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# Speech Acts across Cultures: A Comparative Study of Chinese and Pakistani Students' Request and Politeness Strategies

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## Abstract

*The examines are the different request strategies in English used by Pakistani and Chinese students according to social distance and power of interlocutors. Data comprises students from Pakistan and China enrolled in an undergraduate program at International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan. Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper's (1989) taxonomy of request strategies is taken as a theoretical framework to compare the request speech act patterns of Pakistani and Chinese students. This study analyzed the request speech act in terms of head act strategies used by participants. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) categorized the request speech act into three request strategies i.e. direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventional indirect strategies. The study identifies similarities between Pakistani ESL learners and Chinese EFL learners in making use of mood derivable as the preferred strategies for making requests in situations of different social distance, power, and familiarity between the interlocutors.*

**Keywords**: Cross-Cultural Communication, Politeness, Pragmatics, Request, Speech Acts

## Introduction

The speech act is an important area of study in pragmatics which is concerned with the cultural-specific aspects of language. The elocutionary act of saying conveys the propositional meaning of a sentence; the illocutionary act is the performance of a particular language function e.g. request, denial, complain, etc. Searle (1975) classifies speech act as indirect and direct speech acts. When the illocutionary act of a speaker's utterance can be interpreted in more than one way. In a direct speech act, the speaker presents his/her intent directly and explicitly. CCSARP categorized speech act strategies as direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) used the Discourse Completion Tasks to investigate the speech act from a cross-cultural perspective and concluded that the two groups are different in their requesting apology strategies in different situations. Otcu and Zeyrek's (2008) investigated the Turkish ESL learners' request strategies by studying the role of language proficiency in modifying the requesting behavior. They employed DCTs and role play as instruments of the study. It was concluded that advanced learners were able to modify their requests in different situations whereas learners with low proficiency used fixed and similar requesting patterns.

Language users are successful speech act users when they make appropriate use of speech act sets for a particular speech act in their conversation. This appropriate usage and control require the ability to provide both sociocultural and sociolinguistic appropriate behavior. Participants were selected from Chinese and Pakistani students studying in undergraduate programs of different faculties at the University. A total of 40 female undergraduate students (20 from each nationality) ranging between 19-24 years old participated in the study. There are certain limitations in this study due to time constraints. The sample size for the study was small as it includes 20 Pakistani and 20 Chinese students studying at IIUI and four situations were used to elicit the responses of participants. So, the requesting patterns of this sample of the study cannot be generalized. The study focuses on the following research questions;

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1.    What are the different request strategies in English used by Pakistani and Chinese students according to social distance and the power of interlocutors?
2.    Is there any difference between the patterns of request strategies used by these students?
3.    What are different politeness strategies/politeness markers used by Pakistani and Chinese to mitigate the effects of the face-threatening act of request?

**Literature Review**
Every language has a system of signs that are used for communication by people of a particular speech community. Linguistic and communicative competence enables the speakers of a language to be effective in their language use. The lack of competence can cause pragmatic failure or error between interactants who have different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Jie, 2010).

Cross-cultural pragmatics is a basic and critical area of study in pragmatics. Cross-cultural pragmatics suggests three approaches to study culture concerning discourse; the contrastive approach, the inter-language approach, and the interactive intercultural approach. Richard et al. (1985) describe inter-language as the language used by foreign or second language learners in a learning process. According to Kasper (1989) "Inter-language pragmatics is the study of non-native speakers' use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language." Inter-language pragmatics is based on cross-cultural pragmatics that emphasizes illocutionary and politeness dimensions of speech act performance (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989).

Kachru (1985) categorized the world Englishes according to their use into three circles i.e. "inner circles", "outer/extended circles" and "expanding circles". The native English- speaking countries are in the inner circle e.g. UK, USA, Canada, and Australia. The outer or the extended circle consists of those countries where is English is used as a second language as these countries have been former colonies of native English speakers e.g. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Singapore. The three circles should be treated equally in and outside the classroom interaction.



Three Concentric Circles of Englishes
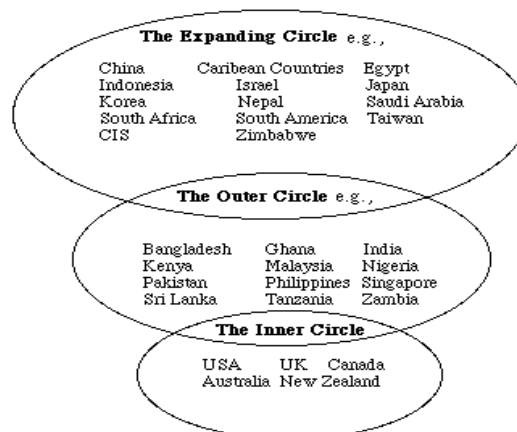
English is a foreign language for Chinese. On the other hand, English is a second language in Pakistan as it is also described in Kuchru's (1985) description of World Englishes. This study intends to analyze speech acts of request and apology in English by Chinese (EFL learners) and Pakistani students (ESL learners).

