposition awareness." Enriched quantitative interpretations. Analysis integrated counts/meanings via a cultural lens. High coding reliability; statistical evidence showed meaningful differences. The results section follows, presenting quantitative data (tables/figures) and examples for SEL-BES contrasts.

4. Results

Four components of request behavior were analyzed: the types of request strategies used (direct vs. indirect), the use of politeness, and the sociocultural context of the requests. The results offer a mixture of qualitative and quantitative evidence.

Differences were observed in the request strategies used by Saudi English learners (SELs) and British English speakers (BESs). A larger proportion of SEL requests (39.8%) was categorized as direct strategies, compared with 24.2% for BES requests. BESs showed a stronger preference for conventionally indirect requests, with 55.6% of their requests being of this type, while Saudi requests were conventionally indirect only 31.7% of the time. SELs were more likely to use indirect non-conventional hints, as this strategy was used in 28.5% of their requests compared to only 20.2% of BESs. The association between group and strategy type was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 1290) = 15.62, p < .001$.

Table 5. Distribution of Request Strategies by Group

Request Strategy	SEL Group	BES Group
Direct requests	39.8% (259)	24.2% (155)
Conventionally indirect	31.7% (206)	55.6% (356)
Non-conventionally indirect (hints)	28.5% (185)	20.2% (129)

Note. Percentages represent total frequencies of request strategies across ten DCT scenarios per participant (N = 1290 total requests). SEL: (n = 65; 650 requests), BES ((n = 64; 640 requests). For chi-square analysis, indirect strategies are combined conventionally and non-conventionally with indirect categories.

For inferential testing, request strategies were collapsed into two categories—direct and indirect (combining conventionally and non-conventionally indirect forms) to permit a 2 × 2 chi-square comparison across participant groups.

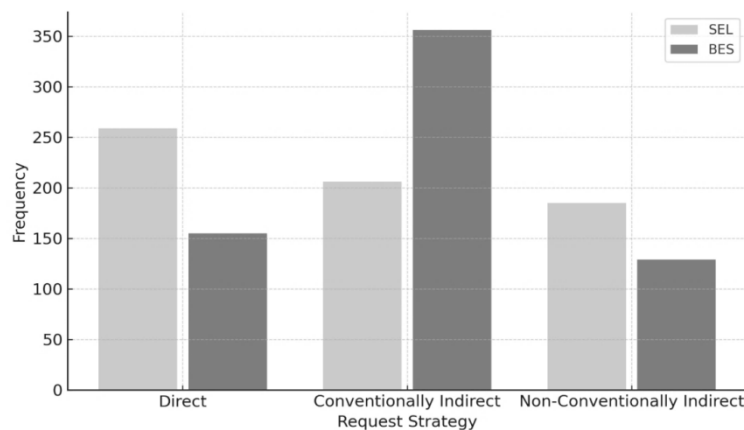


Figure 1. Distribution of Request Strategies by Group

Note. The figure displays the comparative percentage distribution of direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect request strategies between Saudi ESL learners (SEL) and British English speakers (BES).

When analyzing strategies by splitting them into 'direct' and 'indirect', the difference became even clearer. For participants in the SEL group, direct strategies were executed 39.8 percent of the time and indirect strategies, 60.2 percent of the time. In contrast, interpreters of BES executed direct strategies for only 24.2 percent of the time and indirect strategies for 75.8 percent of the time. This suggests that BES

interpreters preferred indirectness even more. BES had a ratio of about 3 indirect requests per direct request, while SEL participants had a ratio of only 2. Qualitatively, SEL participants were more direct, particularly in peer contexts where directness may signal solidarity and relational closeness within Saudi sociocultural norms. For example, by using blunt imperatives in informal settings, as in “Give me your phone” or “Send me the document tonight,” while direct requests among BES participants were more framed in the form of a statement of need or a question, which, while still coded as direct, had a softer pragmatic tone. In contrast, British participants frequently framed comparable requests through hedging structures, such as “Would you mind sending me the document when you have time?” or “Could you please share your notes?”, reflecting a stronger orientation toward minimizing imposition.

