Request formation by Greek-Cypriot learners of English and native speakers of British English: a cross-cultural perspective

Sorayia Fahmy

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REQUEST FORMATION BY GREEK-CYPRIOT LEARNERS OF ENGLISH AND NATIVE SPEAKERS OF BRITISH ENGLISH: A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE.

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF

THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY

SORAYIA FAHMY

MAY / 2006

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
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HAS BEEN APPROVED BY

Dr Paul Stevens
Thesis Committee Chair/Advisor__________________________________________________________________________
Affiliation: The American University in Cairo

Dr Yehia El Ezabi
Thesis Committee Reader/Examiner_______________________________________________________________________
Affiliation The American University in Cairo

Dr Fred Perry
Thesis Committee Reader/Examiner_______________________________________________________________________
Affiliation The American University in Cairo

________________________________________
Department Chair/ Program Director

Date Drug

________________________________________
Dean

Date
To

My Son Charis
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There were times when I thought that this thesis would never finally be completed. Working on a full-time basis, being a wife and a mother had almost made it impossible to actually find the courage to do it. In fact I wouldn’t have completed my thesis without the help and support of these people.

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ABSTRACT

In a world where the importance of borders may be declining, knowing what is appropriate behavior for the native speakers of a target language, and being able to apply this “appropriateness”, is of the utmost importance, if learners are to communicate effectively with native speakers (Wolfson, 1983). Second language (L2) cultural values and social relationships, knowing when to talk, what to say, what is conventional in a language, and what is not, how and to what extent to be indirect (Tannen, 1984) are only some of the considerations that learners should acknowledge when performing a speech act in a foreign language, and which determine whether they will succeed in communicating an intended pragmatic intent without facing the risk of pragmatic failure.

Cultural variation in speech act behavior and, consequently, pragmatic failure can cause not only serious communication breakdown between interlocutors, but also the birth of cultural and/or sexist stereotyping. Therefore, due to the magnitude of the consequences of pragmatic failure, the present study has attempted to examine how two linguistically and culturally different groups, namely female Greek-Cypriot learners of English and female native speakers of British English vary in their realization of requests, under varying degrees of social distance. Additionally, under the same social constraints, a comparison of request formation by advanced female Greek-Cypriot learners of English and female native speakers of Cypriot Greek were also carried out.

54 Discourse Completion Task (DCT) were completed and used, of which 18 comprised the group of native speakers of British English (BE), 18 constituted the group of Greek-Cypriot, native speakers of Greek performing in English (GE) and the remaining 18 belonged to the native Greek-Cypriots group performing in Greek (GG). Coding of the data was based on a
coding scheme devised by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) for their cross-cultural speech act realization project (CCSARP), according to which the Head act is classified into nine levels of directness whereas the various modifications seen can be seen as either internal or external.

After coding the Request Head Acts and the Request Internal and External Modifications, the total frequency rate of each of the categories was counted in order to show how common certain categories were across the three groups and for each social situation. Moreover, in light of the aforementioned investigation, and to detect any instances of learners’ transfer of their L1 patterns into L2 production, a comparison of GE’s realization patterns of the speech act of request with that in the Greek production data collected from the GG group, was also carried out. In addition to the quantitative analysis, a qualitative investigation of the data was also performed.

Quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data have shown that even though the BE and GE groups favored the same strategy types and modifications the extent and the way that these were used differed. Influenced by their L1 but also due to lack of confidence with regards to their English proficiency level, the GEs’ request realization did not always resemble that of the native speakers. It was therefore assumed that these discrepancies might be the cause of pragmatic failure and possible communication breakdown.
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ABBREVIATION OF TERMS.

CCSARP: Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project.

AE: female native speakers of British English.

GE: female Greek-Cypriot advanced learners of English.

GG: female native speakers of Greek.

SD: Social distance.

HSD: High social distance

MSD: Medium social distance.

LSD: Low social distance

L1: First language

L2: Second language

DCT: Discourse Completion Task
CHAPTER I.
INTRODUCTION

i. THE PROBLEM.

Many of those who have at some point in their life lived in a foreign country may have realized that in different societies, people speak “differently”. Not only do they employ a distinct linguistic code but most importantly, they seem to have a systematic, culture-specific way of using this code.

Speech communities differ from one another not only in the areas of syntax, phonology and lexicon, but also in the ways these structures are put to use (Wolfson, 1983) in the various profound and systematic ways of speaking, characterizing each speech community, which express an established set of cultural values, hierarchies, and social relationships (Wierzbicka, 1991). Along the same line of thinking, having the knowledge of what is appropriate speech behavior in a target language (TL) and being able to effectively communicate with its native speakers imply an understanding of both the language’s phonology, vocabulary and syntax on the one hand, and how all the above can be employed to effectively achieve a particular purpose on the other (Thomas, 1983).

Consequently, any attempt to interpret an utterance by merely translating the words in it, without considering that language’s pragmatic features, or any deviations from native speaker performance because of failure to apply the TL’s pragmatic conventions in L2 production, can lead to serious misunderstanding between interlocutors and, sometimes, complete communication breakdown. Of course, even though such pragmatic failures can also characterize native speakers’ speech, the possibility of them causing serious offence is relatively slim, since native speakers eventually recognize and repair any misunderstanding.
(Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986). In the case of non-native speakers however such misunderstandings are usually never recognized as such, and are therefore not repaired. On the contrary, while grammatical errors might only indicate a learner’s low proficiency level and are soon forgiven by the native language speaker, instances of pragmatic failure often reflect badly on the learners themselves, giving rise to unsupported generalizations such as the “obsequious Japanese” or the “insincere American” (Harlow, 1990). To make matters worse, the consequences of such stereotyping are limited not only to the personal level, but their gravity extends beyond the boundaries of the individual, thus affecting the global, inter-ethnic relations so very significant in an era of migrations, commerce and diplomacy (Tannen, 1984).

Because of the gravity of pragmatic failure and its possible impact on effective cross-cultural communication, the present study has attempted to explore the various ways in which one specific group of learners, female Greek-Cypriot learners of English, differ when using their target language from female British native English speakers. Specifically, the study has sought to explore the extent to which female Cypriot-Greek learners’ production of requests deviates from or matches that of female native speakers of British English, under varying degrees of social distance. In addition, it has tried to explore Greek-Cypriots’ request realization in Greek and how (or if) this compares to that produced the Greek-Cypriot learners of English.

ii. **SUMMARY RATIONALE OF THE PROBLEM.**

One of the most interesting, yet highly controversial issues in the area of pragmatics, is that of variability. The extent to which the various rules governing language in context (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984) differ across borders and linguistic communities, as well as the
different ways and extent to which this variance results in pragmatic failure, and possible communication breakdown, have been a matter of interest for a great number of linguists. In a world where the importance of borders may be declining, knowing what is appropriate behavior for the native speakers of a target language, and being able to apply this “appropriateness”, is of the utmost importance, if learners are to communicate effectively with native speakers (Wolfson, 1983). Second language (L2) cultural values and social relationships, knowing when to talk, what to say, what is conventional in a language, and what is not, how and to what extent to be indirect (Tannen, 1984) are only some of the considerations that learners should acknowledge when performing a speech act in a foreign language, and which determine whether they will succeed in communicating an intended pragmatic intent without facing the risk of pragmatic failure. As Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) suggest, even though all languages share Grice’s cooperative principle, the particular way the maxims of quality, quantity, manner and relation are employed and interpreted by members of different speech groups differs.

In other words, if a second language learner fails to adhere to the target language’s regulative maxims, thus producing speech acts that deviate from those uttered by native speakers, pragmatic failure occurs. According to Thomas (1983), there are two types of pragmatic failure. On the one hand, pragmalinguistic failure takes place when the pragmatic force of an utterance is different from that usually assigned to it by native speakers, sometimes due to a false transfer of speech act strategies from a learner’s L1 to the L2. On the other hand, sociopragmatic failure refers to the social conditions placed on language in use. As she explains, it results from the different assessments of various culturally specific values by speakers of different languages and the way these are applied in their realization of speech
acts. Some sources of such culture-clashes are taboos, degree of imposition and, most importantly for the present study, social distance.

Not only for its theoretical richness, but, most importantly, for its applied necessity (Tannen, 1984), the area of effective cross-cultural communication has inspired a great number of studies, especially in the area of speech acts and speech act patterns. Cultural variation in speech act behavior and, consequently, pragmatic failure, can cause not only serious communication breakdown between interlocutors, but also the birth of cultural and/or sexist stereotyping.

Therefore, due to the magnitude of the consequences of pragmatic failure, and based on an extended array of research indicating how nonnative speech act realization does indeed differ from that produced by native speakers (Blum-Kulka & Levenston, 1987; Fukushima, 1991; Kim, 1995; Le Pair, 1996; Saito & Beecken, 1997; Tannen, 1982), the present study has attempted to examine how two linguistically and culturally different groups, namely female Greek-Cypriot learners of English and female native speakers of British English vary in their realization of one speech act, that of requests.

iii. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

1. Under varying degrees of social distance, how do advanced Greek-Cypriot learners of English compare to native speakers of British English in their realizations of the speech act of requesting?

1a. How do the two groups compare in their realization of requests with regards to Strategy types?

1b. How do the two groups compare in their realization of requests with regards to choice of modifications?
2. Under varying degrees of social distance, how do advanced Greek-Cypriot learners of English compare to native speakers of Cypriot Greek in their realizations of the speech act of requesting?

iv. **THEORETICAL DEFINITIONS OF CONSTRUCTS AND VARIABLES.**

**Pragmatic failure:** the inability of the hearer (native English speaker) to recognize the force of the nonnative speaker’s utterance even though the latter expects the hearer to recognize it (i.e. pragmalinguistic), as well as the cultural clashes concerning what is appropriate social and sociolinguistic behavior in specific settings (sociopragmatic failure) (James, 1998). According to Thomas (1983), pragmalinguistic failure can take place for various reasons, including the inappropriate transfer by the second language learner of instances of their native language linguistic (phonological, lexical, syntactic) as well as pragmatic aspects (Saito & Beecken, 1997), the learners’ low proficiency level, or even teaching induced errors (Thomas, 1983).

**Level of directness:** Level of directness refers to the degree to which the literal interpretation of the speakers’ requests reflects the speakers' intended pragmatic intent. Accordingly, the more direct a request, the more transparent its meaning is, from its constituent words (Takahashi & Roitblat, 1994). Based on their evaluation of each request situation, including social context and speaker-hearer relationship, speakers choose to phrase their requests either indirectly or directly, based on whether they want to minimize or maximize the risk of threatening their interlocutors' positive or negative face, their need to be appreciated by others and to have the freedom to act as they desire (Francik and Clark, 1985).
Native language: Refers to the state of being either a native speaker of Cypriot-Greek or a native speaker of British English.

Social Distance: Social distance refers to a number of factors (power, status, degree of intimacy) that determine and reflect the social relationship between speaker and hearer in a given speech situation (Thomas, 1995). According to Goatly (1995) social distance can be seen as vertical, thus referring to the social status, power and age of the interlocutors, and horizontal, meaning the extent of solidarity and intimacy that characterizes their relationship. Specific reference to the use of this variable is made in the delimitations of the study.

v. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF CONSTRUCTS

Pragmatic failure: In the present study, pragmatic failure was assumed from the number of deviations between native speakers of English and Greek-Cypriot learners of English, in their realizations of requests both with regards to strategy type as well as external and internal modifications. Specifically, pragmalinguistic failure was assumed when native speakers of English and Greek-Cypriot learners of English deviated in their choice of Strategy types and Modifications. Sociopragmatic failure was assumed when the two groups differed in their evaluation of the social distance of a situation.

Level of directness: For the purpose of this study, level of directness was measured with the help of a coding scheme devised by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) for their Cross-Cultural Speech act Realization Project (CCSARP). Accordingly, the Head Act --i.e the part of the request sequence which can realize the specific speech act independently of other elements-- has been classified into nine different sentential forms, each carrying its own directness level and meaning. Each speaker’s choice of a particular form has revealed
his/her personal preference as to which directness level best fits each scenario and has consequently helped them achieve their requestive goal. Deviations between native English speakers and learners in the choice of request form and level were perceived as an instance of potential pragmatic failure.

**Native language:** Refers to the division of the participants into native speakers of English, native speakers of Greek performing in English and native speakers of Greek performing in Greek.

**Social Distance:** Social distance has been defined as the degree of intimacy between hearer and speaker in a given context, based on which the former has phrased her request. The speakers’ requests were formed based on whether the degree of intimacy between them and their hearers was high (LSD), low (HSD) or not clearly defined (MSD). Low social distance was assumed in situations where the hearer asked her roommate to mail a packet for her, when she asked to borrow her new dress, and where the hearer asked her friend of some tutoring. High social distance was measured when a student asked her professor for a make-up test, when the employee asked her manager for an extension and when a student asked to borrow a book from her professor. Finally, Medium social distance was measured when the speaker asked a new colleague to get her a sandwich, when she asked a new transfer student to let her work on some specific books by Shakespeare, and when the speaker asked a colleague to lend her notes on a seminar.

vii. **DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.**

**Pragmatic failure:** For the purpose of the present study, pragmatic failure referred to both pragmalinguistic (the inability of the hearer (native English speaker) to recognize the force of
the nonnative speaker’s utterance), and sociopragmatic failure (the cultural clashes concerning what is appropriate social and sociolinguistic behavior in specific settings), as described by Thomas (1983), taking place when a learner’s production of the speech act of requests deviates from that of native speakers, under the same social constraints.

**Social distance**: Social distance refers to factors like power, status, and degree of intimacy that determine and reflect the social relationship between speaker and hearer in a given speech situation (Thomas, 1995). For this thesis, social distance is equivalent to Goatly’s (1995) horizontal social distance, referring to the degree of familiarity between the interlocutors, as opposed to the social status and power relations between the interlocutors.

**Advanced female Greek-Cypriot learners of English**: The study has been limited to only advanced female learners of English who, at the time of the study, were enrolled in an undergraduate university program in Cyprus. To ensure the high proficiency level of the group, all participants were at least third-year students of English at the University of Cyprus.

**Female native British English and female native Greek-Cypriot speakers**: To achieve homogeneity in the study’s sample and valid comparable findings, all participants were undergraduate students working towards a degree at the time during which the study is conducted. Furthermore, to avoid linguistic differences between regions, all participants were students residing and studying in London.
CHAPTER II.

LITERATURE REVIEW

i. INTRODUCTION

In the world of the “global village”, as Hirschon (2001) states in her article on freedom, solidarity and obligation, the ways of promoting understanding across cultures are of critical importance. The fact that modern day technology has made geographical distance only a minute obstacle to people’s opportunities for cross cultural interactions, as well as the fact that multilingualism is now the norm even in so-called monolingual nations (Silva, 2000), have somehow made it useful that people are in a position to communicate with each other effectively. According to Wolfson (1989), the British colonial empire together with the technological power of the US have paved the way for English to be the language spoken by approximately 400 million native speakers, 125 million ESL speakers and approximately one billion nonnative speakers who use it as a second or foreign language (ELLIS, 2002).

However, the widespread use of English is probably one of the few things that actually have a universal status in relation to the rules of speaking. Research has shown that the norms that govern what people say, when they say it and how, vary considerably within speech communities, thus making the job of the foreign language learner even harder (Wolfson, 1989). Not only do they have to learn the new language’s phonology, syntax and vocabulary, but they must also be able to use this knowledge effectively. However, this is where the real danger lies. Learners will try to employ their acquired knowledge according to the norms and values of their own language and in this way fall into the pitfall of intercultural miscommunication. As Mei (2002) explains in her study on contextualizing intercultural communication, “miscommunication is the result of […] applying culture-specific rules to
the interpretation of a single message” (p.79). People from different cultural backgrounds, influenced by their own cultural norms and rules of speaking, end up attaching different meanings to the same message (Mei, 2002). For example, as Wolfson (1989) says, people’s different socio-cultural backgrounds tend to have an influential effect on speech as well as on other sorts of social behaviour, which in turn affect their speech production. Thus, when people coming from different backgrounds interact, they unconsciously judge one another based on their own language’s sociolinguistic rules and social value systems, thereby causing misunderstandings, and consequently communication breakdowns. Each interlocutor’s values, beliefs and attitudes, their background knowledge, classroom knowledge, as well as their linguistic and non-verbal codes (Kleifgen, 1989), come into conflict with each other and lead to intercultural misunderstandings, the adoption of stereotypes, shock, contempt or even serious insult (Wolfson, 1989).

Consequently, the more we know about each other’s cultures and rules of speaking, the more hope there will be in building tolerance and understanding among people. Being aware of cultural diversity, and most importantly knowing each other’s linguistic patterns will make interaction smoother, and will eventually eliminate instances of stereotyping and negative judgment. As Wolfson (1989) puts it, both native and non-native speakers must finally recognize that “there are patterns of behavior which are neither better nor worse than one’s own, but simply different” (p.34).

ii. Pragmatics

It goes without saying that knowing a language presupposes learning the language system, that is, the linguistic code that will act as the vehicle to communication. However, this is not the only precondition to becoming an effective speaker of a language. Of equal importance
is knowing how to use this linguistic code in order to express one’s intended meaning successfully. One must be taught how to employ the code of the L2 in order to avoid going back to his/her L1 for guidance, and thus producing contextually inappropriate forms that will in turn be criticized by the native speakers (Geis & Harlow, 1996). If learners are not taught how and when to use the multitude of registers and styles that exist in a target language, then their utterances will differ from those produced by the native speakers, and their interactions might result in a breakdown.

iii. **DEFINITIONS OF PRAGMATICs**

Pragmatics is a linguistic approach that “takes into account the full complexity of its cognitive, social and cultural (...) functioning in the lives of human beings” (Verschueren, Ostman & Blommaert, 1995: 13). It is the study of meaning in relation to the context in which people use language (Kasper, 1989; Trosborg, 1995). According to Verschueren et al (1995), the notion of pragmatics is directly related to the property of variability (i.e. the range of choices that one has available), negotiability (i.e. the range of choices that learners have are not made mechanically) and finally, adaptability (the property of language that allows speakers to make their choices). More relevant to the present study is of course the area of interlanguage pragmatics, which refers to the study of the use and the acquisition of second language linguistic patterns by nonnative speakers (Byon, 2004; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993), as well as the notion of pragmatic failure, which may lead to intercultural communication breakdown.

iv. **PRAGMATIC FAILURE**

According to Thomas (1983), pragmatic failure is the hearer’s inability to recognize the speaker’s intended force of an utterance, even though the speaker wanted him/her to do so.
Pragmatic failure can be divided into what she calls pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failure. Of course, it is appropriate here to mention that pragmatic failure is not limited to nonnative speakers’ use of language, as it also occurs among native speakers. However, since the aim of the present study is to investigate instances of pragmatic failure taking place in native-nonnative interactions, the definitions of the relevant terms were given in such a way as to further explicate this aim.

