

"Suggestions in Kuwaiti Arabic and British English"

Researcher:

Naser Mraikhan Alajmi

English Language Instructor

MA in TESOL from Swansea University-UK



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Abstract

The present study sought to investigate the similarities and differences in the use of suggestion strategies between Kuwaiti speakers of Arabic and British speakers of English, in terms of the use of strategy types, the use of linguistic formulas and the effect of the interlocutor's status. Thirty-six participants took part in this study, eighteen Kuwaiti and eighteen British speakers, resulting in 216 suggestions. To collect data, participants were asked to complete a written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) consisting of six hypothetical situations where their responses were analysed. Martinez-Flor's (2005) taxonomy was used to code the data in which suggestion strategies were divided into three types: direct, conventionalised forms and indirect. The findings revealed that there were more similarities than there were differences between the two groups when making suggestion. The two groups preferred to employ more direct strategies than indirect strategies and conventionalised strategies. Moreover, the two groups resembled each other in the use of linguistic formulas, as hints and imperatives were utilised more frequently than other linguistic formulas. However, evidence of differences was found between the two groups regarding the effect of the interlocutor's status, where the Kuwaiti group employed more direct strategies with people of high status, whereas the British group performed more indirect strategies with people of high status.

Keywords: Speech act, Pragmatics, Kuwaiti Arabic, British English, Suggestions, Face Threatening Act, DCT

1- introduction

People encounter situations in which they give advice, make suggestions or express gratitude on a daily basis. These small units of discourse, which are known as speech acts, serve to perform communicative actions. The speech act of suggestion is realised when the speaker attempts to encourage the hearer to carry out an action that is beneficial for the hearer (Searle, 1976). In other words, a suggestion is made when the speaker thinks about how the hearer should behave or what they should do. Therefore, the hearer may feel that their freedom is restricted due to the weight of the speaker's imposition (Schmidt & Richards, 1980). Misunderstandings between the speaker and the hearer could occur due to the use of certain strategies whereby the hearer finds themselves being forced to behave according to the speaker's instructions. Scollon and Scollon (1995) argued that some variables could affect the use of speech act strategies, such as the closeness or distance of the relationship between the speaker and hearer and whether the speech act involved a person with higher or lower status. Thus, speech act studies are important because they can demonstrate how people with different languages and cultures realise a particular speech act.

Speech acts in various languages and cultures have been studied extensively. These studies can be classified according to three groups, namely learner-centred, intralingual and cross-cultural approaches (Morkus, 2014). Learner-centred studies have investigated the ways in which learners with different languages and cultures realise a particular speech act in another language. Tamanaha (2004) investigated the elicitation of the speech acts of complaint and apology performed by American learners of Japanese, and compared their responses to those of native speakers of Japanese and native speakers of American English. Intralingual studies have examined how native speakers of a particular language realise a specific speech act. Hussein (1995) investigated the realisation of the speech act of refusal performed by native speakers of Arabic. Cross-cultural speech act studies have examined how a particular speech act is realised in two or more languages. For example, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) explored the use of apology and request strategies in eight different languages and language varieties. The main objective of conducting research on cross-cultural speech acts is to identify the similarities and the differences between two languages. The current study forms part of the studies of cross-cultural speech acts, as it investigated the realisation of the speech act of suggestion in Kuwaiti Arabic and British English.

Statement of The Problem

Recently, due to globalisation, cross-cultural interaction in societies has become increasingly important because people come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which affects language use (Boxer, 2002). Many researchers have proposed that people speak and behave in different ways in different societies and communities due to the influence of their cultures, religions or norms (Tannen, 1981; Schiffrin, 1984). In other words, that which is considered polite in one society may be seen as impolite in another. Therefore, simply mastering the grammatical constructions of a particular language does not guarantee that a speaker has the ability to communicate appropriately in that language, as sociolinguistic or cultural rules and principles play an important role in understanding a given language in a particular context (Gumperz, 1966). Accomplishing the aim of communication by using language correctly in a specific context is called pragmatic competence.

The lack of understanding of sociolinguistic or cultural rules amongst speakers from different cultural backgrounds may lead to cross-cultural misunderstanding, which is the result of pragmatic failure. Thomas (1983) explained that one reason for pragmatic failure was that a speaker lacked the appropriate linguistic features, which led to difficulty in constructing clear sentences. Furthermore, pragmatic failure can occur when speakers lack sociopragmatic knowledge regarding what constitutes appropriate linguistic behaviour in the second language; thus, they employ first language speech act strategies that are not appropriate in the second language setting – this is called pragmatic transfer (Nelson, Carson, Al-Batal, & El-Bakary, 2002). Thomas (1983) proposed the concept of cross-cultural pragmatic failure, which occurs when a speaker does not understand the intended meaning of what has been said; the author also claimed that linguistic failure was tolerated, whereas pragmatic failure could cause offence. Therefore, in order to ensure a successful interaction with someone from a different culture or language, people should learn the cultural rules and principles, as well as the grammatical rules of the given language.