There were variations between the two groups in the assessment of politeness indicators. “Please” was included by the British in 62.3 percent of their requests, whereas the Saudi learners included “please” in only 33.4 percent of their requests. A similar pattern was found in the use of the gratitude marker “thank you.” The British used “thank you” in nearly half of their requests, whereas the Saudi learners used it in about a quarter of theirs. British speakers employed the hedging constructions “could you,” “would you mind,” or “I was wondering if” in 42 percent of their discourse, compared with 20.8 percent among the Saudi learners.

Table 6. Usage of Politeness Markers by Group

Politeness Marker	SEL (%)	BES (%)
“Please”	33.4	62.3
“Thank you/thanks.”	26.2	49.2
Hedges/Softeners	20.8	42.0

Note. The table compares the frequency of politeness markers, including “please,” gratitude expressions, and hedging devices, across both participant groups.

The influence of sociocultural factors can also be recognized. Saudi participants showed an even greater tendency to be indirect with authorities while still being respectful in hierarchical contexts. However, as peers, they were more likely to be direct, which reflects cultural expectations of bluntness in adult discourse. In contrast, British participants displayed a balance between in-context and cross-contextual politeness, even with close friends, retaining some politeness at a distance and deference to power holders.

Table 7. Sociocultural Factors Influencing Request Strategies

Factor	SEL Group	BES Group
Respect for authority	More indirect in formal settings; deferential with professors	Consistently indirect, slightly more formal with authority
Politeness norms	Direct with peers; politeness conveyed by tone/context	Routine use of “please/thank you” even with peers
Power distance and familiarity	Direct with equals or lower status; deferential with superiors	Polite with all, variation only in the degree of formality

Note. The table summarizes key sociocultural variables influencing request realization patterns, including power distance, familiarity, and politeness norms.

Considering demographic factors, a moderate positive correlation was observed between the use of indirect strategies and English proficiency, as measured by IELTS score ($r = 0.319, p = 0.0096$). Students with higher proficiency levels were more likely to employ indirect strategies and politeness forms, though the correlation remains weak and does not imply a definitive connection. The absence of a significant effect of age is likely due to the restricted age range of 18 to 24 years in the sample, and the gender differences were minimal.

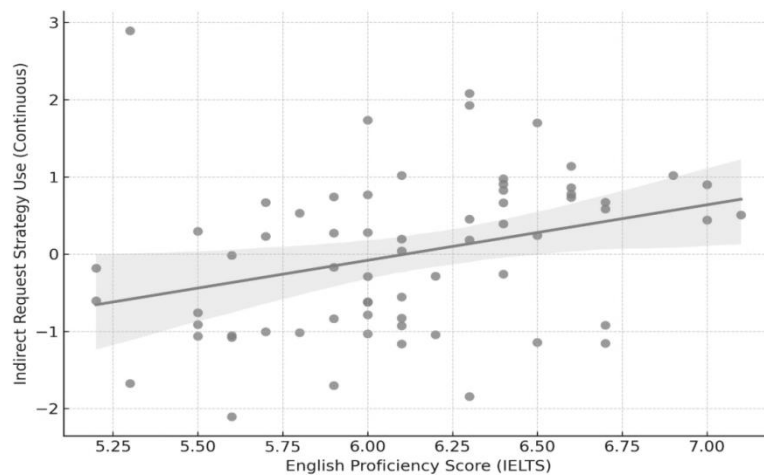


Figure 2. Correlation Between English Proficiency and Indirect Request Use (SEL Group)

Note. The figure illustrates the positive correlation ($r = .319, p = .0096$) between IELTS proficiency scores and the frequency of indirect request strategies among Saudi ESL learners.