Pragmalinguistic knowledge is the ability of an L2 speaker to assign the same force as assigned by the native speaker. Therefore, in pragmalinguistic failure, the learner fails to get his/her meaning across because the communicative conventions used by native and non-native speakers differ (Wolfson, 1989). The second type of pragmatic failure takes place when a learner lacks sociopragmatic knowledge, being the ability to know “what to say and who to say it to”. The failure takes place when native speaker and learner have different perceptions as to what is socially appropriate linguistic behavior. A distinction similar to that of Thomas (1983) is the one between sociocultural miscommunication and grammatical miscommunication. The former leads to misunderstanding due to sociolinguistic and pragmatic transfer on behalf of the speaker and corresponds to Thomas’s (1983) pragmatics failure. The latter is due to the interlocutors’ differing grammars (Gass & Varonis, 1991), an area Thomas does not deal with.

However, regardless of how one names the two facets of pragmatic failure, the point is that the ability to produce appropriate utterances is achieved only when the learner combines both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge. In fact, effective communication is achieved when learners strike a balance between the various aspects of communicative competence instead of enhancing one at the expense of another (Trosborg, 1995).
v. COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

One of the greatest misconceptions about language lies in the difference between linguistic and communicative competence, the point being that knowing how to produce correct sentences does not amount to knowing a language (Wolfson, 1989). Communicative competence, in other words, involves both adhering to the rules of grammar and adhering to the rules of propriety—i.e. knowing what to say, to whom, and when to say it. According to Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence consists of four main components, namely linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. In other words, it involves knowledge and skill: knowledge of the various aspects of language, as well as the skill or the ability to use that knowledge in the best possible way to achieve your communicative intent.

Specifically, linguistic competence refers to the ability to use the linguistic code of a language, whereas sociolinguistic competence is the ability to employ the appropriate utterance in the appropriate context. Discourse competence refers to the ability to combine sentences into unified spoken and written text, and finally, strategic competence enables a speaker to use certain communication strategies to overcome any problems that may arise due to lack of fluency or gaps in knowledge (Canale & Swain, 1980). All the above are essential in achieving effective communication, be that in inter or intra-cultural communication. Even in speakers with a high level of linguistic competence, possible lack of sociopragmatic competence can cause far more serious consequences than the other way round. Even though native speakers, as Crandall and Basturkmen (2004) state, are able to identify—and consequently forgive—grammatical errors, they are less likely to react similarly to instances
of pragmatic errors, in which case the gravity of the communication breakdown is far more serious.

vi. **Cross-cultural Miscommunication**

It is generally believed that the basic reason behind cross-cultural miscommunication is the fact that languages and speech communities are heterogeneous. However, the real cause behind it is people’s false belief that the world of languages is homogeneous, sharing the same (or at least similar) cultural meanings. (Blommaert, & Verschueren, 1998). As Bulcaen and Blommaert --in Blommaert, & Verschueren, (1998)-- explain, a study on conversations between Flemish welfare workers and second-generation Turkish migrant women showed that the former’s faulty perception that the women spoke fluent Dutch and their belief that whatever conflicts that arose in the conversation were unrelated to their linguistic proficiency resulted in the misunderstandings being attributed to the women’s character or intentions.

Of course, the consequences of the misunderstandings are not always so serious, since the interlocutors might become aware of them very quickly and rescue the conversation in no time. In same-language societies or subgroups, people might experience communication breakdowns due to differences related to social class, level of extroversion, proficiency level in the language (Dewaele, 2001), or gender (Tannen, 1982). Whatever the reason though, the consequences are often not beyond repair. As Garcia and Otheguy (1989) argue, although miscommunication occurs among matched groups, it does not have any social meaning; its effects are often harmless.

On the other hand, in cases where conversations take place between people from different linguistic backgrounds, possible misunderstandings can have very serious effects that may
have a projection on the self, and can even generate stereotyping and discrimination both on a personal and on an ethnic level (Tzanne, 1999). In cases like this, where we have differing linguistic and social backgrounds, pragmatic errors are seldom attributed to a low proficiency level and the possibilities of communication failure are greater. Another point that increases the gravity of sociopragmatic errors is the fact that to a large extent, sociopragmatic rules are subconscious and their existence is only discovered by native speakers when they are broken (Wolfson, 1989). So when this happens, they are not as tolerant as when they are faced with a grammatical error or when a learner mispronounces a word.

Specifically, a hearer can establish a communicative intent that is different from the one assigned by the speaker for various reasons, including misunderstanding the S’s illocutionary force (i.e. his pragmatic intent to perform a request, a complaint or a compliment), misunderstanding his interpersonal force (thus establishing a relationship that is quite different from the one that the S had intended), failing to distinguish between the anticipatory and the ulterior goal of the S’s conversation, failing to decipher the topic, or even failing to realize the topic shifts that take place during the conversation (Tzanne, 1999). All these factors, together with issues like the participants’ roles and relation, the setting, or even the channel, play a decisive role in communication breakdown.

vii. **Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory**

Related to effective cross-cultural communication is Brown and Levinson’s (1987) Politeness Theory. They put forward a theory according to which in social interactions, each person is motivated by the need to satisfy his/her positive or negative face wants. “Face”, they explain, is the public image that every member of each society has and wishes to maintain but can be lost if not constantly attended to in social interaction. (Brown, & Levinson, 1987). “Face”
consists of two social claims, positive and negative face. Positive face indicates a certain self-image (Svennevig, 1999), the need to establish a bond with the interlocutor, the desire to be liked and approved of (Diamond, 1996; Wolfson, 1989). On the other end of the continuum, negative face shows our desire not to be imposed upon (Sifianou, 1995; Tzanne, 1999). Specifically, we can show positive politeness by expressing compliments to our hearer, by offering gifts, by considering him/her part of the group, or by simply being cooperative and friendly. On the other hand, negative politeness can be expressed by assuring our interlocutor that one does not have any intention of disturbing him/her or of interfering with his/her freedom to act in any way s/he wishes (Wolfson, 1989).

So, politeness is, in other words, a constant struggle to adhere to our interlocutor’s face without losing our own. And in that, it resembles Watts’s (1989) politic linguistic behavior in that verbal interaction requires participants to negotiate meaning in such a way that their self-image is promoted and any serious threats to the conversation or to their own standing in community are not being jeopardized. As Watts defines it, politic linguistic behavior is a socio-culturally determined behavior that aims at maintaining a balance in personal relationships during interactions. As he explains, any instability or interference with this balance may cause a breakdown in communication. Therefore, speakers employ their knowledge of the community and of the world, and in combination with the various linguistic strategies that they have in their disposal, they try to achieve political effectiveness to the maximum of their abilities (Watts, 1989).

Going back to the notion of miscommunication, misunderstanding is a threatening situation with regards to both the hearer and the speaker. As Tzanne (1999) explains, when a hearer misinterprets the speaker’s communicative intention, the hearer’s face-wants to be liked and
admired are threatened, because if the hearer thinks that the speaker is making a negative evaluation or accusation about him/her, then his positive face is seriously jeopardized. On the other hand, misunderstanding speaker meaning can threaten the speaker’s negative face since it hampers his/her need to be expressed unimpeded in communication (Tzanne, 1999). According to Tzanne (1999), if the speaker chooses to repair the misunderstanding, s/he runs the risk of saving his/her own face by simultaneously threatening the hearer’s face anew, by exposing their previous failure to interpret the meaning correctly. So, in order to achieve smooth and successful communication, interlocutors must struggle between consideration for self and other, until the conflict is resolved satisfactorily for both parties (Trosborg, 1995; Tzanne 1999).

viii. **CRITICISM OF BROWN AND LEVINSON’S THEORY**

Even though Brown and Levinson (1987) consider the notion of face to be universal, some researchers have claimed that their politeness theory has been formed according to the Western perspective and is therefore biased towards the European Anglo-Saxon culture (Ide, 1989; Matsumoto, 1988; Wierzbicka, 1991). Asian –and especially Japanese- linguists have argued that Politeness Theory fails to explain the Japanese honorific system, neglecting therefore to show the emphasis of the language in what Japanese call *wakimae* (i.e. discernment). According to Matsumoto (1988) and Ide (1989), in contrast to Western societies which favor volition when practicing polite behavior –i.e. the choice of operating verbal strategies such as minimizing impositions, seeking agreement etc-, the Japanese behave in such a way as to show the interlocutors’ status differences both verbally and non verbally, by using honorifics, pronouns, address forms etc. In other words, the Japanese polite language system emphasizes human relationships instead of ways to minimize imposition and saving face (Ide, 1989; Matsumoto, 1988).
However, not all Asian researchers agree with the aforementioned arguments concerning Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory. Fukada and Asato (2004), in their own analysis of Japanese honorifics, argue that the aforementioned politeness theory is indeed in accord with Japanese society. Following their line of argument, the two researchers claim that regardless of whether an act is intrinsically face threatening or not, when someone of high status is involved in a conversation, distance and power are automatically given high values and consequently, the weightiness of the act itself becomes high as well, thus becoming a FTA according to Brown and Levinson’s model (Fukada, & Asato, 2004).

With regards to the Greeks and the present study, one can see from the findings that indirectness is not the core strategy to minimize a face threatening act (FTA) nor are the means to communicate deference, directness, or solidarity the same across language and cultures. For example, the Greek culture with its emphasis on intimacy and solidarity between in-group members uses linguistic devices like diminutive to minimize FTAs. At the same time, when faced with situations that require a speaker to show deference, the plural of politeness is employed. In general, as Meier (1995) argues, “politeness can be said to be universal only in the sense that every society has some sort of norms for appropriate behavior…” (p.338)

ix. SITUATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Directly related to the notion of Politeness and people’s linguistic behavior are the variables of Social distance, Power and the Size of Imposition that characterize the context of each conversation. As Diamond (1996) explains, the way we communicate on any occasion reflects the social structures of the situation, as well as the relationships of the interlocutors.
The linguistic choices made are measured based on the power relations between Speaker and Hearer, the degree of familiarity between the two and, finally, the level of imposition that the requested act will place on the hearer. Power and familiarity are the two dimensions of social relations, as these are mentioned by Svennevig (1999). They are the two sides of Social Distance, with one representing the Vertical - Power and the other the Horizontal - Solidarity axes.

To further explain the two axes, Vertical Social distance refers to the notion of power, status of social rank that a person might have over another, which in turn might give him/her the flexibility to exert influence on the speaker (Leichty & Applegate, 1991). On the other hand, horizontal social distance is equivalent to terms like solidarity, closeness, familiarity, and intimacy (Spencer-Oatey, 1996).

A very interesting note regarding these variables and Social Distance in particular, has to do with Wolfson’s (1989) Bulge Theory. Accordingly, the two extremes of speech behavior show very similar and predictable speech patterns, as opposed to the middle section, the bulge, which shows marked differences. The relationship between status unequals on the one hand and intimate friends on the other shows similar speech patterns in that their relation is somehow fixed and well defined, as opposed to, let’s say, potential friends, whose relationship is relatively loose and “requires more care and negotiation in the interaction” (Trosborg, 1995). Predictable and fixed speech patterns are also found in so called standard situations, where the relationship between speaker and hearer is fixed and unambiguous. These situations also allow for greater directness, and are less face-threatening than the non-standard ones (Kasper, 1989). This is evident in Pavlidou’s (2001) study on classroom interaction in the Greek high school. As she noticed, due to the standardized form of
classroom interaction, and the fixed relationship of the teacher vis-à-vis the students, and even though teachers and students are neither strangers nor intimates, their relationship was seen to be relatively well defined and fixed (Pavlidou, 2001).

x. **Speech Act Theory**

In discussing Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory, we have seen that almost all verbal activities, all acts hide risks regarding the speaker/hearer’s positive or negative face (Sifianou, 1995). However, some of these acts are intrinsically face threatening and are therefore called face threatening acts. Yet, what are face threatening acts? What do we call speech acts in general?

As Verchueren, Ostman and Blommaert (1995) state, in speech act theory, “by viewing utterances as acts, we consider the production of words or of sentences as the performance of speech acts and we posit the speech act as the unit of linguistic communication” (p.497).

According to Austin (1962), acts can be divided into locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary. Specifically, locution refers to the act of saying something, whereas illocution focuses on the way a speaker uses an utterance (Verchueren, et al., 1995), be that as a promise, a request, an order, and so on. According to Austin (1962), the illocutionary acts intend to secure an uptake, to produce a conventional effect and finally, to invite a response or a sequel. The third facet of the speech act refers to the act brought about after the speaker expresses what s/he wants: the perlocutionary act.

Slightly different from the above distinction is that proposed by Searle. According to him, acts are divided into an utterance act (i.e. a speech act that consists of a string of words; the act of saying something), a propositional act (i.e. the act that a speaker performs when
referring in an utterance) and an illocutionary act (i.e. the act of stating, questioning, denying). Furthermore, another classification by Searle (1976) that should be mentioned is related to the illocutionary purpose of the speech act. Based on acts’ communicative functions, Searle divides them into five classes: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations. The present study will be dealing with one specific kind of directive, namely that of request.

xi. The Speech Act of Requests

According to Searle (1969), a request is a directive speech act, which aims at getting the hearer to act as per the desire of the speaker, since the speaker knows that the hearer is able to do the specific act. The act is usually an imposition on the hearer, and for this reason it is also considered face threatening. Due to their threatening nature, requests require learners to be very fluent in the target language, both linguistically and pragmatically (Byon, 2004). Consequently, nonnative speakers can easily fall into the pitfall of cross-cultural communication breakdown due to their lack of appropriateness. Actually, this high face threatening nature of the specific speech act is what prompted the researcher to investigate it in the present study. It is believed that it is essential to master the act in order to be able to participate effectively in everyday communication, both at the social and the business levels. As Trosborg (1995) explains, realization of these acts presupposes knowledge of the social rules as well as interactive skills. Therefore, neglecting to acquire these skills will most probably hamper interaction and cause instances of communication failure.

A request may vary in terms of strategy type and level of directness. Specifically, in their study, Blum-Kulka et al (1989) identified three levels of directness: Direct, Conventionally indirect and Non-conventionally indirect (see Table 1). Specifically, Direct strategies refer to
strategies where the speaker’s intent is obvious from the locution (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000). Use of grammatical mood, performative verbs, obligation and want statements define a request speech act as being Direct (see Table 1, Types 1-5). In the second level of Conventionally Indirect requests, the interpretation is facilitated by the use of suggestory formulae or reference to preparatory conditions (see Table 1, Types 6-7). Finally, the non-conventionally indirect strategies, Types 8 and 9, refer to the use of strong or mild hints that require a lot more effort on behalf of the hearer to demystify the speaker’s pragmatic intent.

Table 1

Levels of Directness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Types</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Mood derivable</td>
<td>The illocutionary force is derived from the grammatical mood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. Do as I say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Performatives</td>
<td>The illocutionary intent to make a request is explicitly named by a relevant verb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. I am asking you to do as I say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Hedged performatives</td>
<td>The illocutionary verb is modified by some modal verb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. I would like you to do as I say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Obligation statements</td>
<td>The illocutionary force is derivable from the semantic meaning of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. You will have to do as I say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Want statements</td>
<td>The illocutionary force is derivable from the semantic meaning of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. I wish you would do as I say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Suggestory formulae</td>
<td>The illocutionary intent is phrased as a suggestion by means of a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. How about doing as I say?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Query preparatory</td>
<td>Reference to preparatory conditions for the feasibility of the request:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. Could you do as I say?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Strong hints</td>
<td>The locution refers to relevant elements of the request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. Good boys listen to their mothers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Mild Hints</td>
<td>The locution can be interpreted as a request by the context or the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. There’s no time to loose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Rundquist (1999), indirectness exists whenever a message conveyed is not directly encoded by the syntactic and the lexical content of the utterance. In the case of speech acts, as she explains, a speaker says one thing and means what s/he says, but at the same time, means something else. Actually, one of the properties of indirect speech acts is that of the multiplicity of meanings, since the former always have more than one illocutionary force, with one level of meaning prevailing over another (Clark, 1998). As Clark (1998) explains, there are also conventions that affect the production of indirect acts, namely, conventions of means and conventions of form. Conventions of means refer to the semantic devices used to perform certain speech acts, whereas conventions of form have to do with the wording of the speech acts. Finally, another property of indirectness is the fact that speech acts are phrased indirectly because there is always a reason: some speakers wish to be polite, some want their hearers to perform an act, and others want their listeners to believe that something is true. Whatever the case, speakers always have goals, and in their attempt to achieve these goals, they choose to employ specific indirect speech acts (Clark, 1998).

xii. **Politeness Theory and the Greeks.**

The notions of politeness, pragmatic diversity and indirectness take on a very special significance when it comes to the Greek culture and language. As we can see from the existing bibliography, the Greeks’ way of life as well as the Greek language value mainly positive politeness (Sifianou, 1995), as opposed to some other Western cultures’ preference for negative politeness.

Specifically, as Hirschon (2001) explains, in order to interpret aspects of politeness phenomena in Greece, one has to juxtapose the notion of honor and obligation to that of face; the honor that is born from belonging to a specific group/family and the obligation that one
has in preserving this intimacy/closeness with the other members of the group. According to the Greek worldview, the emphasis placed on freedom and autonomy results in a concern with hierarchy and with asserting one’s position with respect to others. She explains that importance placed by the Greeks on personal autonomy should not be confused with the atomistic idea of the individual, but should be understood in light of collective identity prevailing in the Greek society (Hirschon, 2001).

Of course, one can argue that Greeks are different from Greek-Cypriots --who are in fact the focus of the present study-- since we are referring to two different cultures and also, two distinct linguistic varieties. However, one study that was carried out on the politeness differences between Greek-Cypriots raised in Cyprus and Cypriots who have studied in the UK shows that in many cases, the characteristics attributed to the Greek-Cypriots were similar to those attributed to the Greeks. According to Georgiadou’s (1997) study, in conversation with the UK-Cypriots, the Greek-Cypriots were seen as rude, aggressive and dogmatic, emphasizing the importance of “Ksenos – Dikos”, of outsider-insider. This distinction is very important for the Greek culture in general –including the Greek-Cypriot culture—since in in-group relations, interlocutors are addressed more directly than in English, without fearing to impose on them (Georgiadou, 1997; Hirschon, 2001; Sifianou, 1992).
CHAPTER III.

