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The Speech Act of Invitation: A Contrastive Analysis of Moroccan Arabic and American English

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ABSTRACT

The present study has highlighted the similarities and the differences between American English (AE) and Moroccan Arabic (MA) in terms of the speech act of invitation. In fact, several strategies have been used to make, accept, and decline an invitation. The study's data has been collected via two online questionnaires using Google Forms. In fact, there is one questionnaire which was used to collect data from Americans who speak English as their mother tongue and another one for Moroccan whose mother tongue is Moroccan Arabic. Both questionnaires comprise a number of parts. The first part is where personal information is provided. As a matter of fact, the participants are asked about their region and city as well as their age and sex. They are also asked about their level of education. The second part is composed of four situations for each questionnaire. The participants have to answer in American English when filling out the questionnaire designed in English, whereas others have to answer in Moroccan Arabic when filling out the one in Arabic. The results have shown that there are some similarities between MA and AE in terms of the speech act of invitation. Therefore, it is worthwhile to note that in both AE and MA, there are some indirect and direct strategies which are used to make an invitation. In fact, there are many strategies shared by both MA and AE which indicates that there are similarities. However, there are also some differences given that each language has its own socio-cultural background.

Keywords: *Speech acts theory, Invitation, Moroccan Arabic, American English, Cultural understanding, Socio-pragmatics*

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Learning a second language is not simply a matter of memorizing new words or internalizing a particular grammar. As a matter of fact, there is another aspect of language which is no less important than the linguistic competence. Canale and Swain (1980) assert that despite the fact that the linguistic competence is important for developing proficiency, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence is also needed in this respect. This aspect of language competence is indeed the use of language in a given socio-cultural context. Therefore, in order to use the language appropriately, one should have an adequate understanding of the language functions of the second language in its socio-cultural contexts. Second language learners transfer the sociopragmatic knowledge from their first language (L1) to their second language (L2) resulting in what Thomas (1983) calls sociopragmatic failure. That is to say, second language learners fail to communicate what they intend to communicate in the second language in the sense that they misuse the language functions. This may, ergo, lead to communication breakdown and misunderstandings. These misunderstandings may take place when people from different sociocultural backgrounds meet for business, cultural exchange, or tourism. A prime example of such meetings can be held between Moroccans and Americans as there is a growing interest from the two parties in making business and cultural exchange. In fact, a number of agreements have been signed and partnerships have been created. For instance, in 1982, Morocco and the United States created a commission for cultural exchange under the title of the Moroccan-American Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange and signed as well on June 15, 2004 a Free Trade Agreement which led to the rise of trade exchange between the two countries. This is why, there are important things in language that need to be taken into consideration in order to maintain friendly relations and mutual cultural understanding. As invitation is one of the first things language users encounter in a new culture, the present paper compares Moroccan Arabic and American English in terms of the speech act of invitation. Therefore, investigating the speech act of invitation in relation to Moroccan Arabic and American English is an integral part of building deeper understanding and having successful communication between people who belong to different sociocultural backgrounds. For this reason, it is of paramount importance to understand the language functions in general and invitation in particular.

Research Objectives

This research investigates the speech act of invitation as it is communicated in both Moroccan Arabic (MA) and American English (AE). It endeavors to underline the strategies used by native speakers of MA as well as those of AE

to make an invitation. The paper under investigation also aims to draw a comparison between MA and AE via displaying the similarities and/or differences. Highlighting these similarities and differences can serve as an added value to prevent any possible misunderstanding between Moroccans and Americans when it comes to invitation.

Research Questions

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the strategies used to make invitation in MA and AE?
2. Are there any similarities or differences between MA and AE in this regard? If yes, what are they?