The participants' comments in the qualitative part of the research also highlighted the same trends. Some Saudi participants noted after the

task that, in Arabic, they would normally speak more directly, but that, in English, they felt they “should” include markers of politeness, such as “please”. Nevertheless, many of them acknowledged that, in the case of peers, they forgot to do so. In contrast to Saudi participants, British participants politely over-accommodated to the extent that requests became undermodulated and, in some contexts, could be perceived as excessively polite.

The evidence as a whole suggests that Saudi English learners, unlike British speakers, do not moderate their language or use politeness as much. Politeness among British speakers appears more systematic and integrated. These results illustrate the same pattern described by Saud (2024), in which EFL learners used more conventionally indirect strategies than ESL learners, indicating the coexistence of context-specific pragmatic development patterns.

5. Discussion

The study illustrates distinct pragmatic differences in the polite speech act of requesting between British English speakers and Saudi English learners. Compared to British speakers, Saudi learners demonstrated a greater tendency toward direct request realization, while British speakers employed more conventionally indirect mitigation strategies. These differences should be interpreted within sociocultural norms of communication rather than as indicators of pragmatic deficiency, as appropriateness is shaped by context, relational distance, and cultural expectations. British speakers, on the other hand, favor indirect strategies, incorporating additional layers of politeness when making requests. These observations confirm that while the use of language grammar demonstrates refined linguistic skills, the lack of pragmatic competence violates the underlying cultural values and communicative expectations of the situation. Similar contrasts in pragmatics across linguistic communities have been noted in the professional and workplace settings that pivot on the use of mitigation, rapport-sustaining strategies, and social harmony (Bella, 2025).

The findings align with previous studies that have identified pragmatic gaps among Arab learners of English. El-Dakhs, Al-Haqbani, and Mardini (2023) noted that Arab learners underused politeness markers and used direct strategies aggressively, which contradicted English conventions. Ghazzoul (2019) similarly documented the negative influence of the first language on pragmatic gaps. Alshakhi (2019) noted that Saudi learners frequently failed to adjust the politeness level of their requests. The current research builds on these studies by establishing a moderate, statistically significant relationship between English competence and the frequency of indirect strategy use. This finding suggests that proficiency can enable the use of advanced pragmatic forms of English, but pragmatic competence remains unacquired. This finding supports Alshraah et al.'s (2024) observations that higher-achieving Saudi learners, unlike their less proficient counterparts, show greater concern for their interlocutors' communicative needs.

These differences can be elaborated upon through the provided cultural context. The use of directness among Saudi learners in informal interpersonal settings aligns with Arabic culturally driven pragmatic expectations, where untactful directness is considered a sign of association and trust within a peer group. In contrast, a sign of loyalty in the Saudi cultural context is the use of softened speech and indirectness, as evident in more elevated or hierarchical settings. The ethnographic work of Qaralleh et al. (2025) indicates the simultaneous operation of the socialization engine in families in KSA across the domains of heritage language and English for the maintenance of English. This finding is a vital addition to the framework of intercultural pragmatic competence. British speakers, in contrast, retained a consistent degree of politeness across all social and informal settings, in keeping with a low-power-distance cultural context. This aligns with Hofstede's (2001) classification of cultural distance and is consistent with Culpeper and Terkourafi's (2017) expectations that situational politeness in English is a myth and that politeness is a contextual constant in all social interactions. The use of digital technology for interpersonal communication highlights pragmatic differences, especially in informal interactions, where requests can be made in varying degrees of directness and formality, depending on the social distance between participants (Al-Salem, 2023; Chen et al., 2022).

From a pedagogical perspective, the results highlight the need to teach pragmatic competence. It is important for teachers to prepare lessons that focus on the use of the politeness formulas please, thank you, and hedging, as well as on the differences between Arabic and English. Role-plays, the analysis of authentic conversations, and other explicit awareness-raising activities can help learners internalize these strategies. Practical curriculum design should include the teaching of pragmatic elements in advanced English classes to bridge the communicative gaps learners encounter in academic and professional settings. These changes would align with the objectives of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which seeks to prepare graduates to engage globally (Saudi Vision 2030, 2020). These comments align with the results, which show that teaching pragmatics explicitly and encouraging metapragmatic awareness considerably increase learners' sociolinguistic knowledge and its application in authentic situations (Mart ínez-Flor & Alc n Soler, 2022).

