External supportive moves in Yemeni Arabic as used by female speakers in the same gender and cross gender

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Abstract - This study investigates the types and frequency of supportive moves in Yemeni Arabic as used by female speakers in the same gender and cross gender. The respondents of the study were 336 undergraduate students from Sana’a University, aged 20-23. All of the participants are relatively homogeneous in terms of their cultural background. The data were collected by using Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The analysis of the data is based on Blum-Kulka et al.’s (1989) CCSARP (Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project) coding scheme. The results showed that Yemeni females showed greater use of external supportive moves when interacting with females more than to males. Regarding the use of external supportive moves according to direct head act of requests and indirect head of requests, in general, female respondents in F-F, F-M interactions have a great tendency to employ external supportive moves with direct and indirect head act of requests. In other words, it was observed that female respondents convey polite request by using external supportive moves regardless of directness or indirectness.

Keywords: same gender, cross gender, request, direct request, indirect request, supportive moves
1. Introduction

The emphasis on language as accomplishing certain communicative function led to concentrate on the notion of the speech acts, or the use of an utterance to achieve a specific goal. The application of the notion of speech acts is one of the important points that led researchers such as Austin (1962) to explain the notion of the speech acts. According to Austin (1962) speech is a unit of speaking, used to perform different functions in communication and certain actions can only be carried out using language.

According to Searle (1969: 21), “the speech act is the minimal unit of communication.” This refers that Searle is aware of the significance of context. Searle (1969) takes Austin’s felicity conditions a step further and systematizes the nature of the conditions as: the prepositional content condition, the preparatory condition, the sincerity condition, and the essential condition, which are necessary for a particular utterance to count as a given act; that is, for the successful performance of a particular speech act.

Furthermore, Searle (1976) argued that Austin’s classification did not introduce a clear classification for illocutionary acts. Therefore, Searle (1979: 12-20) classified illocutionary acts into five categories, which reflect the different types of conditions underlying speech acts: 1-Representatives, which tell, people how things are, (e.g. suggest, insist, or swear) 2-Directives which try to get people to do things (e.g. order, request or invite) 3-Comissives, which make us commit ourselves to do things (e.g. intend or favour) 4-Expressive which make us express our feelings and attitudes (e.g. thank, congratulate, or apologize) 5-Declarations, which make us bring about changes through our utterances (e.g. resign, appoint somebody, or fire somebody)

It can be observed that Searle’s classification of the illocutionary acts provide some useful insights for analyzing utterances. Searle’s categories or classifications are more widely used today. However, Vanderveken and Kubo (2002) note that Searle’s theory is not a theory of conversation and that the future of speech act theory should lie in the development of a theory of discourse. Reiter & Placencia (2005) point out that Searle’s theory is insensitive to cultural variation in the conceptualization and use of indirectness.

Many studies have been conducted to investigate the use of supportive moves as mitigators for request. Felix-Brasdefer (2005) conducted a study to examine the notions of indirectness and politeness in speech act of requests, including head acts and external modifications, among Mexican University students in role-play situation. The findings of the study show that NSs of Mexican Spanish prefer to use conventional indirectness strategies by means of ‘query preparatory’ when making request in situations, which display + Power or + Distance, whereas they prefer to use directness strategies when the relationship between the interlocutors was closer (-Distance). Furthermore, the study proves that there is no relation between indirectness and politeness as observed by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983). The findings of the study show that direct requests are situation-dependent and seem to be the expected behaviour among Mexican subjects in a solidarity politeness system (-Power, – Distance). In addition, the findings indicate that NSs of Mexican Spanish use various supportive moves to soften and smooth conversational interaction. These supportive moves are considered as mitigators to soften the harshness of direct requests.

Economidou-Kogetsidis (2002) investigates the way Greek non-native speakers of English use lexical and phrasal down-graders and external supportive moves in order to soften the force of their English requests and the extent to which this mitigation deviates from that of British English native speakers. The findings indicate that the amount and type of modification
used by the Greek learners present some deviations from native speakers’ use. These deviations can be seen as being due to native influence and therefore to pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic transfer, as well as to the different perception of politeness by the two language/cultural groups.

Therefore, the current study is an attempt in this direction to examine this important aspect of their communicative competence in Yemeni Arabic through request as an important type of speech acts. The current study differs from previous studies because it investigates the kind of supportive moves and their roles in making polite request in Yemeni Arabic in the same gender and cross gender.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 The Speech Act of Request in Arabic

According to Haron (2001) atalab (directive) falls under what is called alnafa? ‘initiating’, as opposed to alxabar ‘reporting’. alnafa? cannot be described as true or false, while alxabar can be described as true or false depending on whether it agrees or disagrees with the reality of the world. atalab (directive) in Arabic has two types (1) al-amr that requires the addressee to do something. (2) al-nahiy that requires the addressee not to do something. atalab in Arabic is used to issue a command by someone of higher status to someone of lower status. For example,

(1) ʔuktub darsak. (al-amr)
Write your lesson.