Research Hypotheses

The paper has three main hypotheses which are as follows:

1. There are a number of indirect and direct strategies which are used to make an invitation in MA and AE.
2. There are some similarities and differences between MA and AE in terms of the speech act of invitation.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Pragmatics

Yule (1996) defines pragmatics as "*the study of meaning as communicated by the speaker and interpreted by a listener.*" (p.3) In other words, pragmatics concerns itself with the interpretation of meaning as communicated by the speaker. In the same vein, Bublitz and Norrick (2011) assert that: "*Pragmatics is frequently conceptualized as the science of language use, the study of context-dependent meaning and the study of speaker-intended meaning, presupposing the existence of language, language user and context on the one hand, and context-independent meaning on the other.*" (p.24) Pragmatics is concerned more with the use of language from the perspective of the speakers. In fact, when speakers use language, they make choices and face challenges in social communication. It is worth noting that Bublitz and Norrick's definition mentioned above highlights the importance of language users in the field of pragmatics. Meaning is also of paramount importance in pragmatics. In this respect, Leech (1983) defines pragmatics as "*the study of how utterances have meanings in situation.*" (p. x) In straightforward terms, pragmatics is the study of language used by speakers in a given context. Pragmatics as a field of linguistics encompasses a number of sub-disciplines among which are Cross-cultural Pragmatics, Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP), Socio-pragmatics, to mention, but a few. There are also some highly important theories which lie under the umbrella of pragmatics, specifically, Speech Act Theory.

Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatic Competence has been defined according to Taguchi (2009) as being able to use language in an appropriate manner in a given social context. In fact, it has been of serious concern to a number of researchers in the fields of linguistics, applied linguistics, anthropology, sociology, psychology, communication research, and cross-cultural studies. (p.1) To be pragmatically competent, one needs both knowledge and processing skills to apply it in a particular social context in real time communication. When it comes to Second Language Learning, learners can only perform language functions on the condition that they have knowledge of linguistic forms. Therefore, such knowledge is of paramount importance in the sense that the said learners also need to understand the sociocultural rules that restrict the usage of the linguistic forms mentioned earlier. There is, indeed, a wide range of abilities that pragmatic competence encompasses which are related to the use of interpretation of language in contexts. First and foremost, pragmatic competence entails the ability of speakers to use language for different purposes. For instance, it can be used to make a request, instruct, or make a change. Second, it includes the ability of listeners when it comes to comprehending what speakers really mean, i.e their real intentions, specifically indirect use of language such as indirect request, irony, and sarcasm, to mention but a few. Third, the ability to be cognizant of the rules that govern language use and create discourse in a sociocultural context. Successful conversations are the result of listeners being able to understand the linguistic forms and get the real intentions of speakers. Conversation breakdown takes place when listeners cannot get the intentions speakers really convey. (Ellen Bialystok in Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993, p. 43)

Pragmatic Transfer

Pragmatic transfer is made up of two words pragmatic and transfer. The term transfer comes originally from behaviorist psychology. Additionally, it has been criticized for its "*unwanted*" associations. However, it has lost the majority of its associations to structuralism and behaviorism. Therefore, transfer has another meaning and it is used to refer to cross-linguistic influence. *Id Est*, it refers now to "*the different ways in which one language may influence the learning of another.*" (Ringbom, 2007, p. 30)

Cross-cultural Pragmatics

Trosborg (2010) maintains that cross-cultural pragmatics is related to comparative cultural studies. That is to say, cross-cultural pragmatics deals with the differences and similarities among cultures. (p. 2) Cross-cultural pragmatics is primarily concerned with the differences among cultures, specifically in ways of speaking, cultural values and/or their hierarchies, and communicative styles. By accounting for these differences, “*serious social and interpersonal problems can be resolved.*” (Vierzbicka, 2003, p. 69) For this reason, it is important to investigate the differences and/or similarities between MA and AE.

Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP)

According to Kasper (1998) cited in Putz and Neff-van Aertselaer (2008), ILP concerns itself with the way non-native speakers comprehend and produce action in an L2 as well as the way the ability of action comprehension and production develops. In the same vein, Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) define ILP as: “*the study of non-native speakers’ use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language.*” In the definition above, ILP is necessarily linked to non-native speakers and second language acquisition or use.