As suggested by many researchers, an effective way of understanding the cultural values and norms of a particular society is through speech act research in which the sociopragmatic or cultural aspects of a specific language are investigated (Nelson et al., 2002; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1991). However, although research on cross-cultural speech acts is important for the study of cultural norms, no study has yet compared the speech act of suggestion as performed by Kuwaiti native speakers of Arabic and British native speakers of English. Studies that have investigated the Kuwaiti dialect have investigated the use of speech acts such as asking for a favour (Alrefai, 2012), compliment (Farghal & Haggan, 2006), paying compliments (Alotaibi, 2016), and making request (Almujaibel and Gomaa, 2022). Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap in this area of cross-cultural pragmatics and to examine the use of suggestion strategies in the Kuwaiti and in the British cultures.

1.2 Purpose and Research Questions (RQs)

The main goal of this study is to gain an understating of the linguistic and cultural aspects of the speech act of suggestion as realised by Kuwaiti speakers of Arabic and by British speakers of English. By conducting a thorough analysis of the speech act of suggestion, it is possible to obtain valuable insights into some aspects of Kuwaiti and British cultures, particularly the influence of social distance and social power. The motivation for choosing this speech act was the differences between the two societies – Kuwaiti society is regarded as a hierarchal society, whereas British society is seen as being egalitarian (Tétreault & Mughni 1995). Therefore, more indirect strategies are expected to be employed by Kuwaiti subjects than by British subjects, particularly when addressing people with high status. Therefore, I will attempt to answer the following RQs in this study:

RQ1. Do the two groups use different types of strategies when making suggestions?

RQ2. Does the British group differ in the use of linguistic formulae in comparison to the Kuwaiti group?

RQ3. Does the status of the interlocutor play a significant role in the types of strategies that are used by the two groups?

1.3 limitations

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the participants in this study were selected via non-random sampling; in other words, the researcher asked his friends and relatives to take part in this study. Therefore, it is difficult to generalise the results to all Kuwaiti and British speakers. Another limitation was that, as Nelson et al. (2002) suggested, although discourse completion tasks (DCTs) enable the comparison of the use of language in two cultures, the suggestions elicited from the participants may not correspond to their actual language use because they were pre-informed that they would be asked to make suggestions for six hypothetical situations.

In addition, although DCTs have many advantages, such as controlling for social variables, power and distance, the responses elicited via DCTs are single turn responses, which are short and do not reflect everyday interactions. Moreover, Nelson et al. (2002) pointed out another limitation of the use of DCTs, which was that the participants were asked to employ a particular speech act with people whom they knew, such as their bosses, friends or classmates.

1.4 Significance of The Study

Speech act studies are of tremendous importance for several reasons. Firstly, these studies provide a way to understand how people's communication in different languages and cultures is carried out, and to understand the similarities and

differences in the ways in which interactions occur across various languages and cultures (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985). Secondly, speech act studies can provide insights into the social and cultural norms of a particular community (Meier, 1995). Thirdly, for the purposes of teaching and learning, the results of these studies can provide detailed descriptions of how a particular speech act is realised in a given community, which can be a valuable source of information for material designers and university professors (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996).

It is important to understand how a particular speech act is realised in other languages and cultures in order to avoid having misunderstandings with people who have different languages and cultures, and to minimise a potential face threatening act (FTA) by using indirect strategies such as face saving acts. Hence, the results of this study may help learners of English and Arabic to gain communicative competence in their respective second languages.

1.5 Terms and Definitions

- **FTAs:** The use of direct strategies when employing a particular speech act that could result in threatening the hearer's face.
- **Face saving strategies:** The use of indirect strategies when employing a particular speech act in order to minimise the threat to the hearer's face.
- **Face:** A term that refers to a positive image that a person claims for themselves when interacting with others.
- **Speech act:** An utterance that has a specific function during interactions with others. Examples of speech acts are requests, refusals, advice, apologies, invitations, cursing, swearing and so on.
- **DCT:** A DCT is a method for collecting data that allows researchers to elicit the production of a specific speech act. DCTs consist of several situations that are used to analyse and evaluate the participants' responses.

2- Theoretical Framework

2.1 Politeness Theory

One of the prominent theories in the field of pragmatics, particularly with regard to politeness, is Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory (Eelen, 2014; Mao, 1994; Fukada & Asato, 2004). This theory is based on the notion that speakers tend to minimise the extent of their imposition on hearers in an attempt to show politeness in interactional communication. The theory is important for the present study because it comprises an integrated construct that allows for the analysis of a particular speech act in terms of how it is realised and the factors that can affect it. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory was mainly built on Goffman's (1967) concept of face, which he defined as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (p. 3). Brown and Levinson (1987) suggested that there were two types of face, namely positive face and negative face. Positive face refers to people's needs and desires to be accepted and liked by others, whereas negative face refers to people's desire to be free from impositions.