**The speech act of Request**
A request is defined as "a directive that embodies an effort on the part of the speaker to get the hearer to do something" (Byon, 2004, p. 1674). Requests are considered the face-threatening act as cultural and linguistic competence is required for making effective requests in a foreign language. Inappropriate use of request strategies can result in breakdowns in communication in a cross-cultural scenario. Request speech act has been the focus of investigation in inter-language and cross-cultural studies. In the previous research studies, different aspects of request speech acts are studied in different language learning contexts i.e. cross-cultural context, in the ESL and EFL context (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Ao, 2005; Lin, 2008; and Zhang & Wang, 1997).

Kitao (1990) carried out a study on pragmatic awareness by using a questionnaire to know the opinion of participants (native English speakers, ESL and EFL speakers) about the request strategies. It was concluded that there is no difference between the native and non-native speakers' perceptions of politeness. However, he found that ESL students' politeness, perception, and the use of strategies are more similar to the native English speakers than that of the EFL speakers.

Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) proposes speech act realization patterns (CCSARP) and projected three segments of the sequence of request speech acts. The head act is considered as the nucleus of requests as it can act independently of other elements.

Example: *Asma/ would you please give me your notes? / I missed the last class.*

The sequence of this utterance would be broken into the following segments:

1.    'Asma' address the term
2.    'would you…' head act
3.    'I missed…' adjunct to head act.

Head act is categorized into three strategy types according to the level of directness. These three categories are further divided into nine more subtypes as explained in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Taxonomy of Request Strategies**

| Category | Strategy type | Definition | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| Direct Request Strategy | Mood Derivable | The grammatical mood of the verb | Leave me alone. |
| | Explicit performatives | The illocutionary force of the utterance is explicit | I tell you to leave me alone |
| | Hedged performatives | Utterances embedding the naming. | I would like to ask you to leave me alone. |
| | obligation statement | The illocutionary is directly derivable from the semantic meaning. | Sir, you'll have to move your car |
| | want statement | The utterance expresses the speaker's intentions. | I want you to move your car. |
| Conventionally Indirect Request Strategy | Suggestory formula | The sentence comprises a suggestion. | How about cleaning up? |
| | Query Preparatory | Utterance contains a reference to preparatory conditions as conventionalized in any specific language. | Would you mind moving the bicycle? |
| Non-Conventionally Indirect request strategy | Strong hints | Utterance comprises a clue to object for the application of the act. | This match is boring. |
| | Mild hints' | Utterances that brand no connection to the request | We have been playing this game for over an hour now. |

**(Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, pp. 278- 280)**

**Politeness Theory**

Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory is developed on the premise that many speech acts are threatening to face as they do not respect the face wants of the speaker and/or addressee.

A request is considered a face-threatening speech act (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987) as it involves imposition to the hearer. According to Lakoff (1975) politeness involves those forms of behavior that help to reduce friction in personal interactions. Brown and Levinson (1987) consider politeness as a set of strategies, positive and negative, which function to reduce the imposition or threat to the addressee's face. The face is "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown & Levinson 1978, p.61). The concern of using politeness strategies is to maintain the face of the speaker or hearer in face-threatening acts (FTAs). Brown and Levinson (1978) have identified 'negative face' and 'positive face' as the two kinds of face. Positive politeness refers to a person's wants to be appreciated and approved by others. Negative politeness is used for a person's desire to enjoy the freedom of action without being imposed upon by others and be unimpeded. Speech acts of requests, threats, and advice are considered threats to a person's negative face as the hearer is under pressure to perform or not to perform a specific act. Politeness strategies are used to save the face of the hearer or address in FTAs. The choice of these strategies depends on the level of formality, power, distance, and level of imposition between interlocutors.

**Methodology**

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques. Random sampling was used to select 20 Pakistani and 20 Chinese students at International Islamic University Islamabad. A demographic information form was used to collect the background information about these participants before collecting the data about the speech acts. The demographic information form was designed to obtain information such as age, the program of study, first language, country of residence,

time spent in Pakistan or other English-speaking countries by Chinese students to uncover the possible influence of another language or culture by having lived overseas.

A detailed description of the participants of the study is given in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Description of the Participants**

|  | Pakistani students | Chinese students |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | 20 (all female) | 20 (all female) |
| Age | 20-24 | 19-24 |
| Enrolled in the study program | BS | BS |
| Area of Study | Usuluddin, Arabic, Islamiat | Usuluddin, Arabic, Islamiyat |
| Native language | Pashto, Punjabi, Urdu | Chinese |
| Time spent in Pakistan (for Chinese only) | - | 1 -3 years |

**a.      Data Collection tool**

The data were elicited through Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) in which participants were asked to respond to imaginative situations requiring request speech act strategies. It included four situations and the participants were given the role of a student requesting to people with different social status and familiarity i.e. student-teacher, student-friend, student-shopkeeper, and student-student. The situations were based on two social variables, "relative power" and "social distance". So, each situation varies in terms of social factors e.g. an equal status, high status, and the level of familiarity between interlocutors.