(2) la tuχa:lif wa:lidayka (al-nahiy)
Don’t disobey your parents

In the example (1), it is clear that the speaker used al-amr (command) and it can be observed that al-amr (command) in Arabic used by someone of higher status to someone of lower status. In the example (2) it can be noted that the speaker use al-nahiy to make a command by asking someone not to do something. To make al-nahiy in Arabic, the speakers have to add the particle la (no) before the verb to change the verb to jussive.

However, meaning of directive in Arabic may change when the context change as will be seen in the following most common cases:

A. Praying: a speaker of lower status addressing a person of higher status implies such a meaning.

(3) ja:rab sa:mihni
Oh Allah, forgive me.

B. Requesting: the directive is used here between equals. A friend is asking his friend to wait for him.

(4) la:tagrudʒ min albait hata ?aʃu:d
Don’t leave home until I come back.

C. Expressing a wish: here, the speaker expresses a wish for something hard to get, someone who has got tired of his life.

(5) ja:mautu: ?qdim ?inxna l-hayata ɖami:matun
Oh death, come, life is unbearable.

D. Advising: here, the addressee is not under any obligation to follow the directive. A father is giving advice to his son.

(6) sa: hib min ?nnas ɠa:ya: ra: hum.
Choose your friends from the best people.
It can be observed from the examples above that Arabic makes use of the context to derive the meaning of the directive. In other words, in Arabic the kind of the topic and the status of the relationship between the speaker and the addressee determine the meaning of the directive.

2.2 Gender

Gender and speech behaviour are seen as interrelated variables. As a result, sociolinguistic research has been conducted on gender differences in speech act and politeness. However, empirical findings seem to suggest that gender differences do exist in politeness; women are considered more polite, less critical, and prone to using more softening devices than men (Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1990; Boxer, 1993; Holmes, 1995). Scollon and Scollon (1995) state that women use indirect strategies to communication, and men use direct style to communication. This observation is confirmed by Holmes (1995:2) who says that women generally more polite than men. She points out that “Most women enjoy talk and regard talking as an important means of keeping in touch, especially with friends and intimates. They use language to establish, nurture and develop the personal relationships. Men tend to see language more as a tool for obtaining and conveying information.” Many researchers have reported that women are using politeness strategies in their speech more than men and women are more likely to apologize soften criticism or express thanks more than men (Holmes, 1998; Herbert, 1990; Pilkington, 1998; Tannen, 1994). According to the above discussion, it can be concluded that men and women use language differently and these differences can be observed in politeness.

3. Method

3.1 Respondents

The respondents of the study consisted of 336 undergraduate students (male and female respondents) from Sana’a University. All of the respondents were native speakers of Yemeni Arabic, aged 20-23. They were relatively homogeneous in terms of their cultural background.

3.2 Procedures

The respondents were asked to fill out a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The DCT was written in Arabic language in order to obtain responses in Arabic. The DCT involves twelve written conversations that denote twelve different situations. In each situation, there is a brief description. The DCT was distributed to the respondents to complete each dialogue by writing a suitable request in Yemeni Arabic in Female-Female and Female-Male Interaction across twelve situations.

3.3 Data Analysis

The coding scheme applied in the current study was mainly based on the coding manual developed by Blum-Kulka et al., (1989) in the Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP). They were coded depending on the following types of supportive moves:

| Table 1 External Supportive Moves according to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1-Grounder                  | 2-Preparator                  |
| 3-Apology                   | 4-Gratitude                   |
5. Disarmer
6. Getting a pre-commitment
7. Imposition minimizer

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 External Request Modifications used with Direct and Indirect Head Act of Requests by Female - Female and Female - Male Interactions

This section presents the distribution of external supportive moves across the twelve situations in female-female and female-male interactions. The results are presented according to direct and indirect head act of the requests as shown in the Tables 2, 3 and 4.

As shown in Table 2, the findings indicate that the female respondents employed external supportive moves with direct and indirect strategies in order to mitigate their requests with different frequencies and percentages. Furthermore, the Chi-square test was conducted to investigate the differences or similarities in the use of external supportive moves in F-F and F-M interactions with regard to direct head act of requests and indirect head acts of requests. The results of the Chi-square test indicates that there is no significant difference in the use of external supportive moves in F-F and F-M interactions in situations 1, 2, 3 and 4. The p value in situations 1, 2, 3 and 4 in F-F interactions is 0.932, 0.953, 0.999 and 0.990, p < 0.05, respectively. Furthermore, the p value in situation 1, 2, 3 and 4 in F-M interactions is 0.988, 0.838, 0.997 and 0.992, p < 0.05, respectively.