The influence of sociocultural factors on pragmatic performance is an important contribution to interlanguage pragmatics. It upholds the principles of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness and the sociodramatic knowledge, coupled with the pragmalinguistic repertoire, described by Taguchi and Roever (2017). Also, it refines the aforementioned theories by illustrating how politeness is not a blanket strategy, but is, in fact, shaped by sociocultural frameworks of closeness, dominance, and bowing. The sociocultural framework of interaction rationales remains an essential variable in the relationship between politeness and dominance in the construction of requests. As Hofstede et al (2010) describe, the power distance and collectivism frameworks significantly influence the relationship between the directness of requests and sociocultural expectations in communication.

The described limitations include the study's narrow demographic focus on undergraduate students. Fewer participants limit the study's generalizability. While the Discourse Completion Task method allows greater control over the scenarios, it is a compromise in capturing the full mechanics of spontaneous interaction and systems of governance, particularly the subtleties in pace, tone, and assemblages. The ten

situations, while representative to an extent, capture only a small part of a larger pragmatic framework.

In future studies, the participant pool could include practitioners, adult learners, and high school students. Longitudinal designs might address the ongoing development of pragmatic competence, especially after focused instruction or study abroad opportunities. Comparative studies with cultural groups, for example, with Chinese or Japanese students, may help make broader generalizations. Intervention studies that directly address the effectiveness of pragmatic instruction would also help close the gap highlighted in this research.

6. Conclusion

This research offers substantive data on perceived pragmatic differences concerning requests between Saudi English learners and British English speakers. While Saudi learners made direct requests 40 percent of the time, British speakers did this 24 percent of the time and preferred indirect strategies. British speakers also added politeness markers, such as 'please' and 'thank you,' and hedged more than twice as often as the Saudi speakers. Although Saudi speakers were deferential and sensitive to authority, as shown by their politeness toward professors, they were blunt with peers. British speakers, by contrast, maintained politeness across all contexts. Recent evidence suggests that blending instructional models is effective for pragmatic-focused curricula and promoting students' active use of English in Rehman et al. (2025) authentic communication contexts.

The critical takeaway is that pragmatic competence cannot be assumed to accompany grammatical ability. Even learners with considerable English skills constructed requests that were pragmatically clueless, due in part to cultural transfer from Arabic. This observation provides additional support for the claims of Al-Hammad (2022) and Taguchi and Ishihara (2018) that pragmatic competence must be explicitly taught.

This study has far-reaching consequences. For teachers, this means incorporating awareness and practice of pragmatics into English teaching. For curriculum developers and policymakers, this translates into the inclusion of pragmatic competence as part of educational reforms within the Vision 2030 framework, where it is a priority. Vision 2030 aims to equip Saudi graduates with global competencies as communicators and collaborators across sectors. From a purely theoretical perspective, the results advance models of politeness and interlanguage pragmatics by addressing the impact of power distance relations and politeness conventions on second-language performance.

This study makes three contributions to the field. First, it provides empirical comparative evidence on the use of request strategies among Saudi English learners and British English speakers, thereby expanding the cross-cultural pragmatics knowledge base. Second, it integrates quantitative distributional analysis with sociocultural interpretation within a unified mixed-methods framework. Third, it demonstrates how cultural hierarchy and power distance shape second-language pragmatic performance, contributing to broader models of politeness and intercultural communication.

The development of pragmatic competence calls for longitudinal and experimental approaches in future studies and attention to the development from the perspective of explicit teaching. In longitudinal studies, comparative approaches across different linguistic and cultural contexts are necessary to enhance the applicability of the results. The pragmatic approaches to requests could also benefit substantially from the collection of naturalistic, multimodal data.