**b.      Procedure**

The researcher asked for the consent of the participants before collecting data. Initially, most of the Chinese students were not interested in filling the DCTs as they said that their English is not very good. Then only those students were accessed who were willing to fill the DCTs. Participants were given four hypothetical situations request speech act and were asked to write what they would say in these situations.

The researcher met the participants of both the groups personally at the IIUI female campus and provided detailed instructions about the tasks. Participants were presented with the written situations and were asked to write down their responses for each situation. They were given 20 minutes to complete the provided task in English.

**c.      Data Analysis**

The request strategies advocated by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) were used as a theoretical framework to analyze the responses of the participants to four situations. These three categories were further divided into nine sub-strategies which are explained in Table 4.1. Brown and Levinson (1987) suggested a taxonomy of politeness strategies such as off-record, negative, positive, and bald on record politeness strategies. These strategy types constitute a politeness scale in which bald on record is considered more impolite and the off-record strategy as a more polite strategy.

Descriptive analyses were used to analyze participants' responses to different discourse situations. The frequencies and percentages of participants' use of request and politeness strategies were calculated.

**Findings**

Participants' responses to the four situations of DCTs for speech act of request were counted according to the strategies types as proposed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and their percentage was counted and is presented in Table 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4.

In situation 1, participants were asked to request a friend for notes. In this situation (friend-friend), both the interlocutors share an equal level of power and are familiar with one another. The use of different requesting strategies by Pakistani and Chinese students for this situation is shown in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Patterns of requesting strategies of Chinese and Pakistani Students for S1**

| Category | Strategy type | Pakistani Students | | | Chinese students | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Freq. | % | Total | Freq. | % | Total |
| Direct Strategy Request | Mood derivable | 12 | 60% |  | 4 | 20% |  |
|  | Explicit performatives | - | - | 14 | - | - | 8 |
|  | Hedged performatives | - | - | 70% | - | - | 40% |
|  | obligation statement | - | - |  | - | - |  |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | want statement | 2 | 10% | | 4 | 20% | |
| Conventionally indirect request strategy | suggestory formula | - | - | | - | - | 12 60% |
| | Query Preparatory | 6 | 30% | 6 30% | 12 | 60% | |
| Non Conventionally indirect request strategy | Strong hints | - | - | | - | - | |
| | Mild hints' | - | - | | - | - | |

Table 4.1 shows that there are some similarities in the use of requesting strategies by both the groups as they used mood derivable, want a statement, and query preparatory sub-strategies to make requests to their friend. However, there is a difference in frequency and percentage of use of these strategies by Chinese and Pakistani students. Pakistani students mostly used mood derivable and the Chinese used query preparatory as the dominant strategy to make requests to their friends for notes. Few examples of real data of Chinese students for query preparatory strategy are:

1. *Would you mind giving me your notes,*
2. *Could you give me your notes please* and
3. *May I borrow your notes*?

Pakistani students mostly used mood derivable for requesting, for example, *Please, give me your notes.*
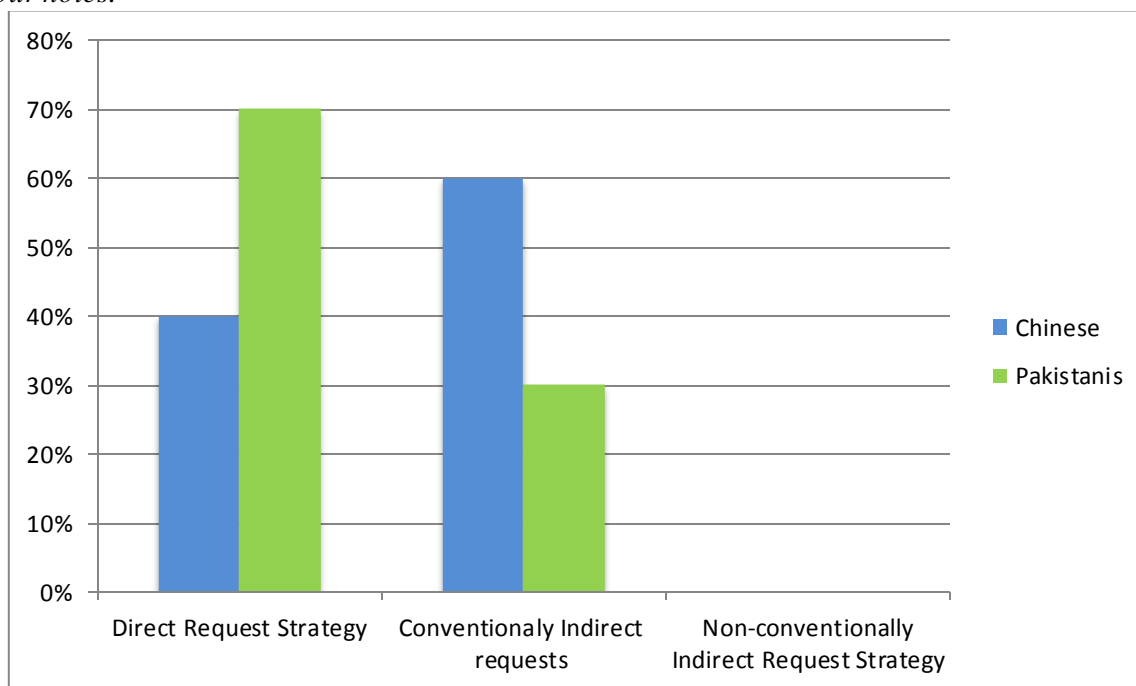