Referring to the use of external supportive moves, it can be observed that the female respondents have a great preference to employ various external supportive moves in F-F and F-M interactions. The female respondents consider the external supportive moves important parts in making requests and polite markers that help to mitigate and soften their requests.

Regarding direct head act of requests and indirect head of requests, the female respondents in F-F and F-M interactions have a great tendency to employ external supportive moves with direct and indirect head act of requests. It can be noted from Table 3 that the use of external supportive moves in Yemeni Arabic with direct and indirect head act of requests is obligatory to mitigate and soften the request and to make it polite and tactful request.

Table 2 shows that the female respondents seem to be aware of that the degree of politeness does not affected by directness or indirectness. They are aware that the degree of politeness is affected by the external supportive moves. They consider the head act of requests that proceeds or follows by external supportive moves as polite request. Therefore, they consider as obligatory element in making polite requests in Yemeni Arabic.

| Supportive moves | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|
| Preparatory (formulaic) | F-F | F-M | F-F | F-M | F-F | F-M | F-F | F-M |
| D | I | D | I | D | I | D | I | D | I |
| 39 | 35 | 34 | 28 | 13 | 10 | 9 | 7 | 45 | 38 |
| grounder (formulaic) | F-F | F-M | F-F | F-M | F-F | F-M | F-F | F-M |
| D | I | D | I | D | I | D | I | D | I |
| 27 | 25 | 28 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Table 2 External Supportive Moves Used in Direct and Indirect Head Act of Requests in F-F & F-M Interactions in Situations 1, 2, 3 & 4
Commitment (formulaic)

|                | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|
| Getting a pre- |    |    |    |    |
| commitment      |    |    |    |    |
| (semi-          |    |    |    |    |
| formulaic)      |    |    |    |    |
| Apology         |    |    |    |    |
| (formulaic)     |    |    |    |    |
| Disarmer        |    |    |    |    |
| (semi-          |    |    |    |    |
| formulaic)      |    |    |    |    |
| Imposition      |    |    |    |    |
| minimizer       |    |    |    |    |
| (semi-          |    |    |    |    |
| formulaic)      |    |    |    |    |
| Gratitude       |    |    |    |    |
| (formulaic)     |    |    |    |    |

The table above shows the percentage of external supportive moves used in direct and indirect head act of requests in Yemeni Arabic. The findings indicate that there is no significant difference in the use of external supportive moves in F-F and F-M interactions according to the degree of directness or indirectness. The p value in situations 5, 6, 7 and 8 in F-F interactions is 0.785, 0.984, 0.974 and 0.979, p<0.05, respectively. Furthermore, the p value in situation 5, 6, 7 and 8 in F-M interactions is 0.940, 0.991, 0.995 and 0.703, p <0.05, respectively.

With regard to the use of external supportive moves, the findings show that the female respondents in Yemeni Arabic used various external supportive moves to mitigate and soften the harshness of requests and make it polite. The external supportive moves are employed by the female respondents to show their requests as polite request. It seems that the external supportive moves are very important in Yemeni Arabic and it is consider as the source of politeness in request in Yemeni culture. It seems that the use of supportive moves in Yemeni Arabic with direct and indirect head act of requests is compulsory.

Furthermore, the Chi-square test was conducted to examine whether F-F and F-M interactions differ in their use of external supportive moves according to directness and indirectness in situations 5, 6, 7 and 8. As shown in Table 3, the results indicate that there is no significant difference in the use of external supportive moves in F-F and F-M interactions according to the degree of directness or indirectness. The p value in situations 5, 6, 7 and 8 in F-F interactions is 0.785, 0.984, 0.974 and 0.979, p<0.05, respectively. Furthermore, the p value in situation 5, 6, 7 and 8 in F-M interactions is 0.940, 0.991, 0.995 and 0.703, p <0.05, respectively.