Although Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory was based on maintaining the speakers' face, some speech acts can threaten people's faces. These speech acts are known as FTAs, in which people's positive face or negative face can be threatened. For example, a hearer's positive face is threatened when people reject their offers or suggestions, which implies that the speaker is not concerned about the hearer's desires. The speech act of request threatens the hearer's negative face because the speaker encroaches on the hearer's freedom from imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987): Speakers can perform FTAs in three ways, namely to "go bald on record", to "go on record" or to "go off record" (p. 69). The first option, to go bald on record, is when speakers engage directly in an FTA without softening or mitigating it; this form of act can be used by speakers who have more power than their hearers. The second option, to go on record, is when speakers use strategies, such as hedging, to mitigate an FTA. The third option, to go off record, is when a speaker protects a hearer's face by minimising the threat to or the imposition on the hearers by using hints, such as "I must have forgotten my book" instead of saying, "Can I borrow your book?"

2.2 Speech Act Theory

The concept of the speech act is interrelated with politeness theory and some speech acts could threaten the hearer's face. Austin (1962) proposed the concept of the speech act by positing that speakers used language not only to express their ideas or desires, but also to perform actions. For example, a hearer performs the action of moving something from one place to another in response to the speaker saying, "Can you pass me the salt?" Therefore, words are not simply parts of phrases, but can also lead to actions. In this regard, Austin suggested that human acts could be classified according to three categories, namely locutionary acts, illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts. A locutionary act is regarded as the basic meaning of any sentence or utterance, such as "the coffee is cold." An illocutionary act refers to the intentional meaning of the utterance; in the example of the coffee, it is a complaint. Finally, the perlocutionary act represents the repercussions of the intended meaning of the utterance on the hearer. In other words, it refers to the consequences of the illocutionary act on the hearer - in the example of the coffee, the waiter may take the cup of cold coffee to the kitchen and replace it with a cup of hot coffee.

While Austin (1962) classified speech acts according to three categories, Searle's (1976) taxonomy focused mainly on the illocutionary act, and was divided into five groups:

1. representatives that reflect a speaker's beliefs, such as assertions,
2. directives that cause the hearer to perform actions, such as requests,
3. expressives that occur in daily communications, such as expressing gratitude,
4. commissives that imply future plans, such as promises, and
5. declaratives, which refer to the expressions used for making judgements, such as "I declare".

The speech act of suggestion, which is the speech act that is investigated in this study, is considered to be a directive whereby the speaker causes the hearer to do certain things or to perform specific actions.

2.3 Speech Act of Suggestion

According to Seale's (1976) taxonomy, suggestion is considered to be a directive whereby the speaker causes the hearer to do certain things or to perform specific actions. Bach and Harnish's (1979) explanation of directives suggested that the speaker's attitude and intention when employing an utterance should be considered as a motivating factor for the hearer's actions. Furthermore, one of the characteristics differentiating directives from other speech acts, such as representatives or commissives, is that an interaction between a speaker and a hearer is necessary in order for this speech act to be employed (Searle, 1976). As Trosborg (1995, p. 20) proposed, "only in the case of directives is the hearer's subsequent act (getting things done) part of the speaker's intention".

Nevertheless, although a suggestion is made to serve the hearer's interest, Rintell (1979) suggested that, when suggestions are employed, the hearer is asked to undertake certain actions that the speaker thinks will benefit the hearer; according to politeness theory, a suggestion is regarded as an FTA (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The term face refers to "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61) Therefore, making a suggestion is regarded as intruding on the hearer's private sphere by proposing an action regarding what the hearer ought to do. Therefore, the speech act of suggestion threatens the hearer's face because the speaker encroaches on the hearer's freedom from imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987), and pragmatic competence is required in order to perform this speech act successfully (Banerjee & Carrell, 1988). Some sociolinguistic variables, such as the interlocutor's status, can affect the realisation of this speech act; for example, making suggestions to a friend as opposed to a person with high status, such as a manager. Since making a suggestion is an FTA, speakers are likely to utilise face saving strategies in an attempt to avoid damaging the hearer's face, particularly when conversing with high-status people.

2.4 Previous Studies of the Kuwaiti speech acts

Kuwaiti Arabic is a dialectal variety of the Arabic language that is spoken in the state of Kuwait. Holes (2007) stated that dialects in the Arabian Gulf were not identical to each other, although they had many linguistic features in common. An example of the differences amongst Arabian Gulf dialects is that the word for 'bread' is *xubiz* in the Kuwaiti dialect, whereas it is *ēsh* in the Saudi dialect – however, this word means 'rice' in the Kuwaiti dialect (Al-Qenaie, 2011).

These linguistic differences are due to the geographical location of Kuwait, which has resulted in the Kuwaiti dialect borrowing words from the Iraqi dialect. Al-Qenaie (2011) found that the Kuwaiti dialect differed from other dialects in the Arabian Gulf on the phonological level, as affrication fronting of the /q/ sound is extremely common in the Kuwaiti Arabic dialect. In addition, Al-Qahtani (2015) investigated how Saudis performed the speech act of asking for a favour, and compared the findings of her study to those in Alrefai's (2012) work, which examined the same speech act in Kuwaiti dialects in an attempt to identify similarities and differences in the speech act of asking for a favour between Saudis and Kuwaitis. After comparing the findings of the two studies, Al-Qahtani (2015) found that Kuwaitis tended to use more conventional indirect strategies, whereas Saudis employed more direct strategies. Another difference between the two dialects was that social distance had a major effect on asking for favours in Saudi Arabic, while it did not have a significant effect in Kuwaiti Arabic. Al-Qahtani suggested that these differences maybe have been due to the regional variation between the two dialects. Therefore, there were differences between Arabic dialects on the level of morphology, phonology, and syntax as these differences can affect the production of a particular speech act.