Intercultural Pragmatics

Pragmatics concerns itself with the users’ use of language in an intra- and inter-cultural context. Therefore, there should be a clear connection between pragmatics and the cultural in the sense that pragmatics deals with the use of language and language, per se, is part of culture. In fact, pragmatics plays a key role in accounting for intra- and interculturality in a particular language-oriented context. (Mey cited in Kecskes and Horn, 2007, p. 165) In this regard, Putz and Neff-Aertselaer (2008) point out in their introduction that: “*Intercultural pragmatics explores the interaction between insights from pragmatics and from intercultural communication, all in relation to the roles and functions of language and communication in a world-wide communication network.*” As is stated in the quote above, the field of intercultural pragmatics centers heavily upon intercultural communication and its relation to the roles and functions of language. According to Kecskes (2014), there is a socio-cognitive perspective that is represented by intercultural pragmatics wherein individual prior and actual social situational experiences are all of equal importance in terms of comprehension and meaning construction. (p. 14)

Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory is considered as one of the prominent theories in the field of pragmatics. Research related to this theory dates back to Austin’s book in 1962.

Austin (1962) maintains that we perform actions when producing an utterance. He provides a list of examples to elaborate on his point (p. 7). The examples under investigation are listed below:

“(E. a) ‘I do (sc take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife)’ – as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony.

“(E. b) ‘I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth – as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stem.

“(E. c) ‘I give and bequeath my watch to my brother’ – as occurring in a will.

“(E. d) ‘I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow.’”

(Austin, 1962 p. 5)

In the examples listed above, there is more than just words uttered. Actions as well are indeed performed when those words are uttered. The verb do in the first example is not merely a word. It is actually an act by which two people are wedded by the law and by religion which is in this case Christianity. In the second example, naming the ship is not simply about naming it, but about saying the name that one would like to give to something or someone. In a will, people can offer their relatives or friends something such as a watch. Words written in a will are not written only for that sake, but there is an act that will be performed when someone dies which is the act of inheriting the deceased’s belongings. In the last example mentioned by Austin, the word bet is not only a word to be uttered, but an act to be performed in the future. That is to say, if it won’t rain tomorrow, the speaker is required to give the hearer sixpence. If the hearer agrees to bet the speaker and it will rain tomorrow, then he or she supposed to give sixpence to the speaker.

Austin (1962) clarifies his point about the aforementioned examples by stating the following:

“In these examples it seems clear that to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not to describe my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it. None of the utterances cited is either true or false: I assert this as obvious and do not argue it. It needs argument no more than that ‘damn’ is not true or false: it may be that the utterance ‘serves to inform you’ - but that is quite different.”

(p. 6)

Austin puts much emphasis on the act to be done rather than just the act of saying in the sense that what is being said is not merely a description of what is being done, but actually doing what is being said. The utterances provided earlier by Austin as examples are not meant to give information, but to stress the fact that they are performative utterances by which acts are performed instead of declarative sentences.

To deal with utterances, Austin (1962) highlights three levels of analysis. The locutionary act which can be defined as *'the act of saying something.'* Indeed, locutionary act concerns itself with the performance of locutions or *'full unit of speech.'* Locutions can also be defined as utterances which have more to do with saying things rather than doing (p.94). Locutions can be used, according to Austin (1962), in a number of ways which are the following:

*asking or answering a question,
giving some information or an assurance or a warning,
announcing a verdict or an intention,
pronouncing a sentence,
making an appointment or an appeal or a criticism,
making an identification or giving a description, and the numerous like.* (p.98)

Those were some functions in which speech can be used such as either when giving information, announcing something, asking a question, or making appointments and identification. After giving examples of ways in which speech can be used, it is high time one can define the second level of analysis, *Id est*, Illocutionary act which is defined by Austin (1962) as the *"performance of an act in saying something as opposed to an act of saying something."* (p. 99) There is actually a big difference between the two opposed definitions in the sense that the first one is that of the illocutionary act whereas the second is for the locutionary act. There is another level of analysis that is used to deal with utterances, specifically perlocutionary act. Austin clarifies the perlocutionary act in what follows:

"Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them; and we may then say, thinking of this, that the speaker has performed an act in the nomenclature of which reference is made either (C. a), only obliquely or even (C. b), not at all, to the performance of the locutionary or illocutionary act. We shall call the performance of an act of this kind the performance of a perlocution." (p. 101)