Table 3 External Supportive Moves Used in Direct and Indirect Head Act of Requests in F-F & F-M Interactions in Situations 5, 6, 7 & 8

| Supportive moves | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|
|                  | D  | D  | D  | D  |
| Preparatory      | 34 | 26 | 30 | 25 |
| (formulaic)      | 56.7% | 43.3% | 54.5% | 45.5% |
| grounder         | 11 | 10 | 15 | 9  |
| (formulaic)      | 52.4% | 47.6% | 62.5% | 37.5% |
| Getting a        | 34 | 28 | 27 | 25 |
| pre-commitment   | 54.8% | 45.2% | 51.9% | 48.1% |
| (semi-formulaic) |    |    |    |    |
| F-F              | 38 | 32 | 34 | 26 |
| F-M              | 29 | 25 | 30 | 24 |
| F-F              | 53.7% | 46.3% | 55.6% | 44.4% |
| F-M              | 43.3% | 46.3% | 55.6% | 44.4% |
| F-F              | 52.9% | 47.1% | 56.3% | 43.8% |
| F-M              | 55.9% | 44.1% | 60.0% | 40.0% |
The analysis was also carried for situations 9, 10, 11 and 12 to examine if the F-F and F-M interactions differ in the use of external supportive moves according to direct head act of requests or indirect head act of requests. As shown in Table 4, the findings of the Chi-square tests indicate that there is no significant difference in the use of external supportive moves in F-F and F-M interactions according to directness or indirectness. The p value in situations 9, 10, 11 and 12 in F-F interactions is 0.948, 1.000, 0.932 and 0.986, p<0.05, respectively. Furthermore, the p value in situation 9, 10, 11 and 12 in F-M interactions is 0.981, 0.982, 0.826 and 0.926, p <0.05, respectively.

From the Table 4 it should be noted that the female respondents in F-F and F-M interactions tend to use the external supportive moves to mitigate and soften their requests. It seems that the degree of politeness is reflected in the use of the external supportive moves instead of direct strategies or indirect strategies. It is interesting to observe that the male respondents in F-F and F-M interactions convey the polite request by using the external supportive moves regardless of directness or indirectness. It seems that the use of external supportive moves in Yemeni Arabic with direct and indirect head act of requests is very important to convey polite request.

Table 4 External Supportive Moves Used in Direct and Indirect Head Act of Requests in F-F & F-M Interactions in Situations 9, 10, 11 & 12

| Supportive moves | S9 | S10 | S11 | S12 |
|------------------|----|-----|-----|-----|
|                  | F-F | F-M | F-F | F-M | F-F | F-M | F-F | F-M |
|                  | D  | I   | D  | I   | D  | I   | D  | I   |
| Preparatory      | 43 | 38  | 37 | 30  | 23 | 17  | 24 | 15  |
| (formulaic)      | 53.1% | 46.9% | 55.2% | 44.8% | 57.5% | 42.5% | 61.5% | 38.5% |
| grounder         | 18 | 13  | 24 | 19  | 34 | 26  | 36 | 28  |
| (formulaic)      | 58.1% | 41.9% | 55.8% | 44.2% | 56.7% | 43.3% | 56.3% | 43.8% |
| Getting a        | 12 | 8   | 9  | 8   | 22 | 18  | 15 | 14  |
| pre-commitment   | 60.0% | 40.0% | 52.9% | 47.1% | 55.0% | 45.0% | 51.7% | 48.3% |
| (semi-formulaic) | 60.0% | 40.0% | 52.6% | 47.4% | 62.5% | 37.5% | 57.1% | 42.9% |

D = Direct Head Act  I = Indirect Head Act
Disarmer (semi-formulaic)  
|   | 7 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 6 | 9 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % | 70.0 | 30.0 | 66.7 | 33.3 | 60.0 | 40.0 | 66.7 | 33.3 | 62.5 | 37.5 | 52.9 | 47.1 |

Imposition minimizer (semi-formulaic)  
|   | 6 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % | 66.7 | 33.3 | 55.6 | 44.4 | 54.5 | 45.5 | 63.6 | 36.4 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 100 | 57.1 | 42.9 | 75.0 | 25.0 |

Gratitude (formulaic)  
|   | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % | 57.1 | 42.9 | 71.4 | 28.6 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 60.0 | 40.0 | 75.0 | 25.0 | 66.7 | 33.3 | 75.0 | 25.0 | 57.1 | 42.9 |

Total  
|   | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chi-square test | 0.948 | 0.981 | 1.000 | 0.982 | 0.932 | 0.826 | 0.986 | 0.926 |
| Chi-square test | 0.948 | 0.981 | 1.000 | 0.982 | 0.932 | 0.826 | 0.986 | 0.926 |

D = Direct Head Act  
I = Indirect Head Act

4.2 Types of External Supportive Moves Used in F-F and F-M Interactions

The external supportive moves were used in F-F and F-M interactions as mitigators for requests in Yemeni Arabic. The most frequent external supportive moves found in the data in F-F and F-M interactions are as follows: (refer to Table 5).