Although several studies of speech acts in different Arabic dialects have been conducted in previous decades, the Kuwaiti dialect has not yet been investigated in depth. The first study of speech acts in the Kuwaiti dialect was the work of Farghal and Haggan (2006), which examined how Kuwaiti university students who were learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) responded to compliments that their friends paid to them in English. The authors used naturally occurring data consisting of 632 compliment responses, most of which were in English, with the remainder being either in Arabic or non-verbal. Seventy-nine EFL students who were fluent in English participated in the study, in which each student in a group of several students was asked to report on eight situations in which they paid a compliment to a fellow university student in English, and to observe and write down the compliment responses that they received, including non-verbal responses. The analysis of these responses was based on frequency and on whether the speakers utilised simple or complex responses, including non-verbal responses. The finding was that the students transferred the use of compliment strategies in their first language when speaking English due to the influence of their first language.

In a different study, Alrefai (2012) explored the linguistic and social distribution of the speech act of asking for a favour employed by 30 male Kuwaiti students. The instrument used in this study, a written DCT, was written in the Arabic language and consisted of 12 hypothetical situations: Four entailed asking for a favour from a low-status person, four from an equal-status person and four from a high-status person. The participants' responses were coded using Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's taxonomy (1984). The results of this study revealed that the Kuwaiti speakers preferred to use conventional indirect strategies when they asked for favours; another was that speakers tended to use religious references. Moreover, Kuwaitis preferred to use direct strategies when asking for a favour for a person with high status.

Alotaibi (2016) investigated how female Kuwaiti EFL students realised the speech act of paying a compliment in English in comparison to speakers of British English. Eighty female Kuwaiti EFL students, divided into two groups, took part in this study; one group consisted of 40 students with advanced English proficiency, and the other of 40 students whose proficiency was intermediate. In order to explore the Kuwaitis' pragmatic competence, the researcher compared the Kuwaitis' responses to compliments to the responses of 50 female speakers of British English. The data were collected via a written DCT consisting of nine hypothetical situations, which the participants were asked to read and to respond to a compliment that was paid to them. The findings indicated that the Kuwaiti speakers transferred compliment strategies, such as the use of endearments, from their first language. Moreover, the Kuwaitis were not aware of the cultural differences when they transferred strategies from their culture.

Almujaibel and Gomaa (2022) recently examined the speech act of request utilised by one hundred Kuwaiti speakers of Arabic and one hundred British speakers of English in a study of cross-cultural speech acts. The researchers used a written DCT and semi-structured interviews to elicit the speech act of requesting. The results revealed that the British speakers used more direct strategies in comparison to the Kuwaitis. Another important result was that the Kuwaiti speakers were aware of the concept of threatening someone's face, as many of the participants used face saving acts when making requests in several situations.

Having explained that studies of Kuwaiti speech acts are scarce and that the speech act of making suggestions in Kuwaiti Arabic has not been investigated, the present study is an attempt to fill this gap by investigating the similarities and differences between Kuwaiti speakers of the Arabic language and British speakers of the English language when making suggestions in different situations.

3- Methodology

3.1 participants

The participants in this study were 36 university students, of whom 18 were British (nine females and nine males) whose first language was English, and 18 were Kuwaiti (nine females and nine males) whose first language was Arabic. The British participants were aged between 18 and 25, and were all studying at Swansea University; twelve were undergraduate students and six were postgraduate students. The Kuwaiti participants were aged between 20 and 29, and were all students at Kuwait University; fourteen were undergraduate students and four were postgraduate students. Before beginning this study, the researcher asked all the participants if they would participate voluntarily in this cross-cultural study of two societies in order to identify the similarities and differences between the two societies when making suggestions. After they agreed, they were given consent forms in Arabic for Kuwaiti speakers and in English for British speakers; these forms also explained the objectives of the study, and the participants were required to sign them to give the researcher permission to analyse the data.

The participants in the present study were selected via a convenience sampling method in which the selection was based on the participants' availability (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 122). This was a non-random method in which the participants were selected because they were easy for the researcher to access. For example, in Kuwait, the researcher asked people whom he knew or who were easily accessible, such as friends and relatives, to take part in this study while, in the UK, the researcher asked his friends and people in the library at Swansea University if they were willing to participate.