METHODODOLOGY

1. PARTICIPANTS.

Even though a total of 60 DCTs were handed out to the participants, only 54 were fully completed and were thus used in the study. Of these, 18 participants comprised the group of native speakers of British English (BE), 18 participants constituted the group of Greek-Cypriot, native speakers of Greek performing in English (GE) and 18 volunteers comprised the group of native Greek-Cypriots performing in Greek (GG). To avoid any problems in the interpretation of the data due to male-female speech variation (Kim & Bresnahan, 1996; Maltz & Borker, 1982), only female production was examined. Furthermore, to minimize variation within the sample, only undergraduate students participated in the study. For groups GG and GE, volunteers were students from the University of Cyprus. Since GEs’ English proficiency level needed to be high enough to allow them to perform in English, they were undergraduate students working towards their degree in English language and literature. At this point, it should be mentioned that no placement test was given to the GE participants to ensure that their English proficiency level was indeed advanced. However, it was assumed that their English was high enough to participate in the study based on the fact that they had been majoring in English Language and Literature at the University for at least two years. The group of BE volunteers consisted of British undergraduate students living in the UK who were contacted with the help of a teacher already residing in London. To achieve homogeneity, all BE participants were living and studying in London. For, both locations, Cyprus and the UK, those administering the questionnaire were English teachers with previous experience in conducting research studies and administering questionnaires.
ii. **Instrument**

The instrument used in the study was a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) consisting of twelve scenarios representing socially differentiated situations. Based on previous research (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989), it was expected that this number of items would be sufficient for the purpose of the present study. After designing the questionnaire in English, and translating it into Greek, the researcher had the Greek version translated back into English to ensure that there were no discrepancies between the two versions of the instrument. Participants were asked to respond to each scenario by providing the speech act of request. Items #1, #2, #4, #5, #6, #8, #9, #11, and #12, aimed at investigating varying degrees of the variable “social distance” (SD). Specifically, scenarios #1, #5, and #8 were designed to measure participants’ responses when SD is high (HSD). Scenarios #4, #6, and #11 looked into medium social distance (MSD) and finally, items #2, #9, and #12, probed participants’ responses when variable SD was low (LSD) (see Table 2). This decision to examine the whole spectrum of social distance, HSD, MSD and LSD, aimed at investigating the bulge effect (Wolfson, 1988): the differences in speech behavior between people, not only when they are faced with the more fixed relationships in the two extremes of the SD spectrum but also when they find themselves somewhere in the middle, with intimacy levels between interlocutors being neither high nor low, but unspecified.

Items #3, #7, and #10 functioned as distractors eliciting the production of speech acts other than the one aimed at, such as compliment (#3), refusal (#7) and apology (#10). These distractors were not analyzed, but aimed at diverting the participants' attention from the purpose of the study.

In terms of content, all situations depicted in the instrument referred to matters that were expected to be familiar to speakers across Western cultures. Each questionnaire was preceded
by instructions asking participants to respond to the different situations as naturally and as spontaneously as possible. Additionally, before completing the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to write down their nationality, their place of residence as well as their year of study. This information helped the researcher ensure the homogeneity of participants and avoid any differences amongst the respondents that might influence the outcome of the study.

Table 2.
Social Situations and Social Distance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Distance</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Social Situations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High SD</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student asks for a make-up test from professor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Employee asks for an extension from the manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Student asks for a book from professor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium SD</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Speaker asks a new colleague to buy her a sandwich.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Student asks a new transfer student to let her work on one of the two books on Shakespeare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Speaker asks a colleague she does not know to lend her the notes she took on a seminar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low SD</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Speaker asks her roommate, Maria, to mail her packet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Speaker asks her friend for tutoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Speaker asks to borrow her roommate’s new dress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distractors</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Apology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Refusal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Refusal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iii. **PROCEDURES**

The English questionnaire was distributed to the BE and GE groups, whereas the Greek version was given to the GG participants. Since participants for the present study should have been undergraduate students, GG and GE volunteers were given the questionnaire at the University of Cyprus. In the case of the GE group, volunteers consisted of students from the department of English language and literature. Permission was granted by the Head of the English Language Department at the University of Cyprus to administer the questionnaire to the students in class. Regarding the BE group, participants were administered the
questionnaire in the UK with the help of a fellow teacher at the University of London. BE participants were solicited randomly and their participation was voluntary. Random solicitation also applied to the GG group from the University of Cyprus. For both groups, administrators approached the students during the breaks and after getting their permission, gave them the questionnaire.

Before filling out the questionnaire, the administrators made sure that the participants chosen fulfilled the basic criteria for participation: the GG volunteers needed to be female native Greek-Cypriot speakers working towards a degree, the BE participants had to be female undergraduate students who were native speakers of British English, and the GE group needed to be female Greek-Cypriot, third-year students of English. For all three groups, the questionnaire administrators explained to the volunteers that it was very important to complete the introductory section before responding to the scenarios given, and pointed out that all responses to the items should approximate those given in oral speech. The purpose of the study was not disclosed. Volunteers were asked to complete and return the questionnaire on the same day. Data collection took approximately three weeks.

iv. **DATA ANALYSIS.**

Coding of the data was based on a coding scheme devised by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) for their cross-cultural speech act realization project (CCSARP). According to this analytical framework, the part of the request sequence, which can realize the specific speech act independently of other elements, the Head Act, is classified into nine levels of directness (see Table 1.). For coding purposes, these nine levels were then grouped into three main directness categories, namely direct strategies, consisting of levels 1 to 5, conventionally indirect strategies, consisting of levels 6 and 7, and finally non-conventionally indirect strategies, comprising strategies 8 and 9 (Blum-Kulka, at al, 1989). In the same manner, both
internal and external modifications were also coded, as per the scheme provided by the CCSARP (see Table 3). Internal modifications include linguistic devices within the request proper, whereas external modifications consist of elements adjacent to the request proper.

Table 3
Internal and External Modifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Modifications</th>
<th>Internal Modifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Downgraders</strong></td>
<td><strong>Syntactic Downgraders</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interrogative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. Could you do what I say?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. I wonder if you wouldn’t mind doing what I said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. I wanted to ask you to do what I say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Embedded “if” clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. I would appreciate it if you could do what I say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consultative devices: the speaker bids for the hearer’s cooperation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. Do you think I could borrow your car today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understaters: the speaker minimizes the requested action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. Do you think I could borrow your car for a bit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hedges: The speaker avoids specification regarding the request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. It would really help if you did something with the kitchen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Downtoner: the speaker minimizes the impact of the request by signaling the possibility of non-compliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. Can you perhaps drive me to school today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Politeness Device</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. May I use your pen, please?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lexical-phrasal Downgraders</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upgraders</strong></td>
<td>Intensifiers: the speaker over-represents the reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. Clean up this mess, it’s disgusting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expletives: the speaker explicitly expresses negative emotional attitude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. You still have not cleaned up that bloody mess.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Modifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alerters:</strong> attention getters, titles, names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Excuse me, can you give me a ride please?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking on availability: the speaker checks if the precondition necessary for compliance holds true.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Are you going towards Ledras? If so, can you give me a ride?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a pre-commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Could you do me a favor? Can you give me a ride?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetener: the speaker expresses exaggerated appreciation towards the hearer’s ability to comply with the request and thus lowers the imposition involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. You have such a beautiful car. Could you give me a ride?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disarmer: the speaker indicates the awareness of the potential offense and possible refusal of the request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Excuse me, I hope you don’t think I’m forward but, would you like to go out with me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost minimizer: The speaker indicates recognition of the imposition involved when complying with the request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Could you give me a lift, if you are going my way, since I have missed the bus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounder: the speaker gives justifications for the request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Can you give me a lift to school? My car is in the garage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With regards to external modifications, in addition to the ones found in the CCSARP the researcher added the category of Promises. This label covers both overt promises as well as covert promises –e.g. Time Specification-- functioning as a facilitator in getting the hearer’s request accepted. At this point it should be mentioned that in some cases, certain linguistic choices did not exactly fit under certain labels of modifications. However, according to the researcher whenever a linguistic device functions as a specific kind of modification, this may be placed under the more general term. This occurred in the case of sweeteners where participants employed various types of linguistic devices which did not necessarily fit the profile of a sweetener in the strict sense but helped them achieve their goal: to sweeten the hearer and consequently obtain compliance.

After coding the Request Head Acts and the Request Internal and External Modifications, the total frequency rate of each of the categories was counted in order to show how common certain categories were across the three groups and for each social situation. Additionally, in the case of Strategy Types, these frequency rates were also presented in percentages, to help view the tendencies of each group with regards to their request realization pattern under the three different levels of Social distance. Calculation in percentages of Internal and External Modifications was not possible due to the small number of data specimens on the one hand, and also because of the many different combinations of modifications employed by the participants in their requests. The researcher believes that presenting these combinations in percentages would not yield any significant findings about the study groups, since the data specimens collected were not large enough to ensure any significant or evident tendencies. Moreover, in light of the aforementioned investigation, and to detect any instances of learners’ transfer of their L1 patterns into L2 production, a comparison of GE’s realization patterns of the speech act of request with that in the Greek production data collected from the GG group was also carried out.
In addition to the quantitative analysis, a qualitative investigation of the data was also carried out, since research has shown that when native to nonnative speaker production is compared, quantitative differences are limited to only specific dimensions, such as perspective and/or amount and type of external and internal modifications (Blum-Kulka & Levenston, 1987). During this qualitative analysis, directness level was examined in relation to both external and internal modifications of the requests, as these were used by the speakers. Based on this more detailed investigation, an attempt was made to detect if, and also which, specific pragmatic formulas or patterns are favored by each group. Qualitative analysis has also helped yield some interesting findings regarding which request types and modifications were favored by each group under the three levels of social distance. Furthermore, qualitative analysis of the data has facilitated the investigation of the linguistic devices employed by the GG group, as well as the effect that these Greek devices had on the performance of the GE group.

Based on previous research (Van Mulken, 1996), it was expected that a more detailed, qualitative investigation would yield many aspects of the participants’ request production, aspects that a simple quantitative approach would likely miss (Blum-Kulka & Levenston, 1987).

v. RATIONALE FOR USING THE SPECIFIC DESIGN.

Ever since the Cross-Cultural Speech act Realization Project (CCSARP), the written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) has been used in many studies for data collection purposes. But in spite of its popularity, it received strong criticism with regard to the quality of data that it produces. Written DCT has been criticized as being less valid than other methods of data collection, like, for example, the oral DCT (Yuan, 2001) in which studies
have shown that “respondents provide longer responses, more explanation particles, more repetitions, more inversions, more omissions and occasionally even more turns… (...) it generates data that are, to a certain extent, representative of natural speech, it allows researcher control, it is efficient in terms of the amount of data it can elicit, and it is ethical” (p.288). Additionally, other researchers have claimed that compared to natural data (Beebe & Cummings, 1996), the written DCT provided responses that were shorter, simpler, less face attentive and less negotiatory. Furthermore, they have argued that a serious problem of the specific data collection method has to do with the fact that the DCT lacks the entire psychosocial dimension of the interaction. Specifically, they state that things like background, relationship between interlocutors, context, and setting are missing, leaving the speaker and hearer free to invent their own background to the interaction or not to invent one at all (Beebe & Cummings, 1996).

However, due to its format, the DCT has proved very effective in studies whose goal was to collect and describe a large corpus of data in a short period of time. For this, and for some other reasons stated below, the written DCT was chosen for the present study:

- The demands of the study, which presupposed an extended production of only one speech act, used under the same social constraints and compared within the same language, as it is produced by native and nonnative speakers (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000; Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989; Johnston, Kasper & Ross, 1998).

- The fact that this specific design had also been used by many other studies investigating speech act production (Fukushima 1996; Gibbs, 1981; Van-Mulken, 1996).

- Similar situations as the ones employed in this study were used by other researchers working on the same topic (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989; Gibbs, 1981; Kim, 1995).
CHAPTER IV.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

The first step in this analysis was the categorization of the data elicited according to the study group –i.e. native speakers of British English (BE), Greek-Cypriot speakers of English (GE), native speakers of Greek (GG)-- and Social Situation described –i.e. High Social Distance (HSD), Low Social Distance (LSD), Medium Social Distance (MSD). Specifically, items #1, #5 and #8 in the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) depicting HSD, were grouped separately for each group of participants. The same happened with items #4, #6 and #11, investigating LSD, as well as for items #2, #9 and #12 (MSD). The elicited data from each category was then coded according to the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) ‘s Coding Scheme, in such a way as to show both, the Strategy Types used to form the Head Act (HA) –i.e. the request proper—as well as the Internal and External Modifications adjacent to the HA.

The next step was to calculate the frequency of each Strategy Type, as well as Internal and External Modifications for each group of participants, used for the same level of social distance.

This aimed at the following:
- Providing information on how often the various linguistic devices were used under the same social constraints
- Allowing the researcher to compare between the three participant groups in each social situation
- Providing information on the differences between the performances of the each group under varying degrees of social distance.
- Detecting any discrepancies between the BE and GE production of the speech act under investigation, and
- Looking into the production of Requests by the GG and the GE, and detecting any instances of transfer that may have occurred from L1 to L2 production.

Contrary to other studies the present study has not presented the average frequency rate of the request Modifications in percentages, but has limited this calculation to the Request Strategy types. It was believed that the small number of data specimens in addition to the vast variety of combinations of internal and external modifications presented in the participants’ responses would not yield any significant or interesting results, had they been presented in percentages. Interesting findings would have been drawn only if the present study’s data were larger. On the other hand, the calculation of the frequency rate of each modification under the same social constraints would be more helpful in showing us not only what means the participants used to achieve their requestive goal, but also to what extent these linguistic tools were used, under each social constraint.

The frequency rate was counted and presented in percentages only in the case of request Strategy Types. This was considered helpful because each participant employed only one strategy type for each situation. Therefore, despite the small number of data specimens, it was possible for the researcher to view the general tendencies of each group of participants under varying degrees of the Social Distance.
i. **High Social Distance (HSD) situations: Strategies and devices employed by BE, GE and GG.**

Tables 4, 5 and 6 describe the average frequency rate of the request Strategy Types, as well as the Internal and external Modifications, as these were used by the three groups (BE, GG and GE).

**Table 4**
*Distribution of Strategy Types used by all groups, in the HSD situations.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>BE Group</th>
<th>GE Group</th>
<th>GG Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mood Derivable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedged performatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation statements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want statements</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestory formulae</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Query preparatory</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong hints</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild Hint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5**
*Distribution of Internal Modifications used by all groups, in the HSD situations.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>BE Group</th>
<th>GE Group</th>
<th>GG Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downgraders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past tense</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embedded “if” Clause</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultative Devices</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downgraders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understaters</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedges</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtoner</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politeness Device</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upgraders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensifiers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expletives</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6
Distribution of External Modifications used by all groups, in the HSD situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>BE Group</th>
<th>GE Group</th>
<th>GG Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alerters</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking on Availability</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a pre-commitment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetener</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disarmer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Minimizer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounder</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be observe from the Strategy Types, the findings here confirm what previous research has shown, namely that the Query Preparatory is by far the most frequently used request strategy type. Regarding Internal Modifications, the BE group shows an extensive use of the interrogative form and the past tense to minimize the force of the request, as well as an equally broad use of the politeness device “please”. Finally, another preference of the BEs has to do with their use of the Grounder as a primary type of External Modification, in addition to the Alerter, used in the form of a Title, Title and Name as well as an Attention Getter.

A more detailed analysis of these—and all other—findings will be presented in the Discussion Section.

Moving on, similar to the BE group, the GEs preference for the Query Preparatory is evident. With the exception of one Want Statement and 2 Strong Hints, 51 (94.5%) of the requests formed by this group chose to form their requests using the easiest and most widely used strategy type available. This resemblance in performance does not persist in the case of Internal Modifications as well though. Here, we have a preference for the use of the Past Tense followed by the Interrogative form, followed by a sizable amount of embedded “if”
clauses. Regarding lexical modifications, contrary to the indisputable dominance of “please” which was used by almost all BE participants, the GE seem to prefer the use of Downtoners. The use of external modifications of the GEs approximates that of the BE group, with the only interesting difference being the amount of Grounders used. Even though this category of external modifications appears to be the favourite of the GE group, their frequency is significantly lower than that of the BEs.

Moving on to the Greek-Cypriots performing in Greek, with regards to Strategy Types, the GGs seem to be employing strategies from all three levels of the Directness scale, especially the Direct and the Conventionally Indirect groups. Specifically, 13 requests (25%) formed by the participants in this category chose to use more Direct categories, despite the fact that these requests were made in High Social Distance situations. The remaining 40 requests (74%) used the Query preparatory, whereas one participant used a Strong Hint. Whether this extensive use of Performatives, Hedged Performatives and Want Statements can be characterised as instances of impolite behaviour of behalf of the Greek-Cypriots will be discussed in detail in the following section.

With regards to Internal and External Modifications, the most important observation to be made has to do with the minimal use of the politeness device “please”. Similar to the GE group, the GGs refrain from using the specific lexical modification, thus indicating an instance of L1 transfer by the GEs in their L2 production. Furthermore, it is interesting to note the smaller number of syntactic modifications used by the GGs as well as their preference towards the Past as a form of softening the impact of the request, just as in the case of GE. We also have an amount of Interrogative forms in the data but that amount is less than half of that used by the BE group and considerably less than that employed by the GE group.
The GGs have also used a smaller number of external modifications. Compared to the other types of modifications, Alerters and Grounders are employed 38 and 28 times respectively, but in relation to the GG and BE groups, this frequency rate is significantly smaller.
ii. **Low Social Distance (LSD) situations: Strategies and devices employed by BE, GE and GG.**

The following Tables describe the linguistic behaviour of the three groups, in Low Social Distance situations.

**Table 7**
Distribution of Strategy Types used by all groups, in the LSD situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>BE Group</th>
<th>GE Group</th>
<th>GG Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mood Derivable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performatives</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedged performatives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation statements</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want statements</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestory formulae</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Query preparatory</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong hints</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild Hint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opting out</td>
<td>2 (Item #12)</td>
<td>1 (Item #12)</td>
<td>2 (Item #12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 8**
Distribution of Internal Modifications used by all groups, in the LSD situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>BE Group</th>
<th>GE Group</th>
<th>GG Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic Downgraders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past tense</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embedded “if” Clause</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical Downgraders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultative Devices</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedges</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtoner</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politeness Device</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upgraders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensifiers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expletives</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9
Distribution of External Modifications used by all groups, in the LSD situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>BE Group</th>
<th>GE Group</th>
<th>GG Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alerters</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking on Availability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a pre-commitment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetener</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disarmer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Minimizer</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounder</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the other end of the Social Distance continuum, the participants of this study were asked to form requests under the social constraint of Low social distance. These requests made by the native speakers of British English showed that the participants favoured the Query Preparatory strategy but, as opposed to the previous analysis, we now have instances of Mood Derivable requests (2), Strong Hints (2) and Hedged Performative (1). The Low social distance characterising these items probably gave the respondents flexibility to employ more strategy types of all directness levels.

The distribution of categories in the Internal Modifications section appears to be approximately the same as before. External modifications are also used, but the frequencies are now different. Specifically, whereas HSD situations showed more Grounders, Promises and Disarmers, we now have higher numbers in Alerters, Sweeteners and Cost Minimizers.