Preparator

Preparator is a kind of external supportive move that is used to introduce the request to prepare the hearer for an upcoming request and draw the hearer’s attention. The data of the current study identifies different external supportive moves of preparators, which often occur at the beginning of request. An external supportive move of preparators is the first preferred utterance among the respondents in female-female interactions and female-male interactions. It occurs across the twelve situations with different frequencies. The overall use of external supportive moves of preparatory across twelve situations in F-F interactions is (33% [n= 668]), whereas, the overall use of them across twelve situations in F-M interactions is (31% [n= 624]). It can be observed that there is a slight preference in F-F interactions to use external supportive moves of preparators more than in the F-M interactions. External supportive moves of preparators can be observed in some of the examples below:

Preparator  
Request

(11)  
*Law samahtag*  
*If you allowed me*  
*Excuse me*

|   | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ja:mdirah | mamkin | ?rwihi | badri |
| hey manager | can | go | early |
| manager, | can I | leave work | early? |

?ljirm | maši | mawcid | mša | tabib alasnan |
| today | have-I | appointment | with | dentist |
| today, | I have | an appointment | with | dentist. |

Preparator  
Request

(12)  
*?iøa takarramt*  
*If you be generous enough*  
*Please*

|   | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ja:ayči | ?irani | daftara-k |
| brother-my | lend-me | notebook-your |
| my brother, | lend me | your notebook |

?swir | almuḥadarah
From the examples above, respondents use external supportive moves in order to prepare the hearer for the ensuing request. The speaker usually announces that he/she will make a request either by means of checking the hearer availability for carrying out the request or by asking the hearer permission to make the request. It also can be found that the head acts are modified by external supportive moves. For example, ‘Laaw sama’ (excuse me) for male in (11), ‘ʔi?d? takarramt’ (please) for male in (12), ‘ʔi?d? takarramt’ (please) for female in (13) and ‘ʔi?d? ma:fi: ʔi?z?d?’ (If there is no bother) for male or female in (14). External supportive moves, which mentioned above are in excess of the politic behaviour that can be expected during the interaction, and can thus be open to a polite interpretation. The respondents also used religious plea as external supportive moves to mitigate and soften the upcoming requests such as ‘aallah jo?ba?rik fi:k’ (Allah blesses you) for male in (15) and ‘aallah ja?h?d?ak’ (Allah preserves you) in (16).
Grounders

Grounder is another example of external supportive moves. It can be observed from Table 4.44 that external supportive move of grounder (reasons or justification) is the second preferred utterance among the respondents in F-F interactions and F-M interactions. The function of external supportive move is to mitigate the illocutionary force of request and to smooth the conversational interaction. The overall use of external supportive moves across eleven situations in F-F interactions is (23% [n= 471]), whereas, the overall use of external supportive moves across eleven situations in F-M interactions is (24% [n= 479]). It can be observed that there is no difference in the choice of external supportive moves. In F-F interactions and F-M interactions, it is preferred strategy by respondents to mitigate their requests. External supportive moves of grounders can be observed in some of the examples below:

Request

(17) Law samahti jaːtʃ-ʔi ʕirn-ʔi mahmul-ʔi mbf
If you allowed me sister-my lend-me laptop-your type
Excuse me my sister, lend me your laptop to type

Grounder (reason/justification)

waʃyibi mahmuːli mɔstal
assignment -my laptop-ty broken
my assignment my laptop is broken.

Grounder (reason/justification) Request

(18) min faʃlik ʔana kənt saibʔ mɔss wajtɕ
out of your bounty I was absent yesterday want
Please, I was absent yesterday and I want

ʔstaːiɾ daftari-k ʔnqîl almuhadarât
borrow notebook-your copy lectures
to borrow to your notebook to copy the lectures.

Request

(19) allah jawdsak jaːsam saliː wasln-ɀ la-suːq
Allah preserve you Hey uncle Saleh take-me to-market
Allah preserves you, my uncle Saleh give me a ride to the market

Grounder (reason/justification)

ʔʃtarì fawakh ʔndi dʃyuːf
to buy fruit have-I guests
to buy fruit I have guests.