The perlocutionary act is simply an act performed by the speaker when saying something which has an impact or rather an effect on the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the hearer. That is to say, the speaker may say something that affects the hearer mostly emotionally and that is what the perlocutionary act is all about. In the explanation above, there is also some emphasis on the idea that the effect is consequential in that there is a real consequence which is caused by what the speaker says. All things considered, the act in question is, *inter alia*, the third level of analysis that Austin (1962) suggests to deal with utterances. (Austin, 1962 p. 101)

The locutionary act is manifested in the verb 'said' which represents the act of saying. Each word is meant as it is in the example under investigation. The illocutionary act is presented via the verb 'urged' which may imply one of the two acts: either the act of advice or order. Here in Act B, it is not simply a matter of saying, but rather an act of giving advice or order. The perlocutionary act describes the effect of speaker on a person who is either convinced or forced to shoot someone else. Thus, there is an effect of the speaker in Acts C on the hearer's action that is shooting someone.

(Austin 1962, 102)

Austin (1962) provides more examples to clarify his point on the difference between locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Indeed, in the examples above, he uses different verbs to distinguish between the acts in question. For instance, in act A, he uses the verb *"said"* to imply that the first act is about a statement more than an action. In act B, the verb *"protested"* is used to indicate that there is an action taking place as opposed to another one. Therefore, protesting is not merely a statement, but rather an action. As for the perlocutionary acts, two examples are given in this respect. In fact, there are a number of verbs used to indicate that there is an effect on the hearer's feelings, thoughts and/or actions, specifically in the phrases *"pulled me up"*, *"stopped me"*, and *"annoyed me."*

Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

One can distinguish between two types of speech acts, namely a direct speech act and an indirect speech act. In fact, a direct speech act communicates the literal meaning of the words being expressed, whereas an indirect one communicates a different meaning apart from the apparent meaning. Speech acts are closely related to society and social dimension in that the use of some of them are motivated by the lack of familiarity, the reasonableness of the task, the formality of the context and social distance. Speech acts are also related to the cultural dimension in the sense that their linguistic realizations are culturally bound. (Cutting 2002, p.19)

Three Facts about Illocutionary Acts

There are three main facts about illocutionary act. First, an illocutionary act is a social act. Second, it is speaker-oriented. Third, an illocutionary act is always present be it implicit or explicit. To prove the existence of implicit illocutionary acts, some linguistic evidence is in order. The sentence *this house is constructed by John and myself* is grammatical, whereas the sentence *this house is constructed by John and herself* is not. This is because there is an implicit performative prefix (I claim that) before the two sentences which account for their grammaticality or ungrammaticality. (Elhaloui 2016, pp. 29-32)

Illocutionary Acts and Meaning Rules

Meaning is assigned to illocutionary acts via some rules which are accepted by both interlocutors: the speaker and the hearer. The meaning of these illocutionary acts is determined by four rules which are the Propositional Content Condition (PCC), the Preparatory Condition (PC), the Sincerity Condition (SC), and the Essential Condition (EC). The PCC can be explained in terms of illocutionary acts which are similar to mental ones which must have an object. One can use a sentence or a proposition to express the object in question. For instance, when one believes in something, then there is an object of believing. The object of loving means that one loves someone or something. It would be, therefore, absurd to just love. (Elhaloui 2016, pp. 43-45) The rule with which, for instance, the speech act of apology is specified is as follows:

$$\text{APOLOGY}_{\text{PCC}} = A_{\text{past}} \text{ by } S$$

The object of the speech act of apology is about an act in the past performed by the speaker. That is to say, the speaker says sorry to the hearer about something that happened in the past. The act has been therefore done in the past by the speaker. The second rule is that of the PC which states that in order for an illocutionary act to be successful, the speaker or the hearer must have some beliefs about that act. (Elhaloui 2016, p. 49) Indeed, this is clarified by Searle (1969) and cited in Elhaloui (2016) as the following:

“When I make a statement, I imply that I can back it up. When I make a promise, I imply that the thing promised is in the hearer’s interest. When I thank someone, I imply that the thing I am thanking him for has benefited me or at least intended to benefit me); etc.” (p. 49)

The quote above implies that one should always imply what he or she expresses in order for the given illocutionary to be felicitous. By thanking, for instance, the speaker implies that something has been actually of benefit to him or her or at least intended to be useful. If there is no belief that the speaker has benefits, then the speech act of thanking will not be successful.