3.2 Instrument

A modified version of the written DCT used by Pishghadam and Sharafadini (2011) was used to collect the data; the DCT consisted of six situations that required suggestions to be made. The situations included making two suggestions to a high-status person, two to a person of equal status and two to a low-status person. The participants were presented with the situations in a face-to-face manner and were required to imagine themselves in the situations and to write down their responses within five minutes; this ensured that their responses would be spontaneous and natural. DCTs are considered to be the most widely used instrument in research on speech acts (Nelson et al., 2002; Hinkel, 1997; Nureddeen, 2008; Kwon, 2004; Allami & Naeimi, 2011). Kwon (2004) stated that researchers preferred DCTs because they give the researchers control over different variables, such as gender, language, age and social status. In addition, DCTs enable researchers to compare the use of strategies in two or more languages or cultures (Nelson et al., 2002). Moreover, DCTs facilitate the collection of the data that researchers use to design situations for eliciting particular speech acts (Kasper, 1999).

3.3 Data analysis

An adapted taxonomy of the suggestion strategies presented by Martinez-Flor (2005) was used to analyse and code the participants' responses. As Table 1 demonstrates, Martinez-Flor divided the strategies for suggestions into direct forms, conventionalised forms and indirect forms, as each type involves different linguistic features. The English data were coded immediately based on the taxonomy mentioned previously, while the Arabic data were translated into English before being coded. When analysing the responses, I calculated the frequency of each type of suggestion strategy, as well as the frequency of the linguistic formulae for the strategy based on Martinez-Flor's taxonomy. It is worth noting that some of the responses contained more than one linguistic formula, such as Example (1), in which the British response contained two linguistic formulae according to Martinez-Flor's taxonomy, namely hints and "should":

(1) I've seen it for sale at a cheaper price in another bookshop, you should get it there (B17).

In Example (1), "I've seen" is regarded as a hint, which is an indirect strategy, and "should" is a conventionalised form. In this case, I focused on the head act, which is "should" in Example (1).

Table 1

Taxonomy of Suggestion Linguistic Realisation Strategies (Martinez-Flor, 2005)

Type	Strategy	Examples
Direct	Performative Verb	I suggest that you ... I advise you to... I recommend that you ...
	Noun of Suggestions	My suggestion would be...
	Imperative	Try using ...
	Negative Imperative	Don't try to...
Conventionalized Forms	Specific Formulae (Interrogative Form)	Why don't you...? How about ...? What about...? Have you thought about ...?
	Possibility/Probability	You can ... You could You may You might ...
	Should	You should ...
	Need	You need to ...
	Conditional	If I were you, I would ...
Indirect	Impersonal	One thing (that you can do) would be... Here's one possibility ... There are a number of options that you ... It would be helpful if you ... It might be better to ... A good idea would be ... It would be nice if
	Hints	I've heard that ...

4. Results

4.1 Frequency of strategy type employed

To answer RQ1, “Do the two groups use different types of strategies when making suggestions?”, I calculated the frequency of the direct strategies, conventional forms and indirect strategies used by both groups and compared the two groups to determine the similarities and differences. As shown in Figure 1, after calculating the frequencies in all the situations, the British participants exhibited a balance between using direct and indirect strategies, with $P = 37.5\%$ for both.

The Kuwaiti participants used more direct strategies in comparison to the other two types, with $P = 55.5\%$. Figure 1 shows that both groups' use of indirect strategies was relatively similar, with $P = 39\%$ for the Kuwaiti and $P = 37.5\%$ for the British participants. It is clear that both groups used conventionalised forms least often when making suggestions.

With regard to the use of conventionalised forms, the British group used them 27 out of 108 times, which was $P = 25\%$ of all the situations. Conversely, the Kuwaitis used only four conventionalised forms, with three suggestions being made in situation two and one suggestion being made in situation three, amounting to $P = 5.5\%$ of all the suggestions. It was clear that the four occasions on which the Kuwaitis used conventionalised forms involved equal- and low-status people. There

were also clear similarities between the two groups because both used direct and indirect strategies most frequently and conventionalised forms least frequently.

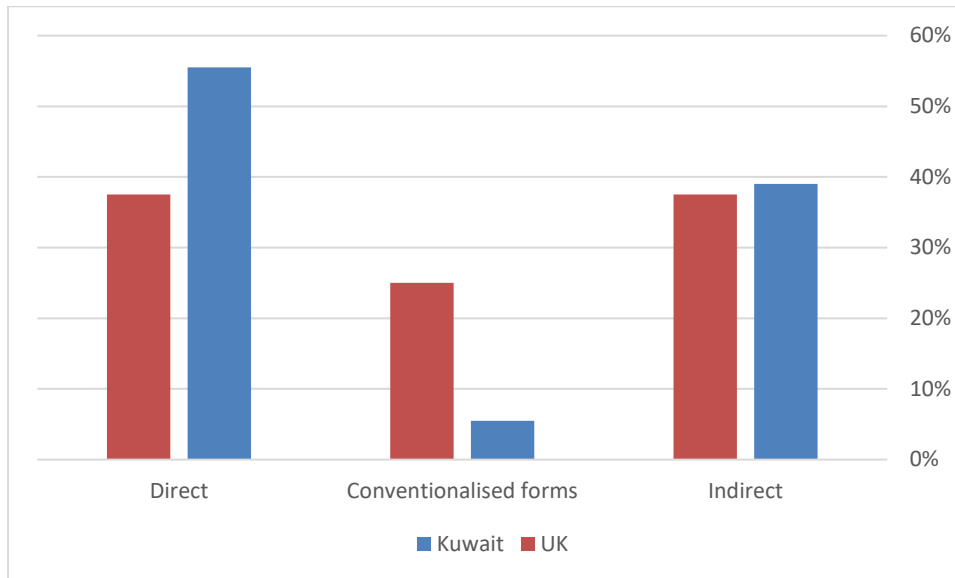


Figure 1. Percentage of strategy type used by Kuwaiti and British participants based on Martinez- Flor's (2005) taxonomy.