From the examples above, it can be seen external supportive moves as a co-operative mitigator that mitigates the conversational interaction by giving reasons or justifications. External supportive moves make the hearer to be more understanding and willing to co-operate such as ‘mahmuːli mɔstal’ (my laptop is broken), in (17), ‘ʔana kənt saibʔ mɔss’ (I was absent yesterday’ in (18) and ‘ʔʃtarì fawakh ʔndi dʃyuːf’ (to buy fruit. I have guests) in (19). The external supportive moves, which used in examples 17, 18 and 19 form part of the expected politic behaviour in this type of interaction. However, these external supportive moves can be interpreted as polite justification that mitigates the request.
**Getting a Pre-Commitments**

Getting a pre-commitment is an external supportive move and is considered as one of the important external supportive moves. It is the third preferred utterance among the respondents in F-F interactions and F-M interactions. The overall use of external supportive moves across eleven situations in F-F interactions is (15% \[n= 292\]), whereas, the overall use of external supportive moves across eleven situations in F-M interactions is (13% \[n= 265\]). It can be observed that there is a great preference in F-F interactions to use getting pre-commitments more than in the F-M interactions. Getting pre-commitments can be observed in some of the examples below:

| Getting a pre-commitment                                                                 | Request                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| *(20)* məmkin ʔtlo b mennik ʔidmah                                                      | ja:ʔostaðah ʔʃt-i                                                     |
| possible I-request from you help                                                         | my teacher, want-I                                                    |
| *Can I ask your help                                                                       |                                                                        |
| astəʃ:i:r kitab-ik                                                                     |                                                                        |
| borrow book-your                                                                       |                                                                        |
| to borrow your book.                                                                    |                                                                        |

| Getting a pre-commitment                                                                 | Request                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| *(21)* ʔiða maːfiː ʔiʃidɡ məmkin ʔidmah                                               | ja:mədirah ʔʃt-i                                                     |
| If no bother possible help                                                             | my manager, want-I                                                    |
| If there is no bother can you help me                                                 |                                                                        |
| sjaːraːt-ik ʔwasil ʔay-i min almahtah                                                  |                                                                        |
| car-your lift brother-my from station                                                  |                                                                        |
| your car to lift my brother from station                                               |                                                                        |

| Getting a pre-commitment                                                                 | Request                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| *(22)* baammkanak tsədni                                                                | ja:ʔhmad ʔʃt-i tsəlfini fəluːs                                          |
| able-you help-me                                                                       | hey ahmed want-I lend- me money                                         |
| Can you able to help me?                                                                 | Ahmed, I want to lend me money?                                         |
| nisiːt fəluːsi fi albeit                                                                |                                                                        |
| forgot money-my at home                                                                 |                                                                        |
| I forgot my money at home                                                               |                                                                        |

As shown in the examples above, external supportive moves used by the respondents with head acts to prepare the hearer for request and prepare the addressee for what could be as a favour. They are devices used at the beginning of the head act to help the speaker feel that he/she has a safer ground for uttering his/her request. For example, all requests, which mentioned in the examples above, can be interpreted as face threatening acts (FTA). Therefore, the speakers use the external supportive moves in excess of the required politic behaviour of the interaction and are open to an interpretation as polite utterances that help to protect the speakers’ faces and hearers’ faces, such as ‘məmkin ʔtlo b manic ʔidmah’ (can I ask your help) for female in (20), ‘ʔiða maːfiː ʔiʃidɡ məmkin ʔidmah’ (If there is no bother can you help me) for male or female in (21) ‘baammkanak tsədni’ (can you able to help me) in (22).
Apology

Apology is another type of external supportive moves. External supportive move of apology is the fourth preferred utterance among the respondents in F-F interactions and F-M interactions. It occurs across the twelve situations with different frequencies. The overall use of external supportive move of apology across twelve situations in F-F interactions is (9% \[n= 195\]), whereas, the overall use of external supportive move of apology across twelve situations in F-M interactions is (10% \[n= 206\]). The function of apology is to minimize and mitigate the impact of request and to attract the hearer’s attention. It also helps the requester to save his face and the addressee’s face. Apology can be observed in some of the examples below:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Apology} & \text{Request} \\
(23) & & \\
\text{ʕafwan} & \text{jaʔustʔað} & \text{məmκin} & \text{tśirin-i} & \text{kitab-ik} \\
\text{sorry} & \text{hey teacher} & \text{can} & \text{lend-me} & \text{book-your} \\
\text{I am sorry} & \text{teacher,} & \text{can you} & \text{lend me} & \text{your book?} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Apology} & \text{Request} \\
(24) & & \\
\text{ʕafwan} & \text{jaʔɔtʔi} & \text{ʔdi-li} & \text{alfaturah} \\
\text{sorry} & \text{sister-my} & \text{give- me} & \text{bill} \\
\text{I am sorry} & \text{my sister,} & \text{give me} & \text{the bill.} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Apology} & \text{Request} \\
(25) & & \\
\text{ʕafwan} & \text{jaʔi} & \text{wasln-i} & \text{la-suʔq} & \text{niʃari} \\
\text{sorry} & \text{hey ali} & \text{take-me} & \text{to-market} & \text{to buy} \\
\text{I am sorry} & \text{Ali,} & \text{take me} & \text{to the market} & \text{to buy} \\
\end{array}
\]

fruit for-family
fruit for my family.