Similar to the BEs, the GEs also present a variety in their choice of Strategy Types, using the entire Directness scale of the coding scheme. Even though the Query Preparatory is still their first choice with with 42 instances, we now see 6 cases of more direct strategy types, namely Mood Derivable, Performative, Hedged Performative, Obligation and Want Statements as well as Suggestory Formula. Two requests were formed using the Strong Hint in their
requests. Again, the flexibility of the low distance situations allowed them to use strategies other than the widely used conventional indirect requests and perform more like the GGs.

Table 8 shows the frequency of the internal modifications used by the GEs. With the exception of the Interrogative forms which remain in the same standards as in the HSD situations, all other types of modifications are used fewer times, thus indicating the need for less textual processing. In comparison to the BE group, choice of modifications rests approximately in the same levels, but again the extent to which these modifications are used differs, with the GEs putting less effort in making their requests sound “more polite”. The same applies for the External modifications as well, where with the exception of the Sweetener and Getting a pre-commitment, all other types seem to be used much less than in the HSD situations. Compared with the BEs, the same modifications are employed but the extent is again quite different.

Strangely enough the GGs now seem to use fewer direct strategies than in the HSD situations and more Query Preparatory. The question that arises here—and which will be dealt with in the Discussion section—is whether the GGs are intrinsically more polite when it comes to close friends than people of authority. However this cannot be answered until we look into their choice of strategy types in combination with their use of internal and external Modifications. If their choice of these modifications is the same or quite similar to that evident in the HSD situations, then probably we are dealing with a culture that values close friends, over to people who are less intimate and of higher social status than them. However, if not, then we will have to examine their choice of modifications in High and Low SD situations and try to find out which types are preferred for which situation. Another point worth mentioning here is the resemblance in choice of Strategy types by the GE and the GG
group, since both of which seem to employ types ranging from the more direct to the more vague constructions.

The GG and the GE show a similar pattern when it comes to choice of Internal Modifications as well where, with the exception of the widely used Interrogative form, both of them seem to avoid using “please” and employ these devices much less than the BE group. In relation to their performance in the HSD setting, and with the exception of the Downtoner and the Negative form, all other devices are used either in a similar way or more, suggesting the possibility of Greek-Cypriots valuing intimacy over authority.

The phenomenon of using more modifications now when SD is low applies in the case of external modifications as well. With alerters being the most widely used device, the GGs’ request realization shows that getting pre-commitments, cost minimizers, and promises are used more than in LSD situations. Another point worth mentioning is that with regards to the frequency rate of Cost Minimizers and Promises, their production of external modifications resembles that of the native speakers of British English. Additionally, when it comes to Grounders and Getting pre-commitments, their frequency rates can be placed somewhere in the middle of the scale, with BEs being on the one end (high use) and GEs on the other (low use).
iii. **Medium Social Distance (MSD) situations: Strategies and devices employed by BE, GE and GG.**

Tables 10, 11 and 12 present the performance of the groups in MSD situations.

**Table 10**
**Distribution of Strategy Types used by all groups, in the MSD situations.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>BE Group</th>
<th>GE Group</th>
<th>GG Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mood Derivable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedged performatives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation statements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want statements</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestory formulae</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Query preparatory</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong hints</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild Hint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opting out</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 11**
**Distribution of Internal Modifications used by all groups, in the MSD situations.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>BE Group</th>
<th>GE Group</th>
<th>GG Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downgraders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past tense</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embedded “if” Clause</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultative Devices</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downgraders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understaters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedges</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtoner</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politeness Device</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upgraders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensifiers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expletives</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12
Distribution of External Modifications used by all groups, in the MSD situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>BE Group</th>
<th>GE Group</th>
<th>GG Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alerters</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking on Availability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a pre-commitment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetener</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disarmer</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Minimizer</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounder</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from Table 10, in MSD situations BEs behave somewhat differently than before. Moving away from the fixed borderlines of high and low social distance which may direct their linguistic behavior towards more fixed choices of strategy types, we now see them making direct as well as indirect choices. The Query Preparatory is still their first choice, with 87% (47 cases), but the remaining 10% is evenly distributed between Mood Derivable (1), Hedged Performative (1), Want Statement (1), Suggestory Formula (1) and Strong Hint (1). In addition to that, two participants chose to opt out of a situation.

With regards to Internal modifications (Table 11), we have a noticeable decrease in the use of the politeness device, as well as a decrease in the use of downtoners. Choice of the interrogative form, consultative devices and hedges is more similar to the HSD situations than the LSD ones whereas the remaining categories can be seen as being somewhere in the middle of the HSD-LSD scale.

Moving on, when responding to MSD situations, this group appears to be using external modifications much less than under the other two social constraints (Table 12). With the exception of the sweeteners, disarmers and checking on availability, which are used slightly more now, BEs indicate that alerters, getting pre-commitments, grounders and promises are
not so important in making their requests. It is very interesting to note that from 61 instances of grounders that have been employed in HSD situations, we now have only 36, whereas from 47 alerters, we now have only 24.

In MSD situations, GEs present a requestive behavior that is concentrated in three main strategy types (Table 10). In addition to the bulk of the requests which belongs to the Query preparatory (44 requests), Four requests used the Want Statement and 3 requests use Strong Hints. This gives us the impression that the group does not feel flexible enough to use strategy types from all levels of the directness scale but at the same time, is not so cautious as to restrict itself to the “safe” Query Preparatory. And in that respect, they appear to be somewhat restricted in comparison to the BE who make use of more direct strategies. Probably due to the fact that they are performing in a L2, they do not want to take the chance of sounding rude or impolite by using Mood Derivables and Performatives. This point can be justified further by the performance of the GGs with regards to Strategy Types.

Moving on to the Internal Modifications now, the situation shows a balance between HSD on the one hand and LSD on the other. Somehow, with the exception of the Interrogative form which remains at the same levels in all three social situations, the remaining modifications strike a balance between the two ends. In comparison with the other groups, the GE’ show similarity with the GGs in use of interrogative form, use of Downtoners, and “please” and at the same time, they appear to be employing the past tense, the “if” clause and intensifiers more than the other two groups.

Finally, in Table 12, we can see that the use of Checking on availability and cost minimizers exceeds others. In relation to the BEs, the GE group seems to be using the same external modifications but in different frequencies since the amount of devices used is less than the ones employed by the native speakers.
Finally, we have the requestive behavior of the GG group. As we can see from the Tables above, the GGs continue using strategy types from all directness levels with their choices being closer to those made by the BEs than the GEs. With the Exception of the Want statements which are extensively used by the GE and GG, their choice of request strategy type shows being native speakers of the language they are performing in, they are not afraid to use more direct—and probably less polite—strategies when forming a request, as opposed to L2 learners who might be more hesitant in doing so, especially if the social boundaries between the interlocutors are not quite set.

Regarding internal modifications (Table 11), the GGs appear to be making the least effort to appear “polite” compared with the other two groups. All devices are employed less by the GGs with the Interrogative form being the one mostly used, followed by the Past tense. When it comes to comparing MSD to LSD behavior of this group, in the former case the frequency rates of the different devices are lower, with the exception of the past tense and the embedded “if” clause, which function as means to add politeness to the requests. Finally, when it comes to external modifications (Table 12), GGs favor Checking for availability, Disarmers and Promises in their requests. This might indicate a general sociopragmatic principle that exists in the Cypriot society: when the social status between two people is not clearly defined, requests should be preceded by acknowledgement of possibility of refusal, by checking if the precondition for the compliance holds true, and by offering the hearer a way-out of the request.

In general, one can conclude that, once again, the Query Preparatory appears to be the safest and most widely used strategy type, regardless of group and regardless of social situation. However, we should note here that despite its preference by all, each group has its own
requestive behavior, with GGs showing a more obvious tendency to employ strategies from the entire directness spectrum under all social situations. This flexibility is evident—to a lesser degree—in the BEs as well in situations of low and medium social distance. The GEs showed this variation in choice of strategy type only when social distance was low. One might argue here that this finding is directly related to the fact that speakers of a language are always more confident when performing in their native language and can communicate their pragmatic intent without fearing that they will sound impolite—unless, of course, this is their intention. Second language learners will never cease to be careful in the way they speak, and might end up favoring strategies and linguistic devices that are easier and thus safer to use.

Another point worth mentioning here has to do with the fact that in HSD situations, GGs seemed to be favoring Direct request strategies, as opposed to the other two groups. It is believed—and it will be further examined in the Discussion Section—that it is easier for a Greek speaker to use direct strategies and still be polite and effective in his request because, as opposed to English, the Greek language allows for other linguistic factors to intervene and save what in other situations might be considered an “impolite” structure. Specifically, as we will see later, the use of the plural, the use of diminutives like “Μαριουδί” (Marioudi) or possessive adjectives like “μου” (mou) can soften the force of an imperative and make it as appropriate, as effective and as polite as any query preparatory.

As for Internal and External Modifications, one can safely say that the Interrogative and the Past forms are the most extensively used syntactic strategies regardless of social situation and group. The only exception to that has been the preference of the GGs in HSD situations for Interrogative and Negative structures. With regards to External Modifications, the Grounder and the Alerter are the participants’ favorite choices, but their frequency rate differs among the three groups. Namely, BEs used them a lot more than the GEs and the GGs. This also applies to lexical modifications where, even though the Politeness device “please” and the
Downtoner are the two most popular categories, their frequency differs between BE, GE and GG, with the first one using them the most and the third one employing them the least.

The total distribution of all strategy types and modifications used by the three groups in all social situations settings can be found in Tables 14, 15 and 16 (see Appendices 3, 4, and 5).
CHAPTER V.  
QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

i. **HIGH SOCIAL DISTANCE SITUATIONS.**

Native speakers of British English

As mentioned in the Findings’ section, 90.7% of the BE participants in the HSD situations chose to perform their requests using the most typical of all strategy types: the conventionally indirect Query Preparatory. However, what is important to note here is their choice of internal and external modifications adjacent to the request proper. Data revealed that the BE participants dealt with items 1 and 5 of the questionnaire, quite differently from item 8 even though all three items describe HSD situations. Their responses showed that the first two, namely the one where the student asks for a make-up test from her professor and the one where the employee is asking for an extension, required much more linguistic elaboration than item 8 (i.e. student asks to borrow a book from her professor).

Specifically, in situations 1 and 5, we have an excessive use of Grounders (maximum of three in one Request) in combination with Promises:

1. *Dr Peterson, I did very badly in my last Maths exam and I feel awful about it. I want to show that I could do better. Could you please allow me to do a make-up test, to prove that I can do better?*

2. *Mr Jones, do you think that I could have an extension. I’ve been having a lot of work to do and family problems so I could not complete the report. I promise I will finish it by Friday.*

The external modification of Promise was added to the list of modifications by the researcher due to its extensive use by the participants. It is the researcher’s judgment that by promising, to do something the speaker reinforces her request and strengthens the possibility for compliance. It is interesting here to note the use of Time specification by many of the participants in situation 5. Even though it cannot be grouped as a promise, its function
resembles that of a promise in that by specifying the time of handing in the required report, the speaker facilitates the hearer’s agreeing to her request. In other words, by asking for a specific, \textit{limited} extension, --and not an open ended one where the hearer will also have to think about the new deadline— the speaker makes the involvement of the hearer even less and thus makes compliance easier:

3. \textit{Sir, I won’t be able to give you the report tomorrow. Can I give it to you \textit{the day after} (Time)?}

4. \textit{I’ve tried to get it finished but it’s just not possible. By any chance, can I have a 3-day extension (Time)?}

Related to the issue of making the imposition on the Hearer less, a very important point regarding HSD situations has to do with the fact that the majority of Requests formed did not concentrate on what the Hearer should or was asked to do. In other words, the focus of the action that needed to be done was placed \textit{by the Speaker} on the Speaker herself, thus minimizing the imposition involved on the hearer and making it easier for her to agree with the requested act.

5. \textit{I would like the opportunity to redo the test (focus on Speaker) to my full ability.}

6. \textit{Can I please retake the last Math exam (focus on Speaker)?}

7. \textit{I’m sorry Sir but is it possible to finish the report (focus on Speaker) by tomorrow?}

In those cases where the focus is placed on the Hearer and the action that he must take, the speaker makes sure that this will not affect his attempt to gain compliance. As you can see from the following examples, requests which imply an action taken by the hearer use additional modifications to ensure that the politeness of the request is not affected.

8. \textit{Mr Jones, I’m sorry but I can’t be able to hand in my report by tomorrow. Can you give me another deadline? I promise to hand it in by then. Thank you. You are very kind.}
9. Dr Peterson, I wasn’t feeling very well in the test. I know I could do so much better. I really enjoy your lessons and really feel that I can succeed in Math. Please give me another chance to show you my true potential.

10. Mr Jones, my mum is ill and I can’t do my report for tomorrow because it’s in my dad’s house. If you can extend the deadline then I’ll get it finished for you. Please?

As one can see from the modifications employed by the participants, use of Disarmers, Sweeteners, Grounders, Promises, the Politeness device “Please” make the request sound less imposing on the Hearer, even though the required action is asked to be taken by him. Regarding the third example, it is very interesting how the speaker uses the “if” clause to ask for an extension that is actually very imposing on the hearer-employer, and makes it sound as if it is in fact beneficial for her: “If you can extend the deadline then I’ll get it finished for you.”

Another point worth mentioning is how a structurally direct request “Give me another chance” can be turned into an acceptable, polite Strong Hint, if one adds the correct modifications:

11. “Please give me another chance to show you my true potential.”

In fact, this is true for all cases where we have the use of more direct request strategies. In the following example the Want statement does not sound like a Direct strategy due to the Grounder that precedes the Head Act and the Promise that follows. The intensifiers used in both the Grounder and the Promise somehow erase the directness of the request and raise it in the politeness scale of the speaker:

12. I feel very bad and I want a make-up test and I will do my very best.

The same applies in the next example as well where the Hedged Want statement’s force becomes less due to the Intensifiers in the Grounder and the Head Act, as well as the use of
please at the end of the request, which, with the right intonation, may show the hearer that this structurally direct request is actually a plea for help.

13. Sir, I've done really really badly in my last Math exam. I really really need to do it again. Please.

In situation 8, the use of external and internal modifications is somewhat limited. Specifically, only 6 out of the 18 responses used the past tense in forming the request and only two of those used the embedded “if” clause to maximize the politeness effect of the request. The majority of the participants used the “Can I” construction, with some exceptions using “May I”. The only modifications here were Getting a pre-commitment, Grounders (maximum of one in each Request) and Promises, as well as the politeness device “please” and two instances of Downtoners. Actually, the use of Getting a pre-commitment as an external modification, as opposed to Sweeteners, and Disarmers which were employed in situations 1 and 5 shows how the speaker perceives the distance between her and her interlocutor to be less than in the aforementioned items. Starting your request with “Can I ask you a favor” shows some kind of intimacy that does allow for favors to be asked in the first place.

14. Dr Peterson, can I ask you a favor? Could I borrow your book on the 1st World War? I have been assigned to read it by my history teacher.

It is believed that this difference in the realization processes between items 1/5 and 8 exists for two reasons: the nature if the request itself and the nature of Speaker-Hearer relationship. Specifically, the imposition inherent in the request is less than the one in cases 1 and 5 whereas compliance with the request signifies something beneficial for both the speaker and the hearer; reading a book for an assignment is beneficial for and commendable by both the student and the teacher. So, this makes it easier for the hearer to accept without need on behalf of the speaker to use many modifications and textual processing. Moreover, the nature of the request makes the relationship of the hearer and the speaker in this situation somewhat
predictable and more fixed. In other words, one might argue that the entire situation falls under the “standard situations” label where the relation between the interlocutors is set by the social norms or society, and requires little processing with regards to request formation.

Of course, this does not mean that the speakers have not used any modifications in their attempt to achieve their requestive goal. Despite general tendencies, participants have used the external modification of Promise to minimize the imposition caused by the request and to help see her request accepted:

15. Sir, if you’re finished with the WW1 book, can I have it? I’ll bring it back when I’m finished.

16. Dr Peterson, can you lend me the book on the 1st World War for my research? It won’t take me a long time. I’ll give it back to you as soon as I’m finished.

This second example also mentions the time aspect which functions as a promise to facilitate the hearer in giving her what she wants.

Choice of modal verb in forming the Query preparatory can also add—or eliminate—politeness from a specific request. Use of “may” for instance, raises a request in the politeness scale:

17. Dr Peterson, may I please borrow your book on the WW1? I am fascinated by it and would like to do some research on it. Please can I have it?

This last example shows another characteristic of BE HSD request performance. Namely, the use of two requests by some participants:

18. Dr Peterson, for the last Math exam, I was not happy about the results. If it is possible, it would be great to have a make-up test. Could you arrange it for me, please?

19. Sir I was wondering if you still have the book on the 1st World War and if I could borrow it. Can I borrow it please?
One observation that needs to be made here has to do with the nature of the two requests. In all occasions where we had two requests, the first one was always a more elaborate, more polite request, aiming to achieve the requestive goal and to fulfill all the requirements of the politeness principle. The second one appears to act more like a confirmation question that is seeking a quick – preferably positive -- response by the hearer.

Native speakers of Greek-Cypriot

Query Preparatory is again the most popular request strategy type, with 74% of the participants using it to achieve their requestive goal. Interestingly enough though, and contrary to the BE and the GE group (which we will examine later), the GGs have employed request strategies from the entire directness scale. Almost 25% of them used more direct requests even though they were dealing with HSD situations. In addition to this, despite the BE’s extensive use of the politeness device “please”—BEs have used it 34 times--, the GGs have only 7 instances of please in the HSD data. The question that arises here now is whether the Greek-Cypriots are intrinsically less polite and less appropriate than the British.

As we will see from the data, GGs may have used more direct requests in the DCT, but, combined with the right modifications and linguistic devices, these requests ended up being perfectly acceptable – in Cypriot society at least. To be more specific, something that does not exist in English but is probably the most evident politeness device available in the Greek language is the Politeness Plural. Having the option to use it whenever they are dealing with people of authority, people they have met for the first time, or elders, the Politeness plural can immediately emphasize the distance between interlocutors and raise what otherwise might have been a Performative, or a Hedged Want statement into a polite form of request:

20. Κύριε Πήτερσον, σας ζητώ να επαναλάβω την εξέταση στα Μαθηματικά γιατί πιστεύω ότι η σημειωμένη βαθμολογία δεν είναι αντιπροσωπευτική των δυνατοτήτων μου. Λόγω σοβαρού προβλήματος που αντιμετώπίζα την τελευταία περίοδο δεν
It is the researcher’s opinion that one of the reasons why all types of modifications, both external and internal, appear to be used much less than in the case of BEs has to do with the Politeness Plural. Since this by itself can attribute politeness to a request, participants do not see the need of using 2 or 3 grounders in a request, combined with promises and other types of modifications. In fact, it has been observed that extensive textual processing was done only in cases where the speaker chose to employ a direct form of request, or in cases where the emphasis was placed on the hearer and not the speaker:

22. Δρ Πήτερσον θα ήθελα να επαναλάβω την εξέταση αν γίνεται γιατί τα έχω κάνει θάλασσα. Απέτυχα τελείως και σας παρακαλώ αν γίνεται να κάνουμε κάτι γι' αυτό γιατί νιώθω εντελώς χάλια.