4.2 The use of linguistic formulas

I calculated the frequencies of the use of different linguistic formulae utilised by the two groups in order to answer RQ2: “Does the British group differ in the use of linguistic formulae in comparison to the Kuwaiti group?” As shown in Table 2, the Kuwaiti and the British participants used nine of the 11 linguistic formulae. The Kuwaitis did not use “need” or the conditional form, while the British speakers did not use nouns of suggestion or “need”. Clearly, the linguistic formula used most frequently by both groups was hints; however, the British participants utilised hints ($P = 30.5\%$) more often than did the Kuwaitis ($P = 26.8\%$). To clarify, the British participants used hints in 13 of the 18 statements in the first situation, while the Kuwaiti subjects used hints 11 times in the fourth situation.

The second most frequent linguistic formula that both groups used was the imperative, with relatively similar frequencies: $P = 24\%$ for the Kuwaiti and $P = 22.2\%$ for the British participants. Both groups used the imperative most often in the third situation, which required the participants to make a suggestion to a friend who looked exhausted due to having spent the entire day studying in the library. The use of the imperative as a linguistic formula by a British speaker is illustrated in Example (2)

- (2) Take a rest and come back early morning (B31).

Kuwaitis used the negative imperative ($P = 17.5\%$), which is regarded as a direct suggestion strategy, more frequently than did the British speakers ($P = 9.2\%$). In Example (3), a Kuwaiti participant made a suggestion to a high-status person (his father) in situation five by employing a negative imperative, which is a direct strategy.

- (3) *Aajel elsafar le an elgow ma yesmah*
 (Do not go tonight because the weather is harsh) (K510)

While around half of the Kuwaitis' responses to situation five were negative imperatives, British subjects responded with a variety of different linguistic formulae, one of which is shown in Example (4):

- (4) It's supposed to rain a lot later, why are you going, can't wait it until tomorrow? (B512)

The third most frequently used linguistic formula amongst the British participants was the specific formula, as shown in Example (4), in which the respondent utilised a question when making suggestion. By contrast, the Kuwaiti speakers only used the specific formula three times ($P = 2.7\%$). Moreover, apart from the specific formula, the Kuwaiti subjects only used “should”, possibility and the noun of suggestion once, whereas the British participants only used the conditional once. In summary, although the two groups preferred to use hints and imperatives, the data revealed that the participants in the two groups differed in the use of linguistic formulae, with performative, impersonal and negative imperatives being used more frequently by the Kuwaiti than by the British participants. However, the British participants used the specific formula, possibility and “should” more often than did the Kuwaitis.

Table 2

The Use of Linguistic Formulas by Kuwaiti and British Participants

Linguistic formula	Kuwaiti Participants		British Participants	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Performative Verb	14	12.9%	6	5.5%
Noun of Suggestion	1	0.9%	0	0%
Imperative	26	24%	24	22.2%
Negative Imperative	19	17.5%	10	9.2%
Specific Formula	3	2.7%	12	11.1%
Possibility/Probability	1	0.9%	9	8.3%
Should	1	0.9%	6	5.5%
Need	0	0%	0	0%
Conditional	0	0%	1	0.9%
Impersonal	14	12.9%	7	6.4%
Hints	29	26.8%	33	30.5%

4.3 The role of status in making suggestion

As explained previously, the DCT contained six situations, two involving making suggestions to a high-status person, two to an equal-status person and two to a low-status person. In order to compare the types of suggestion strategies (direct, conventionalised and indirect) that were used with the three types of statuses, I calculated the frequency of making suggestions according to each status. Specifically, the frequencies and percentages were calculated and compared between the groups for situations one and five, in which participants were required to make suggestions to a high-status interlocutor, situations three and four, in which the subjects were asked to make suggestions to a person of equal status, and situations two and six, in which the participants were required to make suggestions to a low-status person.

Table 3 shows that the Kuwaitis preferred to employ more direct than indirect strategies with people with higher status ($P=58.3\%$). Included in these direct strategies were the use of negative imperatives ($P=42.8\%$), performatives ($P=35.7\%$), imperatives ($P=14.3\%$) and the noun of suggestion ($P=7.1\%$). By contrast, the British subjects tended to utilise indirect strategies more often than they did other strategies when making suggestions to a high-status person ($P=58.3$), with $P=85.7\%$ hints and $P=14.3\%$ impersonal. Clearly, both groups used more direct strategies with equal- and low-status interlocutors than they did conventionalised and indirect strategies, and both groups used imperatives more often than they did any other linguistic formula when making direct suggestions to equal- and low-status people. With regard to the use of conventionalised forms, the British participants used more conventionalised forms than did the Kuwaitis in all three of the status conditions.