As shown in the examples above, external supportive moves of apology were used by the respondents to minimize and mitigate the negative effects of request with direct and indirect head act request strategies such as ‘ʕafwan’ (I am sorry) for male or female in 23, 24, 25 and 26. External supportive moves of apology used at the beginning of the head act as introduction for the request and to be guaranteed ground for requesting. Thus, ‘ʕafwan’ (I am sorry) is open to polite interpretation. It is considered as a part of politic behaviour in this type of verbal interaction and considers as a mitigator for request. It also helps the requester to save his face and the addressee’s face.
Disarmers
Disarmer is considered as external supportive move. External supportive move of disarmer is the fifth preferred utterance among the respondents in F-F interactions and F-M interactions. It occurs across eleven situations with different frequencies. The overall use of external supportive move of disarmer across eleven situations in female-female interactions is (8% \[n = 167\]), whereas, the overall use of external supportive move of disarmer across eleven situations in female-male interactions is (8% \[n = 163\]). It can be observed that there is no difference in the choice of external supportive move of disarmer in F-F interactions and F-M interactions. This type of external supportive moves of disarmers can be seen in some of the examples below:

| Disarmer                           | Request                           |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (27) ʔiða maːfiː ʔiʃʔʤ                               | jaːbint-i ʔiʃran-i mahmulak          |
| if no bother                       | hey-daughter lend-me laptop-your  |
| if there is no bother              | my daughter, lend me your laptop  |

lm̩ʔadat saːʔah
for an hour
for an hour.

| Disarmer                           | Request                           |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (28) ʔana ʔiʃniʃ mafuːlah            | jaːʔistaːʔah ʔajt-i               |
| i know you                         | hey teacher want-I               |
| i know you are busy                | my teacher, I want you           |

tʊktʊbɪ-li
write-me
to write for me

| Disarmer                           | Request                           |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (29) ʔiða maːfiː ʔhradʒ             | jaːsaḥab-i ʔʃt̩i tsalifni          |
| if no embarrassed                  | hey friend-my I want lend-me      |
| if there is no embarrassed         | My friend, I want you lend me     |

fuːlʊːs
money
money.

As can be seen from the examples above, the respondents use external supportive moves devices, which disarm hearers from the possibility of refusal. In other words, the respondents try to remove any potential objections the hearer might raise upon being confronted with the request. External supportive moves of disarmers may include clauses that express speaker’s awareness that the request deemed as an imposition on the hearer. They are considered as part of politic behaviour, which classify as polite and appropriate utterances that save the speakers’ faces and hearers’ faces. The respondents use these disarmers as mitigators and tactful strategy to remove potential objection of refusing the request, such as ‘ʔiða maːfiː ʔiʃʔʤ’ (If there is
no bother) for male or female in (27), ‘ʔana dari ʔnish mafuːlah’ (I know you are very busy), for female in (28) and ‘ʔida maːfiː ʔhradʃ’ (If there is no embarrassed) in (29).

Imposition minimizers

Imposition minimizer is a external supportive move. It is the sixth preferred utterance among the respondents in F-F interactions and F-M interactions. It occurs across nine situations with different frequencies. The overall use of external supportive move of imposition minimizer across nine situations in F-F interactions is (8% \[n= 155\]), whereas, the overall use of external supportive move of imposition minimizer across nine situations in F-M interactions is (9% \[n= 175\]). It can be observed that there is a great preference in F-M interactions to use external supportive move of imposition minimizer more than in the F-F interactions. They employed it to reduce imposition, mitigate their request, make request smooth and to protect the speaker’s face and hearer’s face. External supportive moves of imposition minimizer can be observed in some of the examples below:

Request
(30) jaːsali ʔila albaqaːlah w-ʃtari ʔdrawaːt
*  
Hey saleh go to grocery and-buy vegetable
Saleh, go to grocery and buys vegetable.

Imposition minimizer
almakan qarib
place near
The place is not far.

(31) allah jaːfðik jaːhaːdʒah ʔajtiki tnaːdifi maktab-i
*  
Allah bless you hajji, I want you to clean my office.

Imposition minimizer
ʔams daqaˈaq bass
five minutes only
just five minutes.