The following formula gives an idea about how the speech act of apology is satisfied with respect to the second rule in question:

$$\text{APOLOGY}_{\text{PC}} = \text{(i) } B(S) [B(H) [A \text{ is not to the benefit of } H]] \\ \text{(ii) } B(S) [S \text{ is responsible for } A]$$

(Elhaloui 2016, p. 50)

In order for the speech act of apology to be felicitous, the speaker has to believe that the act is not to the benefit of the speaker as well as assumes his or her own responsibility for the act.

The third rule is the SC which is related to the speaker’s true intention about an act. In other words, the speaker is required to be sincere about the act that he or she performs. By so doing, the SC would be satisfied. For instance, in order for an apology to be sincere, the speaker really intends to take responsibility for his or her past act for which he or she apologizes. The last rule to be discussed in these lines is the EC which is about getting the hearer to understand what the speaker intends. By way of illustration, the speech act of apology is about getting the hearer to understand what the speaker is sorry for. (Elhaloui 2016, p. 58)

The Speech Act of Invitation

The PCC of the speech act of invitation can be formulated in this way:

$$\text{Invitation}_{\text{PCC}} = A_{\text{future}} \text{ by } H$$

Based upon the PPC, Inviting is about an act which is done by the hearer in the future. As for the PC, it can be as well formulated as follows:

$$\text{Invitation}_{\text{PC}} = \text{(i) } B(S) [B(H) [A \text{ is to the benefit of } H]] \\ \text{(ii) } B(S) [A \text{ is a cost to } S]$$

In order for the speech act of invitation to be felicitous, the speaker is required to believe, on the one hand, that the act is of benefit to the hearer. On the other, the speaker should believe that it has some cost to him or her. The speech act of invitation can be also analyzed in terms of the SC and EC. Based on the SC, by inviting, the speaker truly wants the hearer to do something in the future. As for the EC, the speaker intends to get the hearer to do something. In fact, directives, among which is the verb 'invite', have the feature of being "attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something" as asserted by Searle (1979, p. 13).

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection Techniques

The study's data has been collected via two online questionnaires using Google Forms. In fact, there is one questionnaire which was used to collect data from Americans who speak English as their mother tongue and another one for Moroccan whose mother tongue is Moroccan Arabic. The reason behind opting for two questionnaires is to compare American English with Moroccan Arabic in terms of the speech act of invitation. The questionnaires in question are online in the sense that participants in the present study are required to respond using Google Forms. The data is sent to Google Mail. Choosing Google Forms to collect data makes it easy, fast, and accessible in that participants have easy access to the questionnaires. Thus, the data collection process takes less time and effort. In order for participants to fill out the questionnaires, they just have to get the link.

Questionnaires

This study has two questionnaires: one in English and another in Arabic. Both questionnaires comprise a number of parts. The first part is where personal information is provided. As a matter of fact, the participants are asked about their region and city as well as their age and sex. They are also asked about their level of education. The second part is composed of four situations for each questionnaire. The participants have to answer in American English when filling out the questionnaire designed in English, whereas others have to answer in Moroccan Arabic when filling out the one in Arabic. The situations that are in the questionnaires are supposed to be ways of putting the participant in a context where they can imagine what they would say and then write that. In fact, there are four situations in which the participants are required to answer in different cases depending on the person to be dealt with. For instance, the study's participants have the choice to say how they can invite their friends, colleagues, or bosses. The situations also comprise cases where the participants are asked to express how they accept or refuse an invitation. The last part of the questionnaire is mainly composed of a yes-no question followed by open-ended questions which are used to investigate any type of misunderstanding that may occur as a result of communication between speakers of American English and Moroccan Arabic. In general, the questionnaire is mainly based upon the Discourse-Completion Test which was first introduced by Blum-Kulka (1982).