To conclude, alongside grammar and vocabulary, pragmatic competence also deserves to be viewed and treated as a central component of a language. Effective intercultural communication cannot be achieved without prioritizing the teaching and integration of pragmatic competence. This line of research is likely to benefit contextual and learner-group expansion. Closing the gap in pragmatic competence allows learners to participate in internationally and interculturally relevant academic, professional, and social activities in a competent and mutually respectful manner.

Future research may also benefit from direct cross-linguistic pragmatic comparisons between Standard English and Modern Standard Arabic, particularly in the domains of politeness, impoliteness, discourse markers, and address systems. Such contrastive analyses would provide deeper insight into syntactic, morphological, and socio-pragmatic realizations of request behavior across languages.

AI Disclosure Statement.

The authors declare that they used artificial intelligence (AI) tools solely for language editing and proofreading to improve clarity and readability. All conceptualization, analysis, and interpretation of findings remain the original work of the authors.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their sincere appreciation to Al-Baha University for its continuous support and facilitation of this research. The university's academic environment and resources played a vital role in the successful completion of this study. The authors are also grateful for the institutional support provided throughout the research and manuscript preparation process.

Authors' contributions

Dr. SAA and Dr. ASA contributed equally to the design and development of the study. Dr. SAA was primarily responsible for drafting the manuscript, while Dr. ASA contributed to data collection and critically revised the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work

Funding

This research received no external funding. The authors personally funded all aspects of the study, including research expenses and publication fees.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

Open access

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

References

- Ahmed, S. N., & Rehman, S. U. (2021). An examination of students' attitudes towards the use of Google Classroom in the preparatory year English program. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 43(2), 39-59. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1338288.pdf>
- Al-Gahtani, S., & Roeber, C. (2022). The development of L2 interactional competence in Arabic: The case of multiple requests. *Foreign Language Annals*, 55(2), 427-447. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12603>
- Al-Hammad, A. (2022). *The effect of explicit instruction on developing appropriate spoken pragmatic language choices in female Saudi Arabian EFL students* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Liverpool). Liverpool Repository. Retrieved from <https://livrepository.liverpool.ac.uk/3167037/>
- Al-Kahtani, S. (2005). *Refusals realizations in three different cultures: A speech act theoretically-based cross-cultural study* (Publication No. 3169120) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Al-Qahtani, A. A. (2020). Teaching pragmatic competence in an EFL context: The case of Saudi EFL teachers. *Asian EFL Journal*, 27(4.1), 137-164. Retrieved from <http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/2020/10/27/teaching-pragmatic-competence-in-efl-context-the-case-of-saudi-efl-teachers/>
- Al-Qahtani, A. N. (2022). How do Saudis ask for a favor? A pragmatic analysis. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 11(1), 11-20. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.11n.1p.11>
- Al-Salem, N. (2023). Request strategies in Saudi ESL learners' email communication: A pragmatic analysis. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 15(2), 540-546. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1502.22>
- Al-Shakhi, A. (2019). The relationship between English language proficiency and politeness in making requests: A case study of ESL Saudi students. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 9(2), 89-97. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v9n2p89>
- Al-Shraah, S., Kariem, N., Al-Omari, H., & Al-Qarni, K. (2024). Requestive perspectives and conventions: Exploring language proficiency influence among Saudi EFL learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 15(6), 2070-2079. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1506.32>
- Al-Theeby, M. (2018). *Differences in the pragmatic competence of Saudi EFL and ESL learners* [Doctoral dissertation, Cardiff University]. Retrieved from <https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/119180/>
- Bardis, B. (2021). Cross-cultural pragmatic competence in an EFL context. *Sustainability*, 13(18), 10346. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su131810346>
- Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Mahan-Taylor, R. (2003). Teaching pragmatics. *English Teaching Forum*, 41(3), 37-39. https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/03-41-3-h.pdf
- Bella, S. (2025). Mitigation, rapport, and identity construction in workplace upward requests. *Languages*, 10(8), 179.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/languages10080179>