(Dr Peterson, I would like to retake the exam, if possible, because I’ve made a mess. I failed completely and I am begging you, if possible, that we should do something about it because I feel very badly.)

23. Δρ Πήτερσον, μετά το πέρας της εξέτασης νιώθω ότι δεν ανταποκρίθηκα καθόλου στις απαιτήσεις του γραπτού, δεν ήξερα καμιά άσκηση και γι' αυτό θα ήθελα από εσάς αν ήταν δυνατόν να μου δώσετε μια δεύτερη ευκαιρία και να επαναλάβω την εξέταση.

(Dr Peterson, after the test I feel that I have not responded to the requirements of the test at all, I have not answered any question and because of this, I would like from you, if possible, to give me another chance and to retake the exam.)

As we can see from the first example, even though the request itself implies taking an action on behalf of the hearer, to minimize the imposition and to soften the request, the speaker...
chose to use three grounders one of which is strongly emphasized (“μιατί τα έχω κάνει θάλασσα” - because I’ve made a mess), the politeness device (“σας παρακαλώ” - please), downtoners (“αν γίνεται” – if possible), hedges (“κάτι” - something) as well as the plural.

Additionally, in order to avoid placing the burden of the requested act on the hearer, the speaker here chooses to use the 1st person instead of the 2nd person plural of the verb “κάνω” (“να κάνουμε” – to do). This way, the hedged request implies that both hearer and speaker will perform an action in case the request is accepted.

The same applies to the second example. The speaker here uses grounders (“νιώθω ότι δεν ανταποκρίθηκα καθόλου στις απαιτήσεις του γραπτού,” - I feel that I have not responded to the requirements of the test at all), intensifiers within the grounders to maximize the effect that the request will have on the hearer and also to justify it being made in the first place (“καθόλου” – at all), downtoners (“αν ήταν δυνατόν” – if possible) as well as a hedged request (“να μου δώσετε μια δεύτερη ευκαιρία” - give me another chance), in addition to the plural, the past, and the embedded “if” clause.

Despite the fact that GGs have not used many modifications in their request formation, some participants chose to employ promises, time specification as well as giving to the hearer more than one option. Specifically:

24. Κύριε Μάρκου, μου είναι αδύνατο να τελειώσω την αναφορά μέχρι αύριο. Μπορείτε να μου δώσετε λίγες μέρες παράταση; Θα σας ήμουν ευγνώμων.

(Mr Marcou, it is impossible for me to finish the report by tomorrow. Can you give a few of more days extension? I’d be grateful.)

25. Κύριε Μάρκου, αν και θα ήθελα πολύ να ετοιμάσω την αναφορά που μου ζητήσατε (sweetener), δυστυχώς με το φόρτο εργασίας που έχω αυτή τη στιγμή δεν νομίζω να προλάβω να τελειώσω μέχρι αύριο. Σας υπόσχομαι όμως ότι την Τετάρτη θα έχετε την αναφορά στα χέρια σας.
(Mr Marcou, even though I would love to have the report you want ready, unfortunately due to my work load at the moment I do not think that I will be able to finish by tomorrow. I promise you though that by Wednesday the report will be in your hands.)

The above examples show how the speakers use sweeteners to soften their requests. Even though one might argue that the underlined expression does not exactly fit the profile of a sweetener, it is believed that they aim at functioning as one since the speaker is overstating the excessive joy she would feel if the specific request need not be made (αν και θα ήθελα πολύ να ετοιμάσω την αναφορά που μου ζητήσατε - though I would love to have the report you want ready). It is interesting to note here that the choice of verb (“δεν νομίζω” – I do not think) aims at saving the speaker’s face in case her request is rejected. By avoiding a stronger expression and by giving this sense of probability that the verb “νομίζω (think)” has, the speaker is actually giving herself a way out in case of rejection since she appears not to be sure that the report cannot be carried out after all. Another point worth making here has to do with Time. Again, as in case of BEs, this group of participants uses Time specification to facilitate their hearers’ giving them what they want. This attempt to minimize the effort and the actions to be taken by the hearer is also evident in the following example. Here, the speaker makes a specific time proposal to the hearer who will only have to think about the request itself—allowing for the extension to be given or not—and not additional elements too—how long the extension will be:

26. Κύριε Μάρκου προβλέπω πως η αναφορά θα είναι έτοιμη σε λίγες μέρες. Έχουμε καθόλου περιθώριο ώστε να το παρατείνουμε 2-3 μέρες ακόμα:

(Mr Marcou I predict that the report will be ready in a few days. Do we have any timeframe to extend it another 2-3 days?)

Another linguistic device used here has to do with the 1st person plural. Just like in the example before, the speaker chooses to use the 1st person instead of the 2nd person plural of
the verb “έχω” (“έχουμε”) to shift emphasis from hearer to hearer and therefore to minimize the imposition and appeal to her hearer’s feelings of solidarity.

The following example consists of a promise (“Μην ανησυχείτε, θα το προσέχω ως κόρη οφθαλμού” - Don’t worry, I will take care guard it as my eyes) that aims to soften the request, minimize the imposition involved and, in this particular case, minimize the distance between speaker and hearer by giving a sense of exaggeration in the promise:

27. Κύριε Πήτερσον, θα μπορούσα να δανειστώ το βιβλίο σας για την ιστορία του Α’ Παγκόσμιου Πολέμου γιατί πρέπει να κάνω μια έρευνα; Μην ανησυχείτε, θα το προσέχω ως κόρη οφθαλμού.

(Mr Peterson, could I borrow your history book on the 1st World War because I have to do a research on it? Don’t worry, I will take care guard it as my eyes (Greek expression used when something is very precious)

Other participants have tried to form their requests by using expressions which are usually employed between friends in order to minimize the social distance between interlocutors. Instead of trying to embellish their requests with different modifications, they chose to “break the ice”, cross the boundaries and come closer to their hearer. That is why they did not use the plural since this would automatically contradict their goal of building solidarity:

28. Άτε Δρ πήτερσον, μπορώ σε παρακαλώ να επαναλάβω την εξέταση;

(Come on (approximately the meaning of “Άτε”) Dr Peterson, can I please retake the exam?)

Finally, GGs seem to be offering a way out to their hearers. Realizing how much of an imposition a request can be, they are trying to find alternative ways to achieve their goals even in case of rejection. This might work as a face-saving strategy, not only for the speaker herself, but also for the hearer who can say no to the specific request more easily:

29. Θα ήθελα να σας ρωτήσω και διερωτώμαι βέβαια κατά πόσο αυτό είναι δυνατόν να συμβεί, αλλά υπάρχει περίπτωση να επαναλάβω το test ή να κάνω ένα extra project ή ό,τι άλλο εσείς νομίζετε για να διορθωθεί ο βαθμός μου;
(I would like to ask you and I wonder of course if this is possible to happen, but is there any chance to retake the test or do an extra project or any thing else that you think appropriate in order to fix my grade?)

The last, but certainly not least, observation that should be made here has to do with the relative weight that is given by each culture with regards to various social situations, and the degree of imposition of each request. As in the case of the native speakers of British English where items 1 and 5 were dealt with differently than item 8, here again this distinction is made, with item 1 being the most and item 5 being the least, demanding. Contrary to the British, the situation describing the employer-employee relationship has yielded fewer modifications and use of the some seemingly abrupt requests:

30. Κύριε Μάρκου θα πρέπει να μου δώσεις μια μικρή παράταση γιατί δεν νομίζω να τελειώσω μέχρι αύριο.

(Mr Marcou you must give me a small extension because I do not think I will finish by tomorrow.)

31. Κύριε Μάρκου θα ήθελα να μου δώσετε παράταση για να ετοιμάσω την αναφορά γιατί δεν προλαβαίνω να την ετοιμάσω μέχρι αύριο.

(Mr Marcou I would like you to give me an extension to make the report because I don’t have time to finish it by tomorrow.)

32. Κύριε Μάρκου γνωρίζω ότι χρειάζεστε αυτήν την αναφορά μέχρι αύριο αλλά είναι πρακτικά αδύνατο να μπορώ να την ετοιμάσω. Μπορώ να έχω παράταση μέχρι μεθαύριο;

(Mr Marcou I know you need this report by tomorrow but it is practically impossible to finish it. Can I have an extention until the day after?)

Most probably, a manager from England might find these requests impolite or even offensive if used by his employees, but for Cyprus, they are perfectly appropriate. The reason for this possible communication breakdown has to do with the fact that in Cyprus, with its relatively small companies and organizations, where everybody knows everybody and the manager is probably related to most of his employees somehow, using the right politeness strategies does
not make a request polite. Contrary to other bigger countries with large organizations that employ thousands of people, business here is usually family or friend oriented. Consequently, it is quite natural to address your boss using the singular, or to make direct requests, even if these requests will end up being refused. In fact, it is the researcher’s opinion that, for this situation, an over-elaborated request might have a negative effect on the hearer who will feel that his employee is distancing herself from him and is trying to break the sense of solidarity that should exist between members of the same company.

Greek-Cypriot speakers of English

Once again, the Query Preparatory seems to be the most widely used strategy in forming requests. With only three exceptions, all GE participants opted for the safe choice of the conventionally indirect request. However, even if they were not influenced by Greek in their choice of Request strategy type, they showed instances of transfer with regards the politeness device *please*. Specifically, influenced by their L1, *please* is employed even less by the GE group than by the GG group, with only 4 requests using it. In fact one of the requests seems to have included *please* to make up for the absence of any other type of external or internal devices:

33. **Dr, Peterson, could I borrow your book on WW1 for my research please?**

Another similarity between the GG and the GE data has to do with the difference in responses between items 1-8 on the one hand, and 5 on the other. Just like the native speakers of Greek, GEs used fewer modifications and made less effort in their request realization when it came to item 5, as opposed to items 1 and 8. Actually, many of their requests responding to that situation may sound somewhat abrupt, or impolite to the ear of an Englishman:

34. **I know the deadline for the report is tomorrow, but I need to know if I can get an extension**
35. Mr Jones, this is impossible. Can I have an extension?

36. Mr Jones I want to be straight with you. Is it possible for you to give me an extension because I am really pressed and I don’t think that I will be able to meet the deadline?

37. Mr Jones, I really want to manage with all my work but there is tones (sic) to be done by tomorrow. Can I get an extension for tomorrow’s deadline or do you want me to live (sic) something else behind? Either way, in order to get it done properly, I need more time to get all the info needed for the report.

Even though some modifications are used by the speakers here –disarmer, offering options--, the general force of the request is, I believe, too strong for the ears of a British. Use of the hedged want statement, the use of impossible in the second example which gives the request a sense of irritation, as well as “I want to be straight with you” which might be considered as too informal to be used in HSD situations, indicate that for the GE, the social distance between employer and employee is not so high after all. This is further emphasized by the last example in which the speaker doesn’t seem to be taking no for an answer. She is actually offering an option to her interlocutor, just as the GG data has shown, but in this case, this option is even worse than the first. This, in addition to the last statement, shows a speaker who might cause some very negative remarks by her manager, if he were British.

Contrary to requests formed in situation #5, items 1 and 8 yielded some interesting findings with regards to the ways GEs have tried to be polite and gain compliance in their requests. Like in the case of GGs the amount of internal and external modifications is less but we can still see examples of consultative devices, grounders, promises, disarms, checking on availability as well as time indicators, to make requests sound softer and thus more polite.

38. Sir, do you think I could retake the exam?

39. Excuse me, Dr Peterson? I would like to ask you if there is a possibility to take another exam because I did very badly in the last one and I know that I can do better than that.
40. Dr Peterson, sorry to interrupt. I need a book on 1WW that I think you have. Do you think it is possible to borrow it for a few days?

41. Dr Peterson, sorry for the interruption. Do you have a book on the 1st World War? I really need it for my research and I was wondering if I can borrow it for a few days.

In general, one could argue that GE data clearly shows the hesitation of the nonnative speaker to use the language freely and to employ all linguistic devices available to her —if they are so- in order to achieve her goal. Despite the fact that external and internal modifications to a request were more or less on the same level as the GG data, we can safely say that the GGs — as well as the BEs for that matter—were more verbose and eloquent in their requests than the GE group. The latter gave the impression of trying to stay within certain boundaries and trying to avoid taking risks —i.e. they have used the highest percentage of Query Preparatory strategies than all three groups, they have refrained from using modifications like Getting pre-commitments, sweeteners, Cost minimizers and they have restricted their choice mainly to alerters and grounders.

Furthermore, it is evident from the elicited data that second language speakers of English do indeed get influenced by the L1 pragmalinguistic as well as sociopragmatic rules, and might end up causing communication breakdowns —especially in HSD situations where the risk of giving offense to your interlocutor is higher.
ii. **LOW SOCIAL DISTANCE SITUATIONS.**

Native speakers of British English

After a closer analysis of the LSD data, it was noticed again that participants responded differently to situations, due to the level of imposition. In the case of LSD, linguistic elaboration of requests increased as we moved from situation 2 to situation 9 and then to situation 12, where, due to the high level of imposition, 6 subjects –two from each group— chose not to form the request. Even though one might argue that this might actually be indicating things other than deliberate choice –i.e. lack of time, unwillingness to complete the DTD due to its length etc--; it is believed that participants have indeed chosen not to respond to the specific item because it a real life situation, they would not have done it either. In fact, this is supported by the fact that three out of the six participants actually wrote this down. It is also believed that these numbers would have increased, had the method of data collection been other than a DCT.

In fact, in item 2, 15 out of the 18 requests formed by the BE group emphasized the action taken by the hearer. No interesting attempts were made to minimize the imposition of the request, except the addition of the Money factor functioning as a means to diminish any degree of imposition involved, no matter how small that was:

42. *Can you send my packet too and I’ll give you the money.*

43. *Maria if I give you the money for the stamps, will you post my packet as well please?*

44. *Hey Maria, could you please send this letter for me please as you are already going. I’ll give you the money.*

Another observation has to do with the fact that now the social distance is low and the imposition of the specific request is at its minimum, many speakers chose to intensify the
request instead of softening it by emphasizing the urgency of the requested action, without fear of possible offense:

45. Maria can you do me a favor? I need to post this as soon as possible but as you are going out would you do it for me please?

The only case where there was some linguistic elaboration is the following, but it may be that this was done in a humorous way. The choice of words used does not correspond to the specific imposition level; so, it is possible that the speaker was just being playful with her interlocutor:

46. Maria, since you’re going out to mail your letter would you be able to send this packet to Italy for me? Only if you could though; I wouldn’t want to force you to send it if you don’t want to.

Moving on to item 9, we are also moving upwards on the imposition ladder. Therefore, requests now include a number of modifications that aim at softening the request and facilitating the hearer in complying. Even though all requests were hearer oriented, many combinations of internal and external modifications were employed to accompany the Query preparatory requests. Concerning strategy types, all but one Hedged performative belonged to the conventionally indirect requests. As one can see from the following examples, in their attempt to soften the requestive impact on the hearer, speakers used grounders, sweeteners, cost minimizers, as well as instances of exaggerations whose aim was to make the hearer realize the importance of the request –and therefore the hearer’s compliance-- to the speaker:

47. Joanna I’m really scared that I’m going to fail this class. If I do, my parents will kill me. I’m on the brink of your mercy. Please help me. Can you tutor me?

Here, even though the Head Act is a simple Interrogative query preparatory, the grounder at the beginning together with the exaggerated statements functioning as sweeteners, make this a very strong, polite request.
48. Joanna, if you are not doing during the semester could you please tutor me? My grades are falling down so badly! I really need your help.

Here the speaker employs a cost minimizer right before the request to give her hearer space to refuse if needed. By stating this possibility, it make it easier for her roommate to deny without losing face and, at the same time, without risking to lose her own face in case of rejection. At the same time, since the primary goal of any request is to get the requested action completed, the speaker uses “I really need your help” at the end of the request to emphasize the importance of compliance.

The following two examples show how BE speakers tried to soften and emphasize their requests by using sweeteners and a second request form respectively:

49. You’re really good at this, think you would have some spare time to teach it to me?

50. Joanna can you help me with this course please, I’m finding it hard to concentrate; can you help me with my work?

In the last example, the second request is vaguer than the first one, even though neither does actually state the requested action. Probably the reason that this speaker used two requests was because the exact requested action is not clearly mentioned.

Finally, the last LSD item appeared to be the most problematic and at the same time the most demanding for this study’s participants. With two people refusing to form the request, it can be speculated that the imposition level here is much higher than in the other two items. In fact, even in those requests that were actually formed, speakers had to employ a variety of modifications and in some cases, offer their hearer ways to deny without losing face – neither theirs nor the hearer’s.

51. Can I borrow your dress please if it’s possible? If not, it’s fine. I’ll try something else.
Here the speaker is offering the hearer a way-out as an option and, at the same time, is making sure that in case of denial, no one’s face will be lost. Even though the head act is quite simple—with the exception of the downtoner—the imposition of the request is actually weighed and measured with the alternative given at the end.

In the following examples, speakers are really trying their best to get their request accepted. Grounders, sweeteners, asking for pre-commitments, many politeness devices and promises are all employed to soften the request and minimize the imposition:

52. Hey Katie, you know I have a date tonight, and I really want to hit it off with this guy. Could you please lend me that wonderful, black dress just for tonight? Please. It will put a big smile on my face. And I promise I will look after it so much. Please. Please.

53. Katie, do you love me? How much...? Can I ask you a favor? Katie I have a date tonight with ... but I have nothing to wear. All my dresses are in wash. I don’t even have a nice pair of jeans. I really like him. Please Katie, can you lend me your black dress for tonight? Please Katie I will be your slave for a day ... or two days! Please Katie, I will do anything. Please... please... please.

54. Ahh, Katie please let me borrow your dress. I want to look really nice. Come on... I have nothing else to wear. Give it to me and I’ll make you breakfast for a week.

Again, since the social distance between hearer and speaker is low, and this request is made from one friend to another, the speaker cannot use many syntactic modifications and risk making the request sound awkward. However, due to the fact that the imposition is high, we have a sequence of lexical and external modifications instead. Even when the request strategy type is direct, the use of modifications makes it a very elaborate and polite request form.