Participants

The participants in the present study are generally Americans who have been to Morocco and who have had contact with Moroccans. Americans are required to fill out the questionnaire in English. As for the questionnaire in Moroccan Arabic, Moroccans from different parts of the country have participated. The total number of American participants is 30 which is the same as that of Moroccans. Regarding the age of the participants, it ranges between 19 and 37 for Moroccans and 19 and 70 for Americans.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected through Google Forms is analyzed in terms of themes when dealing with open-ended questions and using diagrams when tackling yes-no questions. In fact, in the chapter of analysis, statements of participants will be categorized and analyzed with respect to themes, specifically when analyzing how participants respond to situations. Close attention is paid to the words which are picked by the participants as well as the linguistic strategies that they choose to use. Diagrams are very helpful when showing statistics in the sense that they give a general idea about the participants' answers. The diagrams will be complemented with comments which would help in giving a clear idea about the data. After analyzing each item of both questionnaires, a comparison will be in order. Finally, the analysis ends with testing the hypotheses of the present paper.

Invitation in American English and Moroccan Arabic

The speech act of invitation is dealt with in the present study via using a comparison between American English and Moroccan Arabic. The type of invitation which is tackled in this research is spoken one. Spoken invitation encompasses, *inter alia*, party invitation as well as inviting people for a business meeting or for a drink outside. This study is not concerned with written invitations. Its main objective is to compare between ways by which invitation is expressed in American English and Moroccan Arabic and what strategies speakers use to invite.

DATA ANALYSIS

Making Invitation in AE

In situation 1, the subjects are asked to invite their business partner. To invite their business partner for lunch, American participants use a number of strategies. These strategies are presented in the following chart in terms of percentages.

Situation 1 – Part 1: You meet a person for business and you invite him\her for lunch. What would you say if the person were your business partner?

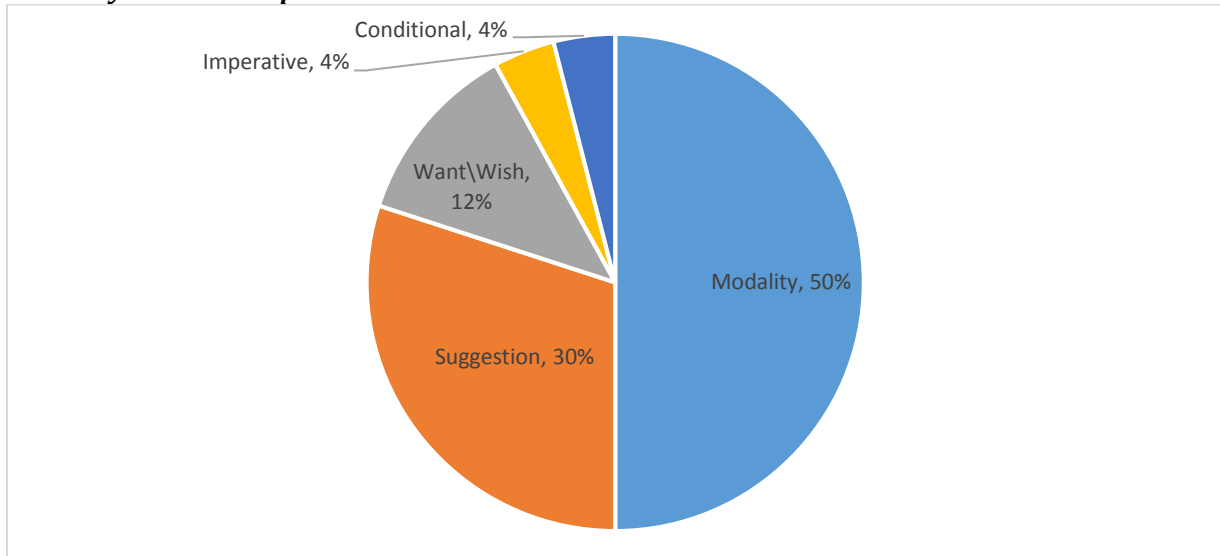


Figure 1: Inviting a Business Partner in AE

50% of respondents use modality as a strategy to give an indirect request for the sake of invitation. The modal that is used in this respect is ‘would.’ An example of how the in modal in question is used is as follows: “*Would you like to grab some lunch?*”

30% of participants use the strategy of suggestion to invite their business partners. The strategy under investigation is the use of the phrase “*let’s.*” 12% of respondents use the direct requestive strategy of want or wish. 4% of the participants use the imperative sentence as a direct strategy to make an invitation. Another 4% of participants use conditional in order to make an indirect request so as to make an invitation.