- Blum-Kulka, S., & Olshtain, E. (1984). Requests and apologies: A cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns (CCSARP). *Applied Linguistics*, 5(3), 196-213. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/5.3.196>
- Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (Eds.). (1989). *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511813085>
- Chen, Y. S., Hsu, C. C., & Yu, C. H. (2022). Developing sustainable email pragmatic competence for EFL learners through reformulation. *Sustainability*, 14(24), 16868. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142416868>
- Culpeper, J., & Terkourafi, M. (2017). Pragmatic approaches to (im)politeness. In J. Culpeper, M. Haugh, & D. Z. Kádár (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of linguistic (im)politeness* (pp. 11–39). Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-37508-7>
- El-Dakhs, D. A. S., Al-Haqbani, J., & Mardini, L. (2023). How do Saudi EFL learners realize the speech act of request? *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 10(1), 2285097. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2023.2285097>
- Evason, N. (2024). *Saudi Arabian culture – Communication (verbal)*. Cultural Atlas. Retrieved from <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/saudi-arabian-culture/saudi-arabian-culture-communication>
- Fukushima, S. (1996). Request strategies in British English and Japanese. *Language Sciences*, 18(3-4), 671-688. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0388-0001\(96\)00041-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0388-0001(96)00041-1)
- Ghazzoul, N. (2019). Linguistic and pragmatic failure of Arab learners in direct polite requests and invitations: A cross-cultural study. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 9(2), 223-232. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0902.13>
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill. Retrieved from <https://www.mheducation.com/highered/mhp/product/cultures-organizations-software-mind-third-edition.html>
- Karpava, S. (2025). The effect of L1 linguistic and cultural background on L2 pragmatic competence. *Languages*, 10(5), 112. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages10050112>
- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (2020) Saudi Vision 2030. (2020). *Vision 2030: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. Retrieved from <https://www.vision2030.gov.sa>
- Leech, G. N. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315835976>
- Lyster, R., & Saito, K. (2010). Interactional feedback as instructional input: A synthesis of classroom SLA research. *Language, Interaction and Acquisition*, 1(2), 276-297. <https://doi.org/10.1075/lia.1.2.07lys>
- Mart ínez-Flor, A., & Alc n Soler, E. (2022). Developing L2 pragmatic competence in the classroom: A focus on instructional effects. In A. S nchez-Hern ndez & A. L. Dafouk (Eds.), *Learning second language pragmatics beyond the classroom* (pp. 15-34). Multilingual Matters.
- Qaralleh, R., Ahmed, S. N., Abbas, S., Hamid, S., & Hayee, H. (2025). Family Dynamics and English Language Acquisition in Multicultural Households: A Cross-Country Ethnographic Study. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL (JALT)*, 8(3), 2308-2325. <https://doi.org/10.63878/jalt1253>
- Rehman, N. ur., Hajira, B., Ahmed, S. N., & Rehman, S. ur. (2025). Blending traditional and digital methods: Enhancing EFL speaking skills beyond LMS platforms. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 14(5), 4210-4221. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v14i5.32534>
- Saud, W. I. (2024). Speech act of request: A contrastive study between EFL and ESL undergraduate students. *Journal of College of Languages*, 50, 33-58. <https://doi.org/10.36586/jcl.2.2024.0.50.0033>
- Taguchi, N., & Ishihara, N. (2018). The pragmatics of English as a lingua franca: Research and pedagogy in the era of globalization. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 38, 80-101. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190518000028>
- Taguchi, N., & Roever, C. (2017). *Second language pragmatics*. Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/second-language-pragmatics-9780194200585>
- Trosborg, A. (1995). *Interlanguage pragmatics: Requests, complaints, and apologies*. De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110885286>
- Yang, Q. (2015). An investigation of the pragmatic competence of non-English majors. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 6(6), 1289-1296. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0606.16>