**Figure 4.1 Comparison of participants' use of request strategies in S1**

Figure 4.1 illustrates the comparison of Chinese and Pakistani speakers' use of direct and indirect requesting strategies. Figure 4.1 shows that Pakistani students used a 70% direct request strategy, 60% mood derivable and 10% want statements as sub-strategies. Their use of indirect requests constitutes 30% and they used query preparatory as an indirect strategy. However, they did not use suggestory statements.

Chinese students, on the other hand, were more indirect in their use of different requests as they used 60% conventionally indirect and 40% direct request strategy. Both the group did not use the non-conventional indirect strategy for requesting their friend.

Table 4.2 presents the distribution of requesting strategies of both the groups for situation 2 (S2) where they had to request the shopkeeper to replace the shirt. In this situation, students are not familiar with the other interlocutors and socially the addressee is more distant as compared to a friend in the previous situation.

**Table 4.2 Patterns of requesting strategies of Chinese and Pakistani Students for S2**

| Category | Strategy type | Pakistani Students Freq. | % | Total | Chinese students Freq. | % | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Direct Request Strategy | Mood derivable | 14 | 70% | | 5 | 25% | |
| | Explicit performatives | - | - | | - | - | 5 |
| | Hedged performatives | - | - | 14 | - | - | 25% |
| | obligation statement | - | - | 70% | - | - | |
| | want statement | - | - | | - | - | |
| Conventionally indirect request strategy | suggestory formula | - | - | 6 30% | - | - | 15 75% |
| | Query Preparatory | 6 | 30% | | 15 | 75% | |
| Non Conventionally indirect request strategy | Strong hints | - | - | | - | - | - |
| | Mild hints' | - | - | | - | - | |

The results given in Table 4.2 show that Pakistani students used mood derivable 70% as the dominant strategy to request the shopkeeper e.g. P*lease change this shirt*. Their use of query preparatory is 30% e.g. *Could you please replace this shirt?* Pakistani students did not use any other strategy apart from these two types.

Similarly, Chinese students also used these two requesting strategies in S2 but they utilized query preparatory (75%) as the dominant strategy and mood derivable (25%) as the other strategy type.

Examples of Chinese students' use of preparatory strategy are:
**1.**     *Would you mind replacing this shirt with the other one;*
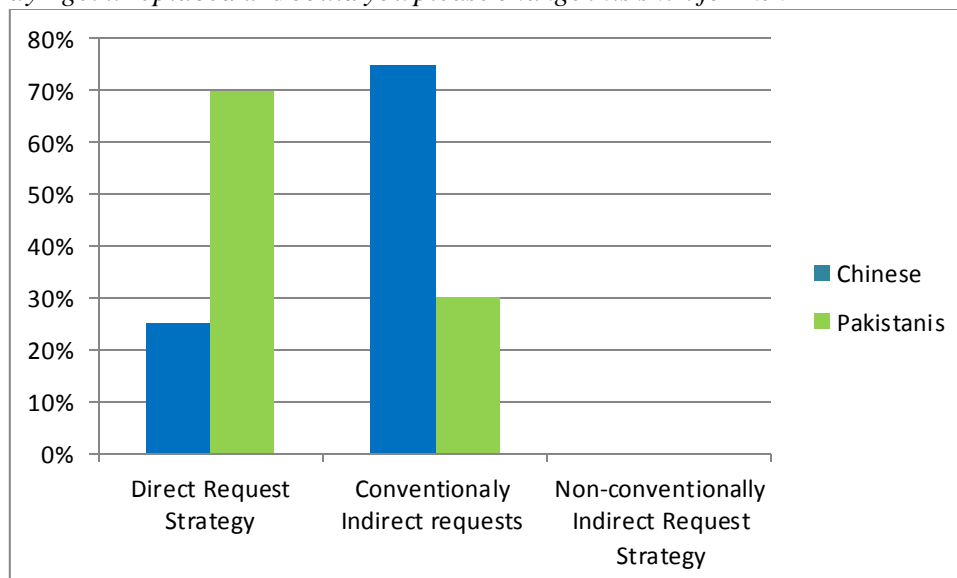**2.**     *May I get it replaced* and *could you please change this shirt for me*?