Native Speakers of Greek-Cypriot

After analyzing the GG data, one general observation that was made has to do with the fact that for some reason, in LSD situations, the GG group—as well as the GE group for that
It is believed that the GGs use the politeness device more now to make up for the lack of other modifications and linguistic elaborations that were there in HSD situations. Since, as we have seen from the elicited data, both, external and internal modifications are numerically less now, most probably this group tried to minimize the imposition involved in the situations by increasing “please”. Furthermore, the use of please in English – as opposed to the Greek “σε παρακαλώ”— further emphasize this solidarity since in Cyprus please is widely used among people –especially close friends and acquaintances—to a point where one might ague that it is gradually replacing the Greek equivalent. One very important aspect in the Greek – and consequently the Greek-Cypriot—society has to do with the feeling of solidarity, and togetherness that exists between family members and close friends. The notion of «δικός»

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1 The use of “please” in Cyprus is very common among close friends and acquaintances. It is gradually replacing its Greek equivalent and it is favored in low social distance situations. It’s broad use applies mainly to Cyprus since “please” – as opposed to “σε παρακαλώ”-- is not so common in Greece.
(dikos: one’s own) - «ξένος» (ksenos: outsider) is a characteristic of the Greek culture which plays a big part in people’s dealings with others and, from what we can see in the data, in people’s use of language. For this reason, regardless of size of imposition, it was expected that in interactions between close friends, some kinds of modifications would be at their minimum. Anything different would be considered a violation of this solidarity, and would be perceived as an insult to the hearer or as an attempt to distance one’s self from their interlocutor. To support this, the following anecdotal evidence narrated to the researcher by a close friend indicates how such violation ended up causing an argument between a Greek-Cypriot man and his fiancée. Specifically, while the couple was having dinner at a Chinese restaurant, the woman who had lived abroad for some time was asked to pass the spring rolls. When she did the latter took one and went on with his dinner as if nothing just happened. The fiancée then looked at him with an irritated expression on her face and the man, surprised, asked what the problem was. She then explained to him that what he did showed disrespect for her and that when people give you something the least you can do is say thanks! He then got upset and said that they’ve been together long enough not to require “thank you”, that her comment was very insulting, and that requiring a thank you sounded quite pretentious amongst people that close. Luckily, this couple is still together and that small incident of miscommunication has not caused greater damage.

Actually, it has been observed that even though the GGs chose not to use many modifications when forming their requests, their interactions indicate that they have employed other linguistic devices whose aim was to minimize the imposition of the requests in order to obtain compliance. Of course this does not mean that the Greeks are intrinsically impolite to strangers or people of authority but that they value positive politeness and therefore their linguistic choices reflect the informality that characterizes LSD interactions and interactions that aim at cultivating the closeness and in-group relations. As we can see from the following
examples, there are certain features of the Greek language that help maintain closeness and are often employed by the speakers in everyday communication:

58. Κόρη, μπορείς να ταχυδρομήσεις και το δικό μου;

(Girl (expression used between close female friends regardless of age) can you mail mine as well?)

59. Μαριγώ μου, μπορείς να ταχυδρομήσεις και το δικό μου πακέτο;

(My Marigo, can you mail my packet as well?)

60. Φιλενάδα, πρέπει να με βοηθήσεις γιατί θα μείνω το μάθημα.

(Girlfriend, you must help me because I will fail the course.)

61. Καλή μου σε παρακαλώ δώσε μου το φόρεμα σου γιατί πρέπει να είμαι τέλεια απόψε.

(My dearest, please give me that dress of yours because I must be perfect for tonight)

62. Καίτη μου, Καιτούλα μου, μου κάνεις μια μεγάλη χάρη; Εκείνο το θαυμάσιο, σέξι, μαύρο φόρεμα, το θυμάσαι; E..., μπορείς να μου το δανείσεις μόνο για απόψε;

(My Kaiti, my Kaitoula, can you do me a big favor? That great, sexy black dress, do you remember it? Hem… can you lend it to me just for tonight?)

63. Βρε Τζοάννα μου, θα μου κάνεις λίγα μαθηματάκια; Σε αντίθεση με σένα, εγώ δεν σκαμπάζω!

(Vre my Joanna, will you give me some tutoring? As opposed to you, I don’t understand a thing!)

As we can see from underlined parts, what is attempted here is to emphasize the fact that the requests were made between close friends and through this solidarity, it was expected that the requests would be accepted. This emphasis was given through the use of certain linguistic devices like “Κόρη”, “Καλή μου”, “Βρε” and “Φιλενάδα” which are only used among close friends, and indicate very high levels of intimacy that would allow for Mood derivable strategies to be used even when the imposition of the request is quite high: see example 61
Additionally, using the names of hearers or the requested item in their diminutive forms as well as the use of the possessive pronoun μου, function as distance minimizers and sweeteners: “Τζοάννα μου” “Μαριγώ μου”, “Καίτη μου, Καιτούλα μου”, “μαθηματάκια”.

Of course this does not mean that the requests formed had no external and internal modifications at all. For instance, the past tense was used in 13 different occasions in the LSD situations. However, this combined with the singular (as opposed to the use of plural in the HSD cases) does not violate the closeness of the interlocutors. Had the speakers used plural in their constructions – either alone or in addition to other modifications—this might have been perceived by the hearer as a distancing device or as a joke!

64. Ξέρω ότι μόλις το έχεις αγοράσει, ξέρω ότι δεν το έχεις φορέσει ακόμα, ξέρεις όμως ότι αυτό το ραντεβού σημαίνει πολλά για μένα και ... θα μπορούσα να το δανειστώ για απόψε; Αν όχι, καταλαβαίνω...

(I know you have just bought it, I know that you have not yet worn it, but you know that this date means a lot to me and... could I borrow it for tonight? If not, I understand...)

Just like in the case of the native speakers of British English, item 12 was the most problematic for the GGs. Two speakers decided not to form the request at all claiming that this is something that they would never ask for, whereas a third one made the request but wrote down that she would probably never ask such a thing in everyday life. Once again, it is believed that the form of the data collection influenced the findings in that some of the participants felt that it was imperative for them to complete the questionnaire regardless of whether they would make this request in real life or not. Probably, the percentage of people choosing to opt out would have been larger had the method of data collection been different.

Due to the high imposition size of item 12, many modifications were used in forming that specific request.

65. Καίτη μου, Καιτούλα μου, είναι πάρα πολύ σημαντικό αυτό το ραντεβού για μένα και δεν έχω τίποτε καλό να φορέσω, ενώ εσύ έχεις ένα τέλειο μαύρο φόρεμα που είναι
ιδανικότερο για την περίσταση. Πέφτω στα πόδια σου, please δάνεισέ μου το μόνο για απόψε και σου υπόσχομαι πως θα σου το φέρω πίσω όπως μου το έδωσες.

(My Kaitie, my Kaitoula, this date is very important for me and I have nothing nice to wear, whereas you have a perfect black dress which is perfect for the occasion. I am falling flat on your feet, please lend me your dress only for tonight and I promise that I’ll bring it back to you just like you gave it to me.)

66. Please, please, please en téléio, γίνεται να μου το δώσεις, μόνο για απόψε; Εν σημαντικό, πρέπει να τον αρέσω. Εν θα σου το καταστρέψω, υπόσχομαι. Άτε κόρη, please!

(Please, please, please it’s perfect, can you give it to me, just for tonight? It’s important, he must like me. I will not destroy it, I promise. Come on kori (girl), please!)

67. Καιτούλα μου, ξέρεις εκείνο το υπέροχο μαύρο καινούριο σου φόρεμα; θα μπορούσες να το δανείσεις στην αγαπημένη σου συγκάτοικο;

(My Kaitoula, you know that lovely black new dress of yours? Could you lend it to your favorite roommate?)

From the examples, we can see that speakers used mainly grounders and promises to form their requests as well as many solidarity devices like “Καίτη μου, Καιτούλα μου”, “Ατε κόρη” and the politeness device please. Furthermore, they have tried to get their request accepted by employing an informal, cute tone that would probably appeal to the hearer’s sense of humor. This tone as well as the speakers’ choice of words sometimes bordered on exaggeration, aiming at making the request sound less serious and thus easier to be accepted. It should be mentioned here that even though exaggerations could be classified under the Internal modification of intensifiers, this was not done in the present study because it was the researcher’s intention to emphasize their use by the groups. Future studies might add it to the CCSARP’s list as another type of modification. Exaggeration was achieved by the repetition of please, by the use of expressions like “I am falling flat on your feet” which functions as a sweetener as well as by expressions which stress the close relationship between hearer and speakers (to your favorite roommate).
Moving on to item 9, the use of solidarity devices is still evident as well as some types of modifications like promises, understaters, grounders, getting pre-commitments, and disarmers. Exaggeration is also employed to achieve the humoristic effect explained before:

68. \( Pe \), μπορείς να με βοηθήσεις λίγο (understater) στη χημεία με κανένα ιδιαίτερο please; Θα σε πληρώσω (promise) και θα σου το χρωστάω και σαν γάρη (promise).

(Re, can you help me a little bit with Chemistry by tutoring me please? I’ll pay you and I’ll owe it to you as a favor as well.)

Here the speaker starts his syntactically simple request by \( Pe \), to show that she considers the hearer as a very close friend with whom she is free to use whatever linguistic expression she wants—even one which might be considered rude among simple acquaintances—and to whom she would ask almost anything.

69. \( βρε \), Μου θα μου κάνεις λίγα μαθηματάκια; Σε αντίθεση με σένα, εγώ δεν σκαμπάζω τίποτα.

(Vre, my Tzoanna, will you give me some tutoring? As opposed to you, I don’t understand anything.)

Here, in addition to the possessive pronoun \( μου \), the \( βρε \), which functions exactly, like \( ρε \) in the previous example, and the diminutive \( μαθηματάκια \), the speaker exaggerates about her ignorance and tries to sweeten the hearer by juxtaposing her ignorance to the hearer’s knowledge.

70. \( Φιλενάδα \), πρέπει να με βοηθήσεις γιατί θα μέινω το μάθημα.

(Girlfriend, you must help me because I will fail this course.)

In this case, we can see how the use of \( φιλενάδα \) (=girlfriend) makes the obligatory statement that follows sound perfectly appropriate if used in LSD situations. However, it is believed

\(^2\) \( Pe \) is a colloquial generic vocative/attention getter used in Cyprus among close friends. If used in more formal setting or when social distance is high, it might give offence.

\(^3\) \( βρε \) is has the same function as \( Pe \) but is mostly used in Greece as an equivalent of \( Pe \). Even though it is not normally used in formal situations, it may be used by a speaker in Medium social distance situations without giving offense to the hearer.
that if this same request had been formed to a BE participant, the latter might consider it quite rude and inappropriate.

71. Κόρη, επειδή είμαι άχρηστη στη χημεία, εννα να μπορούσες να μου κάμεις λλία μαθήματα τούτο το εξάμηνο, πέρκι περάσω το μάθημα;

(Girl, since I am worthless in chemistry, would you be able to give me some tutoring this semester, in order to pass the course?)

Here it is very interesting to see how the speaker employs exaggeration to emphasize the importance of the requested action and therefore to facilitate the hearer’s compliance with her friend’s request.

72. Τζοάννα μου θα με βοηθήσεις στη χημεία γιατί τα βρήκα μπαστούνια; Όποτε έχεις ελεύθερο χρόνο, πες μου.

(My Joanna, will you help me because I found it very difficult? Whenever you have some free time, let me know.)

This last point has to do with the fact that in addition to the possessive pronoun and the grounder used to form the request, the speaker appears to be assuming compliance by the hearer and goes on to ask the latter to inform her whenever she has free time.

Greek-Cypriot speakers of English

The first general observation to make has to do with the obvious flexibility that the GEs now have to form their requests using strategies from the entire directness spectrum and to behave more like the native speakers of Greek-Cypriot. Since they do not have to consider the high social distance between them and their hearer now, speakers show a tendency to employ different requestive strategies and a willingness to behave a bit riskier than before. Even though this group used to have the highest percentage in Query preparatory, they now employ the same amount of indirect request strategies as the GGs which, in combination with the lower number of internal and external modifications, shows that the GEs might be influenced
by the sociopragmatic rules of the L1 in their request realization and have—in LSD situations—the freedom to show it.

Just like the GGs, this group shows an extensive use of the politeness device *please*, which again might be a way to make up for the fewer modifications. Unfortunately for the GEs, English does not allow for the other solidarity devices employed by the Greek-Cypriots, so, it is believed that these requests might be considered somewhat abrupt or impolite to the ears of the British. In fact, the need to use these devices was so strong, that some participants chose to use them even when speaking in English. Even if modifications were more here than in the GG data, which shows that the GEs have attempted to produce appropriate requests in terms of politeness, yet the need to emphasize this solidarity had interfered in their production significantly.

73. **Re Joanna, I'm having a lot of trouble with the chemistry class. I think that if I don't get help I'll probably fail the course. Re friend, could you help me? Like, could you tutor me?**

74. **Hey Joanna, could you help me during the course this semester?**

75. **Hey Katie, about that dress you bought, could you give it to me for tonight?**

As we can see from the first example, the speaker chose to minimize the distance between her and her hearer by using what would have been used had she been asking this in Greek. Both, the use of *ρε* and *ρε* together with *friend* are devices that Greek-Cypriots use everyday in their interactions with people. In fact, on many occasions, the specific expression is used exactly like the one here, in English, with *ρε* preceding *friend*. As for the other two examples, it is believed that *hey* is also an attempt to achieve solidarity by using what is for the speaker the closest equivalent of *ρε* in English.
Once again, items 2 and 9 yielded fewer linguistic elaborations than item 12, which again two participants refused to tackle, and which yielded the majority of internal and external modifications.

76. *I know this will sound crazy to you would you consider lending me your new black dress? I think it would be just perfect for my date tonight.*

Trying to minimize the imposition implied by the request, the speaker begins his attempt with a disarmer, which in combination with the choice of verb in the head act (consider) functioning as a downtoner, makes it easier to proceed with the request. The attempt for compliance is completed with the use of a grounder, which also aims to sweeten the hearer.

In the following example, the alerter (name) is followed by a question to the hearer which is an attempt to remind her that the speaker is indeed a very close friend and that between the two of them sharing things is perfectly acceptable. This somehow justifies the intensified Want statement that follows. Considering the fact that using somewhat more direct strategies amongst close friends is considered a norm within the Greek-Cypriot culture, using the want statement is perfectly acceptable, especially if we consider the fact that the request ends with a *please*:

77. *Katie, remember the shoes you borrowed from me last week? Ok. I really need your black dress, the one that goes with my new high heels. Please!!!*

Other modifications found in the elicited data include promises as well as grounders, getting pre-commitments and sweeteners:

78. *Katie, I have a date tonight with a gorgeous guy tonight and your dress is just what I had in mind for the perfect outfit. Could I borrow it, please, please, please? I promise I will take a very good care of it!*

79. *Katie, I have to ask you for a big favor. Can I borrow your dress for tonight? I have this date and I want to make a good impression.*
In the first example, the head act is preceded by a grounder and a sweetener, and is followed by three instances of *please*. The speaker here, like the GGs, is trying to create a humorous and cute feeling that will eventually minimize the imposition involved and urge the hearer to comply. This attempt ends with a promise.

The second example is linguistically simpler than the first one, with the speaker getting a pre-commitment and ends with two consecutive grounders.

In general, due to the LSD involved in these situations, the GE group uses less Query preparatory request strategies and more direct strategies than ever. Additionally, we have far fewer instances of the past tense and embedded “if” clause, and a very significant decrease in consultative devices, downtoners and grounders. Just like the GGs, we have an increase in *please* to make up for the decrease of other modifications, as well an attempt to employ linguistic devices that would end up reinforcing solidarity. Even though their strategy types and internal/external modifications are very similar to their GG counterparts, due to the difference between Greek and English, the effect of GG production might be more effective than that of the GEs.
iii. **Medium Social Distance Situations**

As opposed to LSD and HSD situations, where the relationship between interlocutors is somewhat more fixed, in MSD cases speaker and hearer must form their requests while at the same time set the terms of their relationship as well. Therefore, as we can see from the elicited data, the strategies and modifications used by the speakers are different from the ones used in the other two situations.

In terms of strategy types, the performance of the BE and GG groups resembles that employed in LSD situations, showing a variety of strategies ranging from the more direct to the conventionally indirect ones. The GEs being more self-conscious of their L2 language use remain faithful to the Query Preparatory just like they did in the HSD situations, but with an even higher percentage now. Of course, influenced by their L1, they also use Want statements but the diversity found in the other two groups of participants is not evident here.

With regards to Internal Modifications, again the GGs use fewer modifications than the other two groups whereas the BEs employ more --especially with regards to the past tense, the embedded “if” clause, intensifiers and the politeness device. In External modifications, the GE and GG groups’ performance is approximately on the same levels, with the native speakers of British English leading the way, except in the cases of Checking on Availability and Getting a Pre-commitment.

Compared to the LSD situations, as opposed to the BEs whose performance does not change when it comes to Internal modifications, the GGs now indicate an extensive use of the past and the embedded “if” clause which is believed to be functioning as a way to maximize the politeness level of the requests formed, since the use of the plural in the elicited data is scarce. This applies to the GE group as well, who function in exactly the same way, having
been influenced by their L1. Another characteristic of MSD production has to do with the use of disarmers by all three groups, which appears to be more than in LSD situations.

Compared to HSD data, we now have more Syntactic Modifications as well as politeness devices. Furthermore, we can also see more instances of external modifications which, with the exception on grounders, promises and alerters, appear more times now than before. It is believed that in HSD cases, the alerters were used by almost all participants because their main function was to denote and give credit to, the rank and the authority of the hearers in relation to the speakers, and were therefore considered imperative in the formation of the requests. As for the type of external modifications that the speakers chose to employ more in MSD cases, the researcher believes that this indicates the importance of minimizing the cost of the requests on the hearer, as well as the attempt by the speakers to show acknowledgement of the imposition involved and the possibility of denial. Grounders and promises are types that are used more in situations where there is no need to excuse oneself for making a request—i.e. in LSD cases—or when the cost of the request is high not only due to the size of the imposition involved, but also due to the lack of intimacy and difference in power between speaker and hearer—i.e. HSD situations.

Native speakers of British English

Like in LSD and HSD situations, MSD elicited data also showed certain tendencies that seemed to hold true for many participants. One of those had to do with the apparent difficulty of the speakers in forming request 11 and, to a lesser degree, request 4. In fact, for these two items the variety as well as the amount of modifications used were quite different than those employed in item 6.
Starting with the pragmatically easiest task to perform, the speakers in item 6 had to ask a transfer student to allow them to use one specific book for their paper. Here, it is believed that due to the low imposition level entailed in the request, as well as the probable superiority of the local student—speaker—towards a transfer student just moving in from abroad—hearer-, participants used mainly the interrogative as well as the past forms together with the embedded “if” clause in making their requests, combined with mainly grounders as external modifications and in some cases, checking for availability. As we can see from the following examples, even though in terms of syntactic modifications the specific requests were somewhat complex, the speakers did not put much effort in increasing their politeness effect on the hearer by using various lexical or external modifications:

80. Would you mind if I take the comedies from Shakespeare, because I think I will do better on this one? But only if you don’t mind…

81. Would you mind if I took the book on his comedies? I think I will work well on it.

82. Helen? What book are you planning to work on? Is it possible if I could work on Shakespeare’s comedies? However, if you want to work on that one, I’ll do a different one.