Table 3

Frequencies of Strategy Types Used by Kuwaiti and British Participants for three status levels

		Direct strategies			Conventionalized Forms			Indirect strategies		
Subjects	Statistic	Higher status	Equal status	Lower status	Higher status	Equal status	Lower status	Higher status	Equal status	Lower status
Kuwait (N=18)	Percentage	58.3%	58.3%	50%	0%	0	12.5	41.6%	37.5%	37.5%
UK (N=18)	Percentage	8.3%	62.5%	41.6%	33.3%	12.5%	29.1%	58.3%	25%	29.1%

5. Discussion

The study compared Kuwaiti and British participants' use of suggestion strategies. RQ1 aimed to identify how Kuwaiti and British respondents used suggestion strategy types, and which strategy types (direct, conventionalised or indirect) they employed. The finding for RQ1 suggested that there were more similarities than there were differences in the use of strategy types. In other words, both groups preferred to use direct and indirect strategies instead of conventionalised forms. These results are in line Darweesh and Al-Aadili's (2017) study, which revealed that Iraqi speakers of Arabic tended to use more direct than indirect strategies when making suggestions. Although the speech act of suggestion is an FTA, the two groups used direct strategies extensively. This may have been because the participants were asked to make suggestions in six situations, four of which entailed making suggestions to people whom the participants knew and with whom they were socially close, such as a father, younger brother, a classmate or a neighbour.

Another interesting finding with regard to the strategy type was that Kuwaiti respondents tended to use religious references whenever they use a direct strategy, such as "I swear to God, don't travel now because of the harsh weather" and "May Allah protect you, I suggest that you stay at home tonight". The use of these religious references could be viewed as softening the FTA in the direct strategy, as the respondents wanted to show their care and compassion to the hearer by using religious references. The use of such references by both males and females reflected the role of religion not only in the Kuwaiti culture, but also in the Arabic culture, since similar religious references have been reported in many studies of Arabic speech acts, such as Alrefai's (2012), Al-Shalawi's (1997) and Morkus' (2014) studies.

With regard to RQ2, the findings showed that both groups utilised hints and imperatives more frequently than they did other linguistic formulae. With regard to pragmatic failure and pragmatic competence, since the two groups employed similar linguistic formulae, pragmatic failure would be unlikely to occur between these speakers in the acquisition of English or Arabic as a second or foreign language. Kasper (1997) and Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) suggested that pragmatic competence could occur when speakers of different languages (in this case, Kuwaiti Arabic and British English) employed similar speech act strategies. Therefore, Kuwaiti speakers of Arabic and British speakers of English could successfully transfer many different suggestion strategies from their first language into their other language.

It was also observed that there were some linguistic formulae that the British speakers used more often than the Kuwaiti participants did. For example, the British respondents used possibility nine times, in contrast to Kuwaiti speakers who only used it once. This linguistic formulae included modal verbs such as "can" and "may", which were used to minimise the extent of imposition on the hearer. Another striking finding was that neither of the two groups employed the linguistic formula "need", such as "you need", when making suggestions, whereas the linguistic formula of the conditional, such as "if I were you", was only used once by a British participant. Gu (2014) argued that conditionals were considered to be a polite way of making suggestions. Therefore, in answer to RQ2, there were more similarities than there were differences between the two groups.

However, with regard to the role of the interlocutor's status (RQ3), the Kuwaitis used more direct strategies than they did any of the other strategies regardless of the interlocutors' status levels, whereas the British participants utilised indirect strategies more frequently with high-status people. The British respondents were aware that direct strategies could cause

damage the hearers' face; therefore, they used more indirect strategies and conventionalised forms with people with higher status in order to minimise the FTA, as they only used nine direct strategies in 108 responses. The Kuwaiti participants differed from the British group regarding this RQ, as they employed direct strategies 53% of the time when making suggestions to people with higher status. This finding is in line with Alrefai (2012), who found that Kuwaiti speakers used more direct strategies when asking for favours.

Although it was anticipated that the Kuwaitis would use more indirect strategies when making suggestions to high-status interlocutors because Kuwaiti society is hierarchal, the results of the present study showed that the Kuwaiti participants used more direct strategies with high-status people. Martinez-Flor (2005) explained that suggestions could be viewed as advice because making suggestions implies that the suggestions will benefit the hearers. Thus, the Kuwaiti participants may have used more direct strategies with high-status people to express their eagerness, involvement and concern. This may have particularly been the case in situation five, in which the participants were asked to make suggestions to their fathers who were planning to travel when the weather was bad; as the Kuwaitis used more direct strategies in response to this situation, it can be assumed that the participants viewed such suggestions as non-threatening.

6. Recommendation for future research

Research on speech acts in the Kuwaiti variety of Arabic has previously received little attention. This study attempted to fill the research gap, but further research is necessary in order to widen our perspectives and understanding of the use of language strategies by Kuwaiti speakers of Arabic.