**Figure 4.2 Comparison of participants' use of request strategies in English for S2**

Figure 4.2 presents a comparison of Chinese and Pakistani students' use of strategies to request a shopkeeper in situation 2. As it is shown in the figure, Pakistani students were more direct in their requests as 70% of Pakistani students used the direct request strategy type and 30% used conventionally indirect requests. Chinese students, on the other hand, were more indirect in their requests as they used 75% conventionally indirect and 25% direct request strategies to request the shopkeeper to replace the shirt. Figure 4.2 also shows that both the groups did not utilize non-conventional indirect request strategies in situation 2.

Table 4.3 shows the distribution of requesting strategies used by Chinese and Pakistani students for situation 3 where they had to request the teacher to change the date of exams. In this situation, the interlocutors are not at the same power status as this request is from a student to a teacher. The findings indicate that both the groups of participants made use of mood derivable, want a statement, and query preparatory strategy types in situation 3 to request the teacher. However, the frequency and percentage of use of these strategy types by both the group of students are different. About 50% of Pakistani students used mood derivable as the dominant strategy and 45% of the students used query preparatory requesting strategy and just 1 student used want statement (*Teacher I need you to change the exam date because ….)* in situation 3.

Examples of mood derivable strategy of Pakistani students from real data:

1.      '*Ma'am please change the date of our exam as I …..'* and
2.      '*Ma'am Kindly change the date of our exam.'*

**Table 4.3   Patterns of Requesting strategies of Chinese and Pakistani Students for S3**

| Category | Strategy type | Pakistani Students | | | Chinese students | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Freq. | % | Total | Freq. | % | Total |
| Direct Request Strategy | Mood derivable | 10 | 50% | | 5 | 25% | |
| | Explicit performatives | - | - | | - | - | 6 |
| | Hedged performatives | - | - | 11 | - | - | 30% |
| | obligation statement | - | - | 55% | - | - | |
| | want statement | 1 | 5% | | 1 | 5% | |
| Conventionally indirect request strategy | Suggestory formula | - | - | 9 | - | - | 14 |
| | Query Preparatory | 9 | 45% | 45% | 14 | 70% | 70% |
| Non Conventionally indirect request strategy | Strong hints | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Mild hints' | - | - | | - | - | |

Chinese students, on the other hand, used query preparatory as the dominant strategy type in this situation with 70% and 25% used the mood derivable request strategy.

Examples of Chinese students' query preparatory strategy are:

1.      *The teacher could you please change the date of our exams;*
2.      *Excuse me, ma'am, would you mind allow me to give my exam some other day*.

Figure 4.3 demonstrates a comparison of Chinese and Pakistani students' use of requesting strategies for situation 3.

The results of situation 3 are identical to the first two situations as Chinese students used conventionally indirect strategies (70%) as the dominant and preferred strategy type in this situation too. Pakistani students used 45% conventionally indirect and 55% direct strategy to request the teacher for a change of exam date. Moreover, both the groups did not use a non-conventionally indirect strategy in this situation too.
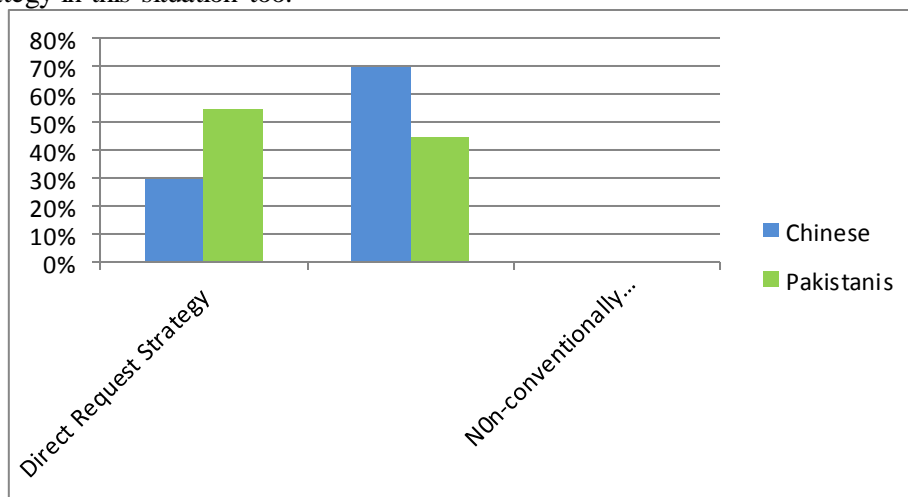


**Figure 4.3 Comparison of Participants' use of request strategies in English for S 3**

Table 4.4 shows the pattern of requesting strategies used by both Pakistani and Chinese students for situation 4 where they had to request their neighboring students to keep the volume of music low as they had their exams.