83. Helen, my favorite play of Shakespeare’s is Twelfth Night. Could I possibly work on that one? I love this play so much.

Sometimes, the external modifications included a sweetener in addition to the grounder:

84. Please, can I read the book on comedies? I love comedies and you can have that one. Honestly, I love your hair.

And in other cases, the grounder modified a more direct strategy type, like a Want statement:

85. Helen, I want to do the comedies instead of the other one because I think I will be better at it. Is it ok with you?

Moving on to situation 4 where the speaker wanted to ask the hearer to buy her a sandwich, one of the interesting points here has to do with the Introduction used by some of the
speakers before forming their requests. With speaker and hearer not knowing each other well, some participants felt that it would be beneficial for them to make some introductory remarks or questions before moving on the request proper. This aimed at gaining familiarity with the hearer and paving the way for the request to follow. In fact, in order to minimize the social distance between them and to make it easier for the speakers to go ahead with the request, one of them actually added a name to the hearer:

86. Sarah, would you mind if you can get me a sandwich too? I’m starving and I can’t leave the office.

Examples of requests preceded by introductory remarks are presented here:

87. Hi, are you new? It’s hard working here you know. I’ve been working all day and I’m so hungry. Are you going to get a sandwich? Is it possible if you can get me one please?

88. Hi, um...you’re new here aren’t you? You see, I can’t go for lunch because I haven’t finished my work but if you are going for lunch, can you get me a burger? Here’s the money. You’re a great help.

As we can see from the examples above, in addition to the introductions used to minimize the social distance between interlocutors, speakers also employed other modifications as well. In the first example, we have the grounder and checking for availability preceding the head act which, in turn, ends with the politeness device. In the second example, the grounder is followed by the cost minimizer and then by a query preparatory. The request ends with a sweetener. It is interesting here to note the use of money as a promise which aims at minimizing the size of imposition and facilitating a positive response:

89. Hi, would you get me a sandwich when you go down and get yours, here I will give you the money.

90. Hi! Excuse me but can you get me a cheese sandwich please? I’m starving. Here, I give you the money. I just can’t leave the office.

Other modifications employed to form item 4 included disarmers, getting a precommitments, and alerters:
91. **Excuse me, I’m sorry to disturb you but I can’t go out to buy lunch today.** Would you be able to get me a sandwich while you are out, if it’s no trouble and if it’s ok with you. Sorry but I have so much work to do and I can’t go out.

92. **Hello, would you do me a favor please?** I would like you to get me a sandwich while you are at the sandwich bar. Please, only if you don’t mind.

Moving on to item 11, again in an attempt to minimize the imposition and to build up some kind of familiarity with the hearer, speakers employed the introductory statements:

93. **Hi, we have never talked before have we? I’m K…. and you are?** Oh, I’m sorry to come to you like this but, I heard that you were at the seminar last weekend. I couldn’t attend it because I had to go to the hospital. Can you lend me your notes? I promise I will bring it back to you by tomorrow. Lunch is on me!

94. **Hi you look nice today! My name is ...** I wasn’t able to attend the seminar last weekend. Do you think I could borrow your notes on it for this report we have to do then maybe I can buy you coffee..?

Realizing the imposition involved, the speakers used many different kinds of modifications to form this specific request. They used grounders, disarmers, promises, sweeteners, consultative devices, understaters, checking for availability, as well as the embedded if construction, the past tense and the interrogative form. Additionally, they used exaggeration, a second request in order to hasten the response and get a precommitment, and they gave names even though there were no names in the description of the situations:

95. **Hi, did you go to the seminar? I couldn’t go because I was ill and as you know, I have to write a report about it. Could I please borrow your notes?**

96. **Hi, I know I don’t know you but I need to write a report on last week but I didn’t manage to go so, could you tell me about it a little bit please?**

97. **Is it possible for me to borrow your notes from the seminar last weekend? I couldn’t attend because something urgent came up. I am actually struggling.** The manager wants the report about it. Could you help me?

98. **Stephanie, I couldn’t attend the seminar last weekend but could I please look at your notes on the seminar?**
Native speakers of Greek-Cypriot.

In general, the performance of the GG group in MSD situations resembles that in LSD situations due to the lack of plural (we have use of the singular in all except one case), and in the shift of emphasis to the hearer, but in another, they are similar to HSD situations when it comes to extent and variety of modifications.

It is the researcher’s judgment that speakers did not use the plural, to avoid maximizing or increasing the social distance between them and their hearer. In cases where social distance is clearly high, pointing out that this is acknowledged by the speaker is an act of politeness which might sweeten the hearer and urge him/her to comply with the request. However, in cases where the SD status is not defined, it might be considered as best to minimize it, and thus facilitate the request. In fact, in one request where the speaker chose to use the plural, this was done in half of the request structure. As one can see from the example below, the speaker begins her request with the plural and then shifts to the singular right before forming the Head Act. Due to the fact that she did not know the hearer, the speaker decided to use the plural to show politeness and to make a good impression on her new acquaintance –especially since her intention was to make a request. However, as soon as the ice was broken and she established ground, she started using the singular to obtain closeness and make her request:

99. Γειά σας, θα ήθελα να σας ρωτήσω αν έχετε πάει στο σεμινάριο το σαββατοκύριακο. Ξέρετε, κάτι μου έτυγκε και δεν τα κατάφερα να πάω όμως θα πρέπει να δώσουμε αναφορά για το τι λέγθηκε. Θα ήταν εύκολο σου να μου δώσεις τις σημειώσεις σου να τις βγάλω copypaste και να σου τις επιστρέψω, ώστε να μη σου τις πάρω και να θες να δούλεψεις και να μη μπορείς.

(Hello, I would like to ask if you were at the seminar last weekend. You know, something came up and I was not able to go but we must report on what was said there. Would it be easy for you to give me your notes to make a copy and return back to you, so that I don’t take them away and you are not able to work if you want to?)

In addition to the use of the plural, this speaker is forming the request in such a way that at the end, she is giving an option to her hearer that is actually beneficial to her.
Another characteristic of GG performance is the fact that there are very few instances of solidarity devices now since interlocutors in MSD situations are not close friends, and use of any such devices would be considered pretentious. Specifically, data has shown only two instances of linguistic devices showing solidarity:

100. Να χαρείς, φέρε μου κι εμένα ένα σάντουιτς γιατί θα πεθάνω από την πείνα.

(Na hareis (expression giving the sense of a plea), bring me a sandwich too because I will die of starvation.)

101. Βρε...θα μου αγοράσεις κι εμένα ένα σάντουιτς γιατί σήμερα δεν έχω μία και αύριο κερνώ εγώ;

(Vre… you will buy me a sandwich too because today I don’t have a penny and tomorrow it will be my treat?)

In the first example, “Να χαρείς” is used to minimize the social distance between speaker and hearer and at the same time to give a sense of exaggeration to the request, in combination with “δεν έχω μία”. On the other hand, “βρε” functions only as a solidarity device but, one that is much more polite and appropriate than the others used in LSD situations. For this reason, the speaker does not use the Cypriot ρε which is considered vulgar if used amongst simple acquaintances, but chooses to use βρε which is standard modern Greek, and thus much more acceptable, even in MSD conversations.

Moving on, another characteristic of the GG request realization has to do with the way they used want statements and hedged want statements:

102. Χέλεν μου έχουμε να διαβάσουμε δύο βιβλία για τον Σαίξπηρ. Έχεις καμιά προτίμηση; Προτιμάς τις κωμωδίες ή τα δραματικά; Εγώ προσωπικά προτιμώ τις κωμωδίες, αλλά αν τις θέλεις, ok.

(Helen, we have two books on Shakespeare to read. Do you have any preference? Do you prefer comedies of dramas? Personally, I prefer comedies but if you want them, ok.)
94

103. Χέλεν, αν δεν σε πειράζει, θα προτιμούσα να διαβάσω το βιβλίο του Σαίξπηρ για τις κωμωδίες. Εσύ έχεις κάποια προτίμηση με κάποιο από τα δύο βιβλία θα μελετήσεις; 

(Helen, if you don’t mind, I would rather read Shakespeare’s book on comedies. Do you have any preference as to which of the two books you will study?)

104. Χέλεν θέλω να διαβάσω το βιβλίο με τις κωμωδίες. Είναι εντάξει?

(Helen, I want to read the book on comedies. Is it ok?)

Even though speakers here use a more direct strategy type, they do not appear to be inconsiderate as to the preferences of their interlocutors. Even though they clearly state what they want –and, in the first example, this choice is placed even before acknowledging the hearer’s wants--, use of disarmers, checking for availability and questioning the hearer’s approval of the speaker’s preferred choice help minimize the imposition involved in the request. Even in the last example where the want statement is not hedged but might sound more like an order, the elliptical request “Είναι εντάξει;” at the end, combined with the appropriate intonation makes it a perfectly appropriate request in a Greek environment. Actually, it is the researcher’s opinion that despite choice of strategy type, giving a way out to your hearer after having expressed your own feelings or preferences is another linguistic tool used by the speakers to get compliance. Acknowledging your hearers’ feelings shows politeness that, at the end of the day, cannot be refused. In LSD situations, it might be difficult –but certainly not impossible-- to say no due to the close friendship that exists between speaker and hearer. On the other hand, in MSD situations, it might be even more difficult to refuse due to politeness principles created by use of language and social norms that make it hard for someone to say no to a person they don’t know so well.

In fact, this tendency to show consideration to the hearer’s preferences is evident in many occasions found in the elicited data, regardless of strategy type:

105. Θα σε πείρα αν διάβαζα εγώ τις κωμωδίες; Αν ναι, πες μου.
(Would you mind if I read the comedies? If so, tell me)

106. Έχεις κάποια προτιμήσεις όσον αφορά το ποιο βιβλίο θα διαβάσεις; Διερωτώμαι αν θα μπορούσα να διαβάσω το συγκεκριμένο βιβλίο γιατί το βρίσκω πιο ενδιαφέρον. Είναι εντάξει; Αν υπάρχει πρόβλημα, απλά πες το...

(Do you have any preference as to which book you will read? I was wondering if I could read that specific book because I find it more interesting. Is it ok? If there is a problem, just say so...)

107. Γειά, τι κάνεις; Ζέρεις τι θα θέλα; Θα μπορούσες να μου δώσεις τις σημειώσεις σου από το σεμινάριο, αν είναι δυνατόν, και αν θέλεις, γιατί δυστυχώς δεν κατάφερα να παρευρεθώ;

(Hi, how are you? You know what I wanted? Could you give me your notes from the seminar, if it’s possible and if you want to, because unfortunately I wasn’t able to attend?)

Moving on to item 11 of the MSD situations, in addition to the downtoners “αν είναι δυνατόν, και αν θέλεις”, we also have another characteristic of GG data which was evident in BE request formation as well. With regards to the specific item in question, in an attempt to establish solidarity, the speakers tended to use introductory statements before making their requests in order to familiarize themselves with their hearers –“Γεια, τι κάνεις”-- and also, as we can see from the previous example, to pave the way for the request itself “Ζέρεις τι θα θέλα;”.

108. Καλημέρα. Είμαι η Άννα. Θα το εκτιμούσα πάρα πολύ αν μπορούσα να δανειστώ τις σημειώσεις σου από το σεμινάριο γιατί δεν κατάφερα να πάω.

(Good morning. I’m Anna. I would really appreciate it if I could borrow your notes from the seminar because I didn’t manage to go.)

109. Γεια σου τι κάνεις; Πήγας στο σεμινάριο; Μπορείς σε παρακαλώ να μου πεις τι λέγθηκε;

(Hi, how are you? Did you go to the seminar? Can you please tell me what was said?)

Due to the fact that this request was the most difficult to form –i.e this is further emphasized by the three instances of deciding not to respond to the specific situation—the Introductory commends were used by many participants before forming their requests. Additionally, they
employed a variety of other modifications as well. As we can see from the examples given, they used grounders, politeness devices, embedded “if” clause, checking for availability, promises, understaters, attempts to get a pre-commitment, disarmers, as well as the past and interrogative forms in forming the head acts:

110. Θα ήθελα να σου ζητήσω μια χάρη. Αν είναι και δεν σε πειράζει, μπορείς να μου δανείσεις τις σημειώσεις σου για το σεμινάριο;  

(I would like to ask you a favour. If you don’t mind me asking, can you lend me your notes on the seminar?)

111. Συγγνώμη, να σε ρωτήσω κάτι; Μήπως έτυχε να παρευρεθείς στο σεμινάριο που έγινε το προηγούμενο Σαββατοκύριακο; Θα μπορούσες μήπως να μου δώσεις τις σημειώσεις από το σεμινάριο να μελετήσω για λίγο; θα σου τις επιστρέψω αύριο.  

(Excuse me, can I ask you something? Did you happen to attend the seminar that took place last weekend? Could it be possible to give me the notes from the seminar to have a look for a while? I will give them back to you tomorrow.)

**Greek-Cypriot speakers of English**

One of the characteristics of GE performance has to do with the use of Want and Hedged want statements. Probably influenced by their L1, they appear to be using more want statements now, ending them with a confirmation at the end of the requests, just like the case of GGs:

112. Hey, I’d really like to read this one. Is it ok?  

113. Helen, I personally prefer to study the comedy, what do you think?  

114. I would really want to work on the book on his comedies. Is that ok with you?

Using the consultative device at the end or the requests for confirmation, the speakers are trying to show to the hearers that even though they are using a somewhat direct strategy type, they are not trying to impose their will on their hearers; they are trying to show that this is actually a question, and the outcome is dependent upon the hearer.
Another instance of L1 transfer occurred in situation 11 of the DCT which, again, proved to be of the highest imposition level for the speakers, who employed many and different kinds of modifications in order to obtain their objective:

115. Hey, can I ask you for something? I know you attended the seminar last week and I’d really need your notes. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend and I need your help!!

Here, in addition to getting a pre-commitment and offering a reason for the request, the speaker’s Head Act is preceded by what is believed to be an L1 transfer from Greek. In many similar occasions, the exact translation of this is used by speakers as some kind of introduction to the request or to the statement that follows. In Greek, it does not have any real semantic significance, and it is used only as a means to direct the hearer’s attention to a specific point of reference. When used in English though, it sounds more like an attempt by the speaker to warn the hearer that she knows that she has attended the seminar and that the latter should not say otherwise.

Another instance of what is believed to be L1 transfer is found in the following example:

116. Could I ask you for a huge favour? I could not attend the seminar and I need your notes to write a report. Would it be possible for you to give them to me?

The problem here lies in the choice of verb. By using give, the BE participant is actually using the verb usually employed in Greek in similar situations. However, the Greek δίνω does not have any negative or abrupt connotations behind it, and it does not presuppose a permanent situation. In English though, the researcher believes that give cannot normally be used in the place of lend or use, which refer to a short period of time. Therefore, by asking the hearer to give the notes, the speaker is in fact transferring his L1 knowledge and risks being impolite to her hearer. For this reason, none of the native speakers of English used give in the specific item. Instead they chose copy, use, and borrow.
One final point worth mentioning regarding GE performance has to do with the Introduction used in some of their requests. However, as opposed to the GGs who only used introductory comments for item 11, this group of participants employed the specific method for items 11 and 4, whereas the number of instances found were much less. The reason behind this is, I believe, the fear of making a mistake. Just like all non-native speakers, they chose to perform the requests without adding additional elements for which they were not sure so they used only the different types of external and internal modifications employed by the other two groups too:

117. Hi sorry to bother you. I’m Sandra from the Admissions. I heard you were going for a sandwich and I was wondering if you could get me one as well. I can’t leave the office right now but I’m really hungry. Would it be ok if I gave you money to get me one as well?

118. Excuse me, I’m Helen from the office over there. How are you? I heard you went to the seminar last weekend. Was it interesting? I had to go to my mother’s and I missed it. Well, I just have to find a way to do our boss’s report without him realizing that I hadn’t been there!

119. My name is ..., and I’m also an intern. I have been told that you have last weekend’s seminar notes and I would really appreciate it if you could lend them to me. Although it was an important seminar I was unable to attend and now I have to write a report about it.
CHAPTER VI.

DISCUSSION

i. **GENERAL FINDINGS OF THE STUDY.**

Following the findings of other studies, the present one has also shown that the most popular Request strategy type is the conventionally indirect Query Preparatory. Preferred by all groups regardless of social constraints, the specific type has proven to be the easiest and safest way to form a request without risking neither their own or their hearer’ face. More specifically, in HSD situations native speakers of British English showed preference for the specific strategy in combination with the Interrogative form, the politeness device *please* and the external modifications of alerters and grounders.

Likewise, the majority of Greek-Cypriot speakers of English chose the Query preparatory, but indicated preference for the past tense as a syntactic modification instead of the Interrogative form. Furthermore, even though choice of external modifications was similar, the GEs’ favorite lexical modification was the Downtoner, and not the politeness device. Influenced by their L1, the L2 speakers refrained from using *please* in their requests, even though the majority of the native speakers used it as part of their politeness strategies. Actually, it is believed that the Greek-Cypriot learners of English would have behaved more like the GG groups in terms of choice of Strategy types as well, had they been more confident in their English language proficiency levels. Once again, learners proved to be cautious as to the way they use the second language, and therefore chose to use a type that would satisfy their goal and at the same time help them avoid making any mistakes. This speculation can be justified by the fact that in LSD situations where communication was taking place amongst close friends and the risk of being offensive or impolite was low, GEs showed greater flexibility in their choice of request strategy types, and allowed themselves to be influenced more by their L1.
Moving on to the native speakers of Greek, in addition to the very limited use of *please* (either in Greek or in English), GG request realization was distinguished by the use of strategy types ranging over the entire directness scale. This variation was evident in all three social situations and characterized their performance, together with the fact that in all three settings they employed fewer modifications than the other groups. Now, does this mean that the Greeks—or in this case the Greek-Cypriots—are intrinsically less polite linguistically than others? The answer is no. Qualitative analysis of the elicited data has shown that in HSD the GGs have somehow replaced standard politeness devices with linguistic phenomena available in the Greek language that have a similar function. Namely, using the Politeness plural, the GGs could form perfectly acceptable requests without having to use many internal or external modifications or solely indirect strategy types. Of course, this is a speculation that this thesis does not deal with. However, it might be interesting to see how this claim holds true empirically through further research.

The importance of the politeness plural in forming pragmatically appropriate requests in Greek is also emphasized in LSD situations. In situations where the social distance between interlocutors was very low, and where speaker and hearer shared an intimate relationship, the politeness plural was not used, since that would have violated the feelings of solidarity and intimacy between interlocutors. Consequently, GG speakers chose to form polite requests by decreasing the more direct strategy types and increasing some types of modifications. This, in addition to the use of possessive pronouns and diminutives, helped minimize the imposition of the requests and bring hearer and speaker to a level of intimacy that paved the way for the requests itself to be made.