In the second part of situation 1, participants use a number of strategies to invite their boss.

Situation 1 – Part 2: You meet a person for business, and you invite him\her for lunch. What would you say if the person were your boss?

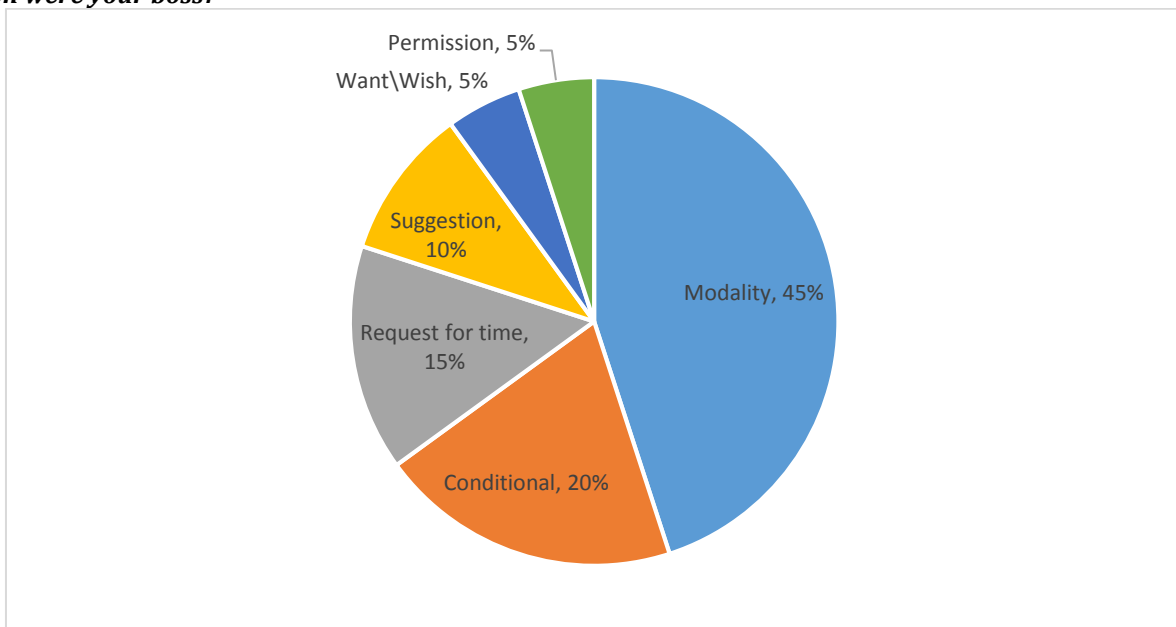


Figure 2: Inviting One’s Boss in AE

45% of participants use modals as a strategy to invite their boss. There are, in fact, three main modals used in this respect. They are: could, can, and would. To invite their boss, 20% of respondents use conditional. 15% use request for time to make an invitation when dealing with their boss. 10% of participants use suggestion in order to invite their boss. For instance, "Let's have lunch and catch up" and "Let's get lunch." Only 5% of participants use wish or want as a strategy for invitation. Similarly, permission as a strategy to express invitation is used by 5% of respondents. The following is an example in which permission is used: "Allow me to treat you to lunch, please."

A number of strategies have also been used by the subjects to invite their employees.

Situation 1 – Part 3: You meet a person for business, and you invite him\her for lunch. What would you say if the person were your employee?