**Table 4.4 Patterns of Requesting strategies of Chinese and Pakistani Students for S4**

| Category | Strategy type | Pakistani Students | | | Chinese students | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Freq. | % | Total | Freq. | % | Total |
| Direct Request Strategy | Mood derivable | 9 | 45 | | 3 | 15 | |
| | Explicit performatives | - | -- | | - | - | |
| | Hedged performatives | - | - | 60% | - | - | 35% |
| | obligation statement | - | - | | - | - | |
| | want statement | 3 | 15 | | 4 | 20 | |
| Conventionally indirect request strategy | suggestory formula | 2 | 10 | 30% | - | - | 65% |
| | Query Preparatory | 4 | 20 | | 13 | 65% | |
| Non Conventionally indirect request strategy | Strong hints | 2 | 10 | 10% | - | - | - |
| | Mild hints' | - | - | | - | - | |

In this scenario, both the students shared equal status, familiarity, and minimum social distance. In this situation too, Chinese students mostly used conventionally indirect strategy (65%) and direct requests (35%). They did not use non-conventionally indirect requests.

*Examples:*
1.      *If you don't mind, slow down the music, please.*
2.      *Could you please keep it too low?*

Pakistani students' responses to this situation are somewhat different from previous situations. It was noted that 2 students used strong hints to request the other student to keep the voice of music low.

Examples:
1.      *It is difficult to concentrate on exams here.*

Moreover, Pakistani students also used suggestory statements (10%) as conventionally indirect requests.

*Example: Why don't you go somewhere else to listen to music.*

Still, most of the students used imperatives with politeness markers to request the neighbor to keep the music low. In situation 4, the dominant requesting strategy used by Pakistani students is mood derivable (45%) and then it is query preparatory (20%).

Examples:  1. *Slow down the volume.*
2.      *Keep it low.*

Figure 4.4 illustrates that Pakistani students used all three strategy types and Chinese students preferred to use conventionally indirect strategy to request in situation 4.
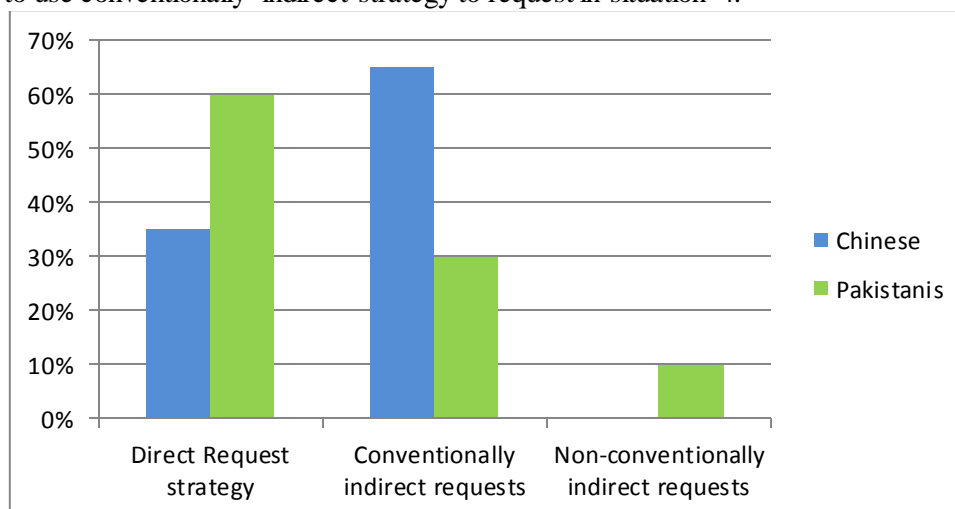


**Figure 4.4 Comparison of Participants' use of request strategies in English for S 4**

Table 4.5 shows the overall strategy types utilized by Pakistani and Chinese students for request speech act in English. The table shows that Pakistani students used all three strategy types in their requests according to different situations. But overall they were more direct in their requesting behavior as compared to Chinese. Chinese students, on the other hand, did not use non-conventionally indirect strategy in any of the situations and most of them preferred to use query preparatory (conventionally indirect request) strategy in different situations.

**Table 4.5 Overall Comparison of Requesting Strategy Types employed by Pakistani and Chinese students**

| Requesting Strategy type | Pakistani students | | Chinese Students | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Direct Request | 51 | 63.8% | 26 | 32.5% |
| Conventionally Indirect Requests | 27 | 33.75% | 54 | 67.5% |
| Non-conventionally Indirect Request Strategy | 2 | 2.5 | - | - |