From the examples above, the respondents use the external supportive moves as an attempt to reduce the negative effects of imposition. It also make request smooth and acceptable, and to convince the hearer to accept the requests by making it very smooth request such as ‘almakan qarib’ (the place is not far) in (30), and ‘ʔams daqaˈaq bass’ (just five minutes) in (31). Thus, ‘almakan qarib’ (the place is not far) in (30), and ‘ʔams daqaˈaq bass’ (just five minutes) in (31) are aimed to support the hearers’ faces. They are considered as a part of politic behaviour and they are a form of politeness payment for the negative impact of the request.

Gratitude

Gratitude is another type of external supportive moves. It is the least preferred utterances among the respondents in F-F interactions and F-M interactions. It occurs across eleven situations with low frequencies. The overall use of external supportive move of gratitude across eleven situations in F-F interactions is (4% \[n= 68\]), whereas, the overall use of external supportive move of gratitude across eleven situations in F-M interactions is (5% \[n= 96\]). It
can be observed that there is a great preference in F-M interactions to use external supportive moves of gratitude more than in the F-F interactions. The function of external supportive moves of gratitude is to minimize and mitigate the impact of request and show the appreciation to the hearers as closing. The external supportive moves of gratitude can be observed in some of the examples below:

**Request**

| (32) | ja:-mʊbaʃer ?uri:d mennak tegi:b-li alfaturah |
|------|------------------------------------------------|
| *    | hey waiter want From you give- to me bill       |
|      | Waiter, 1 want you To give me the bill.         |

**Gratitude**

| w-maʃku:rin Šala ţadamatakōm |
|-----------------------------|
| and-thank-you for service-your |

**Request**

| (33) | Law samaħti ja:mmodirah mumkin tidi-li ʂja:ra:τ-ik |
|------|--------------------------------------------------|
| *    | If you allowed me hey manager can give-me car-you |
|      | Excuse me my manager, can you give me your car   |

**Gratitude**

| ?wasil ?ạ:-i min almahtah maʃa htrami lakɔm |
|---------------------------------------------|
| lift brother-my from station with respect-my for you with my respect. |

From the examples above, it can be observed that external supportive move of gratitude is used as a part of the required politc behaviour to mitigate and soften the request by weakens the negative effect of the requests head act. Gratitude were used with head acts such as ‘w-maʃku:rin Šala ţadamatakōm’ (and thank you for your service) in (32) and ‘maʃa htrami lakɔm’ (with my respect) in (33). The use of external supportive moves of gratitude show solidarity between the interlocutors and decrease the negative effects of requests.

5. Conclusion

As illustrated in Table 5 that female respondents generally showed greater use of external supportive moves to mitigate their requests. Seven external supportive moves were identified in the data of the present study in F-F, F-M interactions. However, in the F-F interactions, the number of external supportive moves that identified in the data was 2016. However, in F-M interactions the number of external supportive moves was 2008. The findings showed that Yemeni females showed greater use of external supportive moves when interacting with females more than to males. Regarding the use of external supportive moves according to direct head act of requests and indirect head of requests, in general, female respondents in F-F, F-M interactions have a great tendency to employ external supportive moves with direct and indirect head act of requests. It seems that the use of external supportive moves in Yemeni Arabic with indirect head act of requests is obligatory to mitigate and soften requests and make it polite.
request. In other words, it is interesting to observe that female respondents convey polite request by using external supportive moves regardless of directness or indirectness.

Table 5 Distribution External Supportive Moves Utterances in Yemeni Arabic in Female-Female Interaction and Female Male Interaction across twelve situations

| Supportive move          | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 | S11 | S12 | Total |
|--------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Grounding                | 52 | 50 | 0  | 0  | 11 | 6  | 8  | 4  | 21 | 24  | 21  | 26  | 60    |
| Disarming                | 6  | 10 | 65 | 33 | 21 | 40 | 46 | 2  | 7  | 6   | 11  | 0   | 40    |
| Imposition minimizer     | 0  | 0  | 60 | 92 | 19 | 12 | 33 | 34 | 0  | 0   | 0   | 10  | 72    |
| Preparatory              | 74 | 62 | 23 | 16 | 83 | 80 | 50 | 60 | 60 | 55  | 70  | 60  | 124   |
| Getting a pre-commitment| 0  | 0  | 4  | 8  | 20 | 11 | 7  | 6  | 62 | 52  | 47  | 50  | 302   |
| Apology                  | 20 | 27 | 10 | 10 | 15 | 15 | 24 | 10 | 23 | 30  | 21  | 15  | 64    |
| Gratitude                | 16 | 19 | 6  | 9  | 7  | 15 | 6  | 8  | 0  | 0   | 3   | 6   | 4     |

Chi-square: .494 .001 .176 .185 .288 .433 .444 .154 .293 .713 .732 .899 1966 2008

D = Direct Head Act  I = Indirect Head Act
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