Since the present study adopted the non-random sampling method, it is suggested that future researchers who are interested in examining Kuwaiti participants' use of suggestion strategies should use the random sampling method to obtain reliable data. In addition, since studies of speech acts in Kuwaiti Arabic have received little attention thus far, future researchers could collect naturally occurring data based on observations, as this may result in authentic and reliable data that are similar to real-life communications. In this regard, many researchers have recommended the use of naturally occurring data in order to investigate how speakers actually perform a particular speech act rather than presenting the way in which they think the speech act should be performed (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Wolfson, 1986). Since research on speech acts helps people from different cultures to understand the characteristics of other languages or cultures, it is important to examine how strangers make suggestions in two different cultures and how different genders make suggestions. Finally, as Nelson et al. (2002) recommended with regard to studies of speech acts, we may need to interview the participants after the study and ask them what motivated them to opt for a specific strategy instead of another, as well as the reasons for the extensive selection of particular strategies. In the case of the present study, this would have entailed asking the Kuwaiti participants about the reasons for their extensive use of the hint strategy while ignoring other strategies, such as "need" and conditional strategies.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the similarities and differences between the Kuwaiti and the British participants when making suggestions in terms of the types of suggestion strategies, the effect of the interlocutor's role when making suggestions and the use of linguistic formulae when making suggestions in the two cultures. The study revealed that there were more similarities than there were differences between the groups. The Kuwaiti group and the British group were similar in the use of strategy types, as both groups preferred to employ more direct strategies than indirect strategies or conventionalised strategies. The Kuwaiti and the British groups used similar linguistic formulae, as they favoured using hints and imperatives, and they did not utilise the "need" strategy. This may indicate that positive transfer from the first language to the second language is likely to take place when British and Kuwaiti speakers decide to learn the Arabic or the English language, since the two groups employed similar linguistic formulae in this study.

The two groups differed in making suggestions to people with high status, as the Kuwaiti group used more direct strategies with high-status people, while the British group used more indirect strategies with people with higher status. The British participants also used conventionalised forms extensively in comparison to the Kuwaiti respondents. Nonetheless, it could be argued that the Kuwaitis and the British participants had more similarities than they had differences in all three of the scenarios.

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"كيفية تقديم الاقتراحات باللغة العربية (اللهجة الكويتية) والإنجليزية (اللهجة البريطانية)"

اعداد الباحث:

ناصر مريخان العجمي

أستاذ اللغة الإنجليزية

ماجستير في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية لغير الناطقين بها من جامعة سوانزي - المملكة المتحدة

ملخص البحث:

تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى بيان أوجه التشابه والاختلاف في تقديم الاقتراح بين اللغة العربية (اللهجة الكويتية) واللغة الإنجليزية (اللهجة البريطانية) من المنظور الثقافي، وتبحث هذه الدراسة عن المشكلات التي قد تواجه المتحدث عند استخدام استراتيجيات تقديم الاقتراح بسبب الاختلاف الثقافي بين المجتمعين، فالمجتمع الكويتي يعتبر من المجتمعات الطبقية على حد وصف العديد من الباحثين، على نقيض المجتمع البريطاني الذي لا يؤمن بالطبقية، ومن أجل ذلك يعد تقديم الاقتراح من أفعال الكلام التي من الممكن أن تسبب سوء فهم، فيعتقد المتلقي للاقتراح أنه يتصرف بموجب ما يقوله المتحدث، ولذلك تحرص هذه الدراسة على تحديد استراتيجيات التأدب في تقديم الاقتراح بين المشاركين، وتشخيص العوامل الثقافية والاجتماعية عن طريق استخدام تلك الاستراتيجيات، وأما عينة الدراسة فتتكون من ثمانية عشر كويتياً وثمانية عشر بريطانيا شاركوا في هذه الدراسة، ولتحقيق هدف الدراسة وقع الاختيار على اختبار اكمال الحديث (DCT) من أجل جمع البيانات المطلوبة، فهو يضم هذا الاختبار ستة مواقف افتراضية، يتصور المشارك أنه يقدم الاقتراح المناسب، وشملت هذه المواقف متغيرات الطبقة الاجتماعية (الدنيا والمتساوية والعليا) والمسافة الاجتماعية (مقرب أو بعيد)، وتوزعت بيانات المشاركين إلى عدد من الاستراتيجيات في ضوء الاطار النظري، وكشفت الدراسة عن تشابه المجتمعين في استعمال الصيغ اللغوية (الأمر و التلميح) ونوع الاستراتيجيات، و كان الاختلاف بينهم في المواقف التي يقدم فيها الاقتراح إلى شخص من طبقة عليا، فقد اعتمد المشاركون الكويتيون على استخدام الأسلوب المباشر، وأما البريطانيون فقد استخدموا الأسلوب الغير المباشر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: فعل الكلام، التداولية، اللغة العربية الكويتية، الإنجليزية البريطانية، الاقتراحات، قانون تهديد الوجه، DCT