Overall comparison of Chinese and Pakistani students' request strategies in different situations is shown in figure 4.5 below.
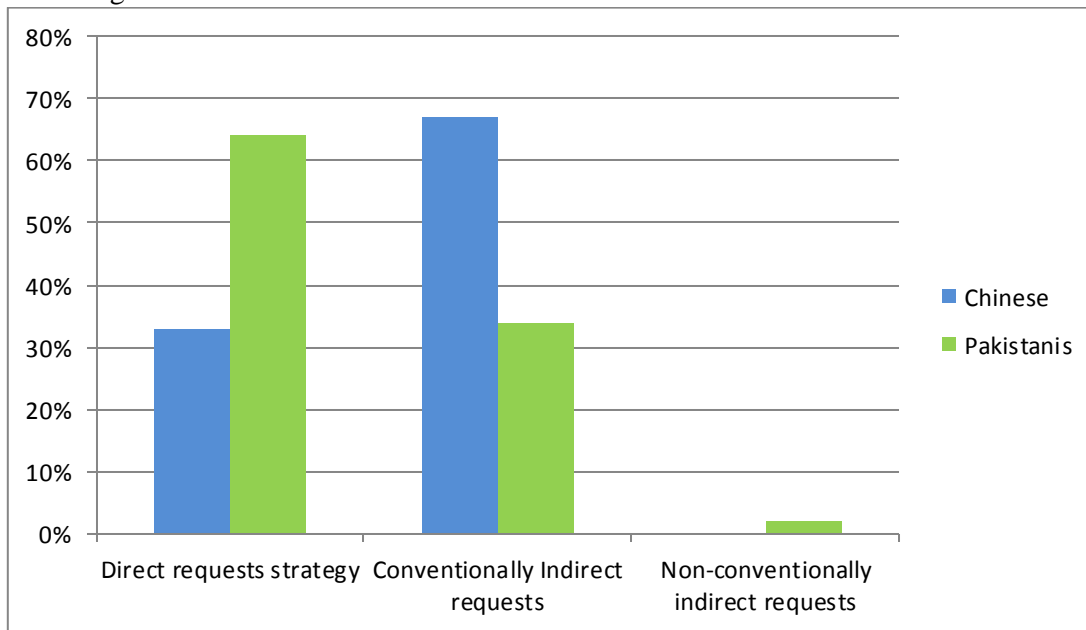


**Figure 4.5 Overall Comparison of Chinese and Pakistani students use of request strategies in English**

Figure 4.5 illustrates a detailed comparison of the use of request strategies by both the group of students. It shows that Pakistani students were more direct in their requests as compared to Chinese students and Pakistani students used all three strategies in different situations. Chinese students on the other hand mostly used conventional indirect strategy and they never utilized non-conventional indirect strategy in their requests.

Table 4.6 below shows the Pakistani and Chinese students' politeness strategies while requesting.

**Table 4.6 Politeness strategies used by Pakistani and Chinese Students**

| | Pakistani | | | | | | Chinese | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | Total | % | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | Total | % |
| Bald on record | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2.5 |
| Positive Politeness | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 14 | 17.25 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 15 | 18.75 |
| Negative Politeness | 17 | 15 | 16 | 12 | 60 | 75 | 16 | 17 | 16 | 14 | 63 | 78.75 |
| Off-record | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 2.5 | - | - | - | - | - | - |

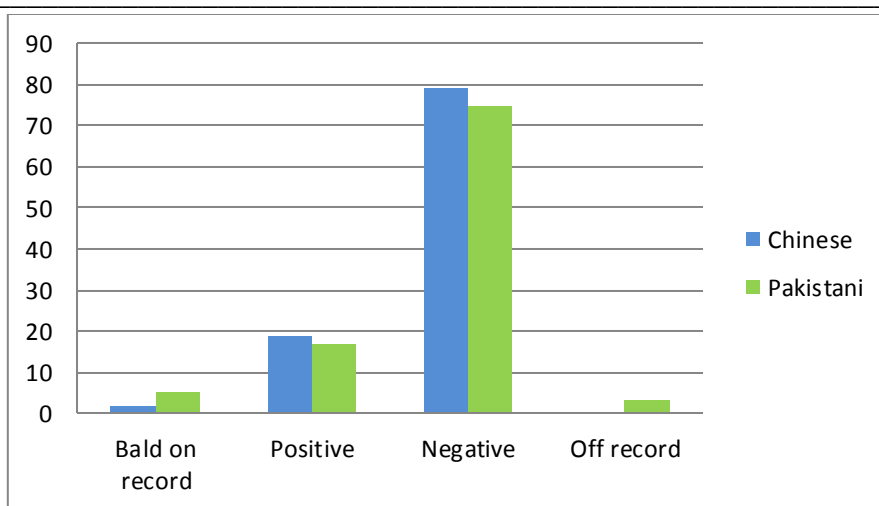A clear comparison of Pakistani and Chinese English speakers is presented in figure 4.6.