Regarding LSD GE and BE groups, participants appeared to be more flexible in their request realizations and used strategy types of varying directness levels, and fewer modifications
adjacent to them. Again, each group insisted on its preferred modifications, but the extent of their use was less. Regarding the GEs, lack of *please* in combination with the preference for more direct strategy types and fewer modifications might be the cause of communication breakdown, as well as the birth of generalizations like “the abrupt Cypriot”!

Finally, when it comes to MSD situations, both groups of native speakers used strategy types of all levels of directness, with the BEs employing fewer types of external modifications, fewer instances of the politeness device *please* but keeping their internal modifications similar to HSD situations. As for the GGs, modifications were less in their entirety, with the only exception being the increased use of disarmers, checking on availability and promises. This preference of the aforementioned modifications is also evident in the GE data. The only noticeable difference between the GEs and the other two groups has to do with the former’s choice of request strategy type, where we have an increased preference for the query preparatory. This further justifies the point raised before concerning the learners’ lack of confidence –or lack of knowledge-- when performing in their L2. Just like in HSD cases, now that the distance between speaker and hearer is not clearly set, the GEs chose to employ the safest request strategy in order to avoid sounding inappropriate to the ear of the native speaker.

In conclusion, it is evident from the elicited data that Greek-Cypriot second language learners of English showed instances of L1 transfer in various occasions. Namely, their limited use of the politeness device *please*, use of more direct strategy types in low social distance situations where the possibility of making a mistake in English was not considered so serious, occasional use of direct requests in HSD situations even though the politeness plural was not available in English, even instances of exaggerations that characterized Greek data, all were transferred in English even though native speakers formed their requests
differently. Transfer of L1 norms was also evident in measuring the size of imposition of specific situation. It has been observed that the degree of imposition of a situation may vary from one culture to another, and that perception of the situation will consequently affect the linguistic choices made by the speakers. Even though this is harmless when it comes to L1 production, when speakers are using their L2 this transfer of their culture’s sociopragmatic rules might cause serious communication breakdown.

In sum, one cannot make generalizations regarding whether a culture is more or less polite than another. Politeness is a characteristic that exists in all cultures. What differs are the disposition and the intentions of each individual speaker, the various ways this politeness is expressed in a language, as well as the level of politeness enclosed linguistically that a given action-situation should best receive. In other words, each language, be that Greek or English, allows its speakers to be polite; it is up to the individual to decide whether they will make use of that option or not.

ii. **Relating the Findings with Other Studies**

As per the researcher’s knowledge, not many studies have examined pragmatics phenomena in the Greek-Cypriot dialect even though some researchers have dealt with issues of speech act realization and politeness in Standard Modern Greek. Previous research has indicated that even though these are two linguistically and to some extent culturally different speech communities, they both value positive politeness and their speech is characterized by an emphasis in informality, solidarity and intimacy between people that belong to the same group –i.e. family, circle of friends, company etc (Georgiadou, 1997). The present study has indeed verified this preference of the Greeks –and especially the Greek-Cypriots— for positive politeness and the fact that interactions between close friends employ linguistic
devices that enhance informality and build on the notion of solidarity “Ksenos – Dikos” (Sifianou, 1992).

Another finding of the study that supports previously conducted research has to do with the Bulge effect, explained by Wolfson (Wolfson, 1988). According to the author, the two ends of the social distance continuum—i.e. low social distance and high social distance—yield very similar behavior due to the certainty that characterizes their social interactions. As she explains, “the more social status and social distance are seen as fixed, the easier it is for speakers to know what to expect of one another” (Wolfson, 1988: 33). On the other hand, in MSD situations when social relationships are open to negotiation, people seek to signal solidarity and to avoid confrontation. Indeed, as seen in the present study, MSD situations were characterized by an attempt on behalf of the participants to build on this solidarity. An example of this attempt is the lack of plural in the GG MSD data, as well the use of introductory comments—especially in situations where the level of imposition was high—in order to gain familiarity with their hearers and then form their request. Another example indicating the bulge effect has to do with the not so fixed distribution of the strategy types, as in low and high SD cases, as well as the use of modifications like checking on availability and disarmers which reflect the participants’ realization that they should build on solidarity and avoid confrontation before having the right to phrase their request.

Related to the issue of solidarity is the difference between Slavic and Mediterranean cultures on the one hand and Anglo-Saxon cultures on the other. According to Wierzbicka (1985), cultures that value positive politeness employ linguistic devices whose task is to enhance this intimacy and solidarity. Just like in Polish, the Greek language allows for the use of diminutives which, when used, can turn an imperative or a performative into a perfectly acceptable type of request. This finding is verified by the linguistic choices of the GG
participants who make extensive use of diminutives in LSD situations as a way to strengthen the solidarity bonds between them and their interlocutors and to pave the way for their request.

iii. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

The first limitation of the present study has to do with the method of data collection. As mentioned in the Literature Reviews as well, the Discourse Completion Task, effective as it may be, cannot be equated to natural speech. Even though studies have shown that DCT can successfully be used in studies on similar nature, one cannot disregard the negative effect of the questionnaire on the participants. The researcher believes that in some cases, the latter felt that it was imperative to respond to a situation due to the format of the data collection, even though this would not be the case in real life. Furthermore, participants might have used more or different kinds of modifications if the method of collection had been role play or some other, more naturalistic form of data gathering.

Another limitation of the study has to do with the size of imposition of the different situations. Even though the present study did not intend to look into this specific variable, degree of imposition varied between items, and that ended up interfering with the findings of the study in general. For this reason, some of the participants chose not to respond to specific situations due to the high imposition size whereas others formed the requests differently for items, even though the level of social distance of these items was the same.

Thirdly, the number of subjects who participated in the present study was relatively small, and this did not allow the researcher to present the findings in percentages or to conduct any other statistical analyses. Percentages were measured only with regards to Strategy types, since each participant chose only one such type, but this was not feasible when it came to the
different modifications. The variety of modification combinations that were presented in the
data, together with the small number of participants could not be shown in percentages,
since this would not yield any interesting findings. Related to this is the following additional
limitation. The small data specimen does not allow for any reliable generalizations to be
made with regards to the findings of the study. Some general tendencies of the groups under
study have indeed been noticed but any attempts to generalize them can only be made after
further research has been made.

Moreover, it was not possible to account for inter-rater reliability since the researcher could
not find anyone with sufficient knowledge of pragmatics who would be willing to code the
data for the study. This might have affected the findings in that researcher bias could not be
dealt with and some judgment errors could not be avoided. Along the same line, certain
linguistic devices used by the participants have been classified as belonging to a specific
category of modifications even though they did not exactly have all the characteristics of
that category. Specifically, there things like Time specification or hedged promises were
labeled under the general term promises since, in the researcher’s opinion, their function in a
request was very similar to that of Promise. For the same reason, some linguistic devices
that had the function of a sweetener were also categorized as such, even though one could
argue that they could be names Hedged sweeteners. It is the researcher’s opinion that since
those linguistic tools were employed by the participants to fulfill certain functions—that or a
promise or a sweetener—they should be labeled as such.

Two more limitations are related to the groups of Greek-Cypriot learners of English and
native speakers of British English. Specifically, regarding the first group, even though
participation in the study presupposed an advanced knowledge of the L2, no placement test
was actually given to ensure that all participants were indeed advanced. Their English
proficiency level was assumed based on the fact that all of them had to have passed the University Entrance Exam in English with high scores – entrance in the University of Cyprus is very difficult due to the small number of accepted candidates every year -- and also based on the fact that at the time of the data collection, they were already in their third or fourth year of studies. Nevertheless, since their proficiency level was not tested one cannot be sure whether the findings of the study were not influenced by it and if they were, to what extent. As for the BEs, since it was not possible to control for their origin – i.e. whether they are English, Welsh, Scots etc—nor for the social class it is likely that if the researcher could control for these variable, the findings would have been more valid.

Finally, one more limitation of the study is related to the fact that the various assumptions made by the researcher could not be empirically tested. For example, it has been assumed that due to the difference in request realization as well as due to the different ways that the BE and the GE groups perceived the various social distance situations, it is possible that pragmatic failure will occur. Furthermore, it was also assumed that in HSD situations, both the BE and the GG groups formed polite requests, the first one using numerically more modifications and more conventionally indirect requests and the second using less modifications and a variety of strategy types in addition to the Plural of politeness. It is believed that the validity of these assumptions can only be determined if they are empirically examined in future studies.

iv. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should take into consideration both the method of data collection as well as the amount of data collected. It is the researcher’s opinion that some other more naturalistic form of data gathering might allow participants to be more verbose in their realizations of requests and thus yield more interesting results. Furthermore, a larger data specimen would
allow for safer generalizations to be concluded as well as more elaborate statistical analyses. Another point that has to do with the data and should be taken under consideration in future research has to do with coding. To avoid researcher bias and to ensure more reliable results in the study, future studies should best allow raters to help in the coding of the data.

Accounting for the level of imposition of the various situations is another point that future research should consider. It is important to make sure that all items describing the same social constraint belong to the same level of imposition. Accounting for the level of imposition can be done with the help of native speakers of British English on the one hand and Greek on the other, who should rate the various situations described in the DCT and rank them based on the size of imposition. DCT items that do not share the same level of imposition for both speech communities might best be discarded.

Another area of future research could examine the assumptions made in this study. Specifically, the requests formed by the GE groups could be rated by native speakers of British English according to whether they are considered appropriate/polite or not. This can provide more reliable information regarding whether pragmatic failure does indeed occur and if communication breakdown is a real danger when the two speech communities communicate. Furthermore, it was also assumed that both groups of native speakers (i.e. BE and GG) form appropriate and polite requests, even though each groups employs different linguistic devices and strategies. Future studies could also look into this assumption and test whether BB and GG requests are rated with the same values of politeness and propriety.

Finally, since it is very important for the findings of the present study to ensure the advanced English proficiency level of the Greek-Cypriot L2 learners, future research should perform
an English placement test prior to data collection to make sure that all participants of this
group share the same L2 linguistic level.
Σας παρακαλώ να διαβάσετε προσεκτικά τα πιο κάτω υποθετικά σενάρια και να συμπληρώσετε τα κενά. Η έκταση των απαντήσεων σας δεν είναι σημαντική. Συμπληρώστε όπως θα απαντούσετε προφορικά. Αυτό που έχει σημασία είναι οι απαντήσεις σας να αντικατοπτρίζουν όσο το δυνατό περισσότερο αυτές που θα δίνατε στην καθημερινότητα, αν βρισκόσαστε κάτω από τις ίδιες συνθήκες.
Σας ευχαριστώ εκ των προτέρων.

Έτος φοίτησης: __________________________

Υπηκοότητα: ____________________________

Τόπος διαμονής: ____________________________

Situations.

1. Δυστυχώς έχεις αποτύχει στο τελευταίο διαγώνισμα στα Μαθηματικά και νιώθεις χάλια. Ζητάς λοιπόν από τον Καθηγητή, τον Δρ Πήτερσον, να σου ξανακάνεις την εξέταση.
Λές:

2. Βρίσκεσαι σπίτι και πρέπει να στείλεις ένα πακέτο στην Ιταλία το συντομότερο δυνατό. Δεν μπορείς να πας η ίδια αλλά η συγκάτοικός σου, η Μαρία, πρόκειται να πάει να ταχυδρομήσει ένα δικό της γράμμα. Θέλεις να της ζητήσεις να ταχυδρομήσει και το δικό σου.
Λές

3. Έχεις δανειστεί το αγαπημένο φόρεμα της φίλης σου και κατά λάθος το έχεις σχίσει. Θέλεις να της απολογηθείς.
Λές:
4. Δουλεύεις όλη μέρα και έχεις πεθάνει από την πείνα. Δεν μπορείς όμως να φύγεις από το γραφείο αλλά μια καινούργια συνάδελφος την οποία δεν γνωρίζεις πολύ καλά πρόκειται να πάει να αγοράσει ένα σάντουιτς. Θέλεις να της ζητήσεις να σου φέρει κι εσένα ένα.
Λές:

5. Ο διευθυντής σου, ο κος Μάρκου, σου έχει ζητήσει να ετοιμάσεις μια αναφορά μέχρι αύριο αλλά δεν υπάρχει περιπτώση να μπορέσεις να την τελειώσεις εμπρόθεσμα. Του ζητάς να σου δώσει ακόμα λίγες μέρες διορία.
Λές:

6. Σου έχουν αναθέσει να ετοιμάσεις μια εξέταση για το μάθημα των Αγγλικών σε συνεργασία με την Χέλεν, μια φοιτήτρια ανταλλαγής που μόλις ήρθε από την Καλιφόρνια. Για να την ετοιμάσετε θα πρέπει να διαβάσετε δύο βιβλία για τον Σαίξπηρ και εσύ θέλεις να διαβάσετε εκείνο που μιλά για τις κωμωδίες του. Ζητάς από την κοπέλα να σε αφήσει να ασχοληθείς με αυτό.
Λές:

7. Μια φίλη ζητά να δανειστεί το αυτοκίνητο σου γιατί το δικό της βρίσκεται για επιδόρθωση. Όμως πρέπει να πάς εκτός πόλης αυτό το σαββατοκύριακο και δεν μπορείς να της το δανείσει.
Λές:

8. Πρέπει να διαβάσεις ένα βιβλίο για την Ιστορία του 1ου Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου για να κάνεις μια έρευνα αλλά ξέρεις ότι το έχει ο καθηγητής σου, ο Δρ Πήτερσον. Αποφασίζεις να πας στο γραφείο του να του το ζητήσεις.
Λές:

9. Εσύ και η Τζοάννα, μια πολύ στενή σου φίλη παίρνετε μαζί το μάθημα της Χημείας. Εσύ αντιμετωπίζεις µερικά προβλήματα με το μάθημα σε αντίθεση με τη φίλη σου που είναι φοιτήτρια του Α. Θέλεις να της ζητήσεις να σου κάνει ιδιαίτερα μαθήματα αυτό το εξάμηνο.
Λές:
10. Μια φίλη σου σε κατηγορεί ότι την διαβάλλεις αν και εσύ δεν έχεις κάνει τίποτε τέτοιο. Όντας σίγουρη για την αθωότητα σου αρνείσεαι τις κατηγορίες.

Λες:

11. Το περασμένο σαββατοκύριακο έγινε ένα πολύ σημαντικό σεμινάριο και ο διευθυντής σας είχε ζητήσει όπως όλοι οι μαθητευόμενοι να παραβρεθούν. Εντούτοις δεν μπόρεσε να πας και τώρα είσαι αναγκασμένη να γράψεις μια ανάλυση σχετικά με το τι έγινε. Η μόνη που πήγε είναι μια κοπέλα από το γραφείο, επίσης μαθητευόμενη, της οποίας όμως δεν σου δόθηκε η ευκαιρία ποτέ να μιλήσεις. Θέλεις να της ζητήσεις να σου δώσει τις σημειώσεις που πήρε στο σεμινάριο.

Λες:

12. Έχεις ένα σημαντικό ραντεβού απόψε και θέλεις να κάνεις καλή εντύπωση αλλά δεν έχεις κάτι καλό να φορέσεις. Η συγκάτοικός σου, η Καίτη, μόλις έχει αγοράσει ένα θαυμάσιο, σέξι, μαύρο φόρεμα και θέλεις να σου το δανείσει για απόψε.

Λες:
Appendix 2

DCT Questionnaire – Greek

Please read the following situations carefully and then fill in the missing part. The length of your responses is not important. Make them as long or as short as what you would actually say in oral speech. What is important is to be as natural as possible and to give answers that you would really use in everyday life if you found yourself in similar situations. Thank you in advance.

Year of study: _____________________

Nationality: _____________________

City of residence: _____________________

Situations.

1. Unfortunately you did very badly in your last Math exam and you feel awful about it. You ask your professor, Dr Peterson, for a makeup test.
   You say:

   2. You are at home and you have to send a packet to Italy as quickly as possible. You are unable to go out but your roommate, Maria, is just about ready to go out to mail her letter. You want to ask her to mail your packet too.
   You say:

   3. You have borrowed your friend’s favorite outfit and you have accidentally torn it. You want to apologize about it.
   You say:

   4. You have been working all day and you are starving. You cannot leave the office but a new colleague whom you don’t really know is just about ready to go down and get herself a sandwich. You want to ask her to get you one.
   You say:
5. You have been asked by your manager, Mr. Jones, to have a report ready by tomorrow but there is no way that you will be able to meet the deadline. You want to ask her for an extension.

You say:

6. You’ve been assigned to do a midterm paper for your English class, with Helen, a transfer student who has just moved from California. You have to read two books on Shakespeare and you want to take the one on his comedies. You want to ask this girl to let you work on that one.

You say:

7. A friend is asking to borrow your car for the weekend because hers is in the shop. However you have to go out of town this weekend so you cannot lend it to her.

You say:

8. You need to read a book on the 1st World War for your research but you know that your professor, Dr Peterson, has got it; so you decide to go to his office and ask for it.

You say:

9. You and Joanna, a close friend of yours are taking a Chemistry class together. You are facing some problems with the course as opposed to your friend who is an A student. You want to ask her to help you by tutoring you during this semester.

You say:

10. Your friend is falsely accusing you of badmouthing her. You know you have done no such thing so you deny the accusations.

You say:

11. There was a very important seminar last weekend and your manager had requested that all interns should attend. However, you could not attend and now you have to write a report about it. The only person who has been there is this girl from your office. She is also an intern but you had never had the chance to actually speak to her before. You want to ask her for her notes on the seminar.

You say:
12. You have a date tonight and you want to make a good impression but you have nothing to wear. Your roommate, Katie, has just bought a wonderful, sexy, black dress so you want her to lend it to you for the night.

**You say:**
Appendix 3

Table 14

Distribution of Strategy Types across all groups, in all social distance situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>HSD</th>
<th>LSD</th>
<th>MSD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BE</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>GG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood Derivable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performatives</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedged performatives</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation statements</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want statements</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestory formulae</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Query preparatory</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong hints</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild Hint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opting out</td>
<td>2 (Item #12)</td>
<td>1 (Item #12)</td>
<td>2 (Item #12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will you ....</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 15

Distribution of Internal Modifications across all groups, in all social distance situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>Interrogative</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Past tense</th>
<th>Embedded “if” Clause</th>
<th>Consultative Devices</th>
<th>Understaters</th>
<th>Hedges</th>
<th>Downtoners</th>
<th>Politeness Device</th>
<th>Intensifiers</th>
<th>Expletives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HSD</strong></td>
<td>BE</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>GG</td>
<td>BE</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>GG</td>
<td>BE</td>
<td>MSD</td>
<td>BE</td>
<td>Intensifiers</td>
<td>Expletives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic Downgraders</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical Downgraders</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upgraders</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16

Distribution of Internal Modifications across all groups, in all social distance situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>GE</th>
<th>GG</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>GE</th>
<th>GG</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>GE</th>
<th>GG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking on Availability</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a pre-commitment</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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