**Figure 4.6 Comparison of Politeness strategies used by Pakistani and Chinese Students**

As shown in table 4.6 and figure 4.6 above, both Chinese and Pakistani speakers mostly utilized negative politeness strategies in their requests. Pakistani students used about 75% negative and 17% positive politeness strategies in their requests. Chinese students used 79% negative and 19% positive politeness strategies to make requests in different situations. The use of bald on record strategy by Pakistani and Chinese students was 5% and 2.5% respectively. An example of the use of bald on record strategy by Pakistani students from real data is: *Give me your notes* and Chinese student said; *Replace this shirt with another one. This is not of my size.* An example of a positive politeness strategy by Chinese students is given below:

*Dear, happy to see you. I need to get your notes copied.*

It is clear from the figure shown above that both Chinese and Pakistani speakers made use of negative politeness strategy more frequently than any other politeness strategy.

The use of negative politeness strategy example from real data: *Can I borrow your notes, please? Could you please replace this shirt?*

Example of Pakistani student: *May I borrow your notes, please? Would you please change the date of the exams?*

It is important to note Pakistani students also used an off-record politeness strategy (2%) in their requesting patterns. Chinese students, however, did not use this politeness strategy. So, there are similarities in the politeness strategies employed by Chinese and Pakistani speakers of English in their requesting behavior. The results indicate that both Chinese and Pakistani speakers of English did not make use of off-record strategies frequently because they as EFL/ESL learners could not take into account the relative power, social status, and distance of the interlocutors while using their requesting strategies.

**Discussion**

This study compares Pakistani and Chinese students' (ESL and EFL speakers) use of request strategies. The study identifies similarities between Pakistani ESL learners and Chinese EFL learners in making use of query preparatory, and mood derivable as the preferred strategies for making requests in situations of different social distance, power, and familiarity between the interlocutors. However, their frequency and percentage of using these strategies are significantly different as 68% of Chinese students used query preparatory (conventionally indirect strategy). Contrarily 64% of Pakistani students used mood derivable and want statements (direct requests) as the preferred strategy for making requests to a friend, a teacher, and also a shopkeeper. Chinese students' strategies do not vary according to different social factors i.e. the level of formality, the difference in status, etc. Their requesting patterns with a teacher are similar to the way they interact with their friends, a shopkeeper, or a neighbor. However, Pakistani students used different strategies depending on the situation.

Moreover, the findings also pointed out that Chinese students used a more negative politeness strategy (79%) which is considered politer on the politeness scale than the positive politeness strategy. Pakistani students used a 75% negative politeness strategy in their requests. The findings indicate that there is a difference in the use of requesting strategies of both Chinese and Pakistani students

according to different communication situations i.e. friend-friend, student-teacher, buyer-shopkeeper, and student-neighbor.

These findings signify that Chinese are more polite and more indirect in their requesting patterns as compared to Pakistani students in different communication scenarios. In Pakistan, students are more close to their teachers, and the level of formality between them is different as a result students are more direct in their requests to their teachers though they used different politeness marker and affectionate terms to use positive politeness in their requests e.g. kindly, please, respected sir, etc.

These differences in behavior patterns of Chinese and Pakistani students may be rooted in their cross-cultural differences which might cause socio-linguistic and socio-pragmatic failures of these students in communication.

In addition, results point out that Chinese students as non-native speakers of English preferred to use conventionally indirect request strategies which have also been concluded in other studies on the issue (Zhang & Wang, 1997; Blum-Kulka et al., 1984; Haberman, Afzaal, Ghaffar, & Alfadda, 2020; Lin, 2008). In this study, the majority of the Chinese students used conventionally indirect strategy and non-conventional indirect requests which are also the findings of the studies conducted by Sun and Zhang (2008) and Blum-Kulka et al. (1984).

Chinese as EFL speakers have low English proficiency than Pakistani students who as ESL speakers have better English language proficiency. It was found that like native speakers, Pakistani students also used direct requests more frequently than conventional indirect requests. This difference in ESL and EFL speakers requesting strategies has also been pointed out by Kitao (1990) as he concluded in his study that there is no difference between the native and non-native speakers' perception of politeness. However, ESL students' politeness perception and use of strategies are more like native English speakers than that of EFL speakers. Moreover, Otcu and Zeyrek's (2008) also concluded that advanced learners were able to modify their requests in different situations whereas learners with low proficiency used fixed and similar requesting patterns, (Fadda, Afzaal, & Haberman, 2020).

**Conclusion**

It can be concluded that Pakistani and Chinese students as ESL and EFL speakers are similar in their requesting behavior as they both use direct and conventional indirect request strategies. However, Pakistani students' use of request and politeness strategies varies depending on their status and level of familiarity with the interlocutors. Chinese students' requesting patterns do not vary in different situations according to different social factors. They were found to be consistent in using conventionally indirect strategies in their requesting patterns in all situations. The findings of the study imply that linguistic proficiency and the understanding of socio-cultural norms of a society are required to make appropriate requests. Misuse of any of these aspects of language use may result in communication breakdowns in cross-cultural communication.

The findings of the stud have implications for teachers who have international students with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds as the appropriate requests will make these ESL and EFL learners pragmatically competent. The instructors need to consider the international students' culture to help them adjust to a new socio-cultural environment in the university.

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