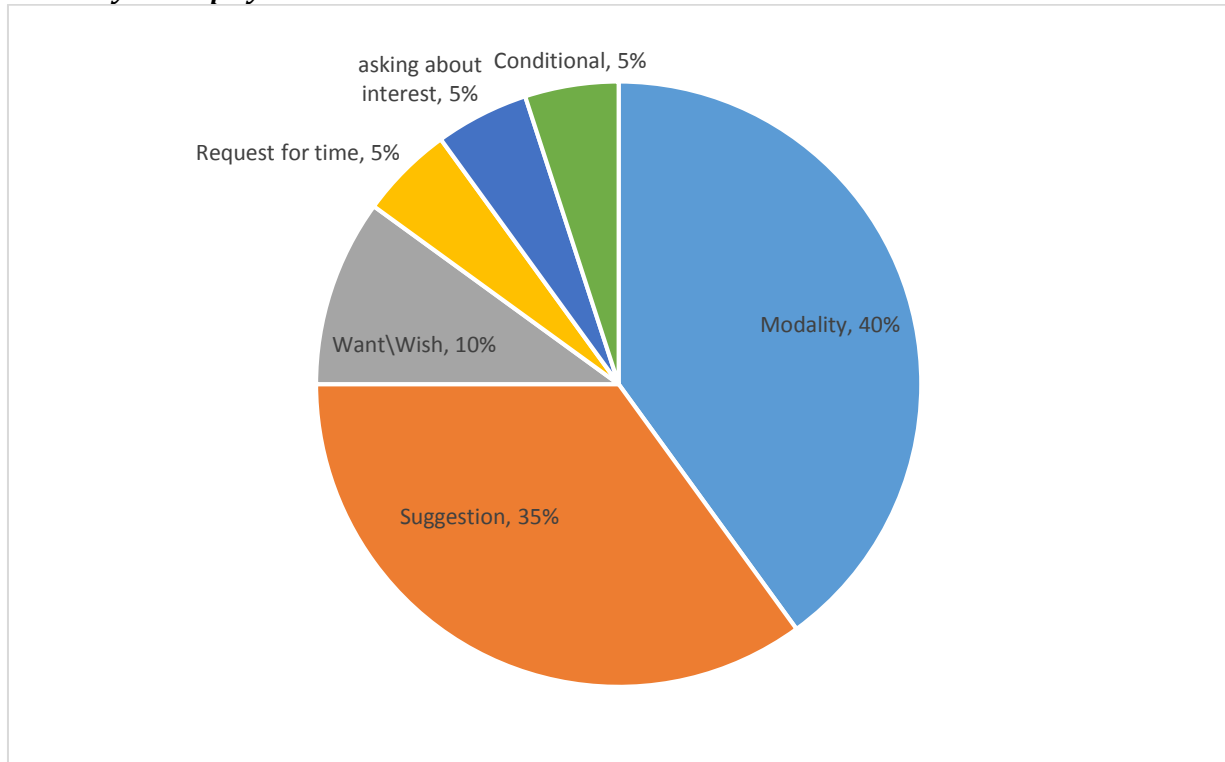


Figure 3: Inviting One's Employee in AE

40% of participants use modality as a strategy to make an invitation when dealing with their employees. In fact, there are several examples that indicate the heavy use of modals. These examples are as follows: "Could I treat you to lunch?" and "Would you care to go and get some lunch?" 35% of respondents use suggestion in order to make an invitation when addressing their employees. 10% of participants use expression of want and 5% ask about interest as a strategy to make an invitation. 5% of respondents use request for time to invite their employees. 5% of participants use conditionals as in the following example: "I am not sure if you have plans for lunch, but a few of us were thinking of going around noon if you care to join."

In situation 2 of the second part of the questionnaire, participants use several strategies to invite their friends for a drink outside.

Situation 2: You want to invite your friend for a drink outside. What would you say?

40% of participants use suggestion as a strategy to invite their friends over a drink outside. For instance, some participants invite via the following examples: "Let's grab a drink, I'm buying." 30% use desire or want to invite their friends. For example, the following are some ways by which American participants invite their friends. "Hey, wanna go get a drink?"

15% of respondents use modality to invite their friends over a drink. 10% use time expressions to invite their friends over a drink as in the following examples: "Drink tonight?" and "Happy hour?" 5% use a yes/no question to invite their friends. For example, "Hey are you up for a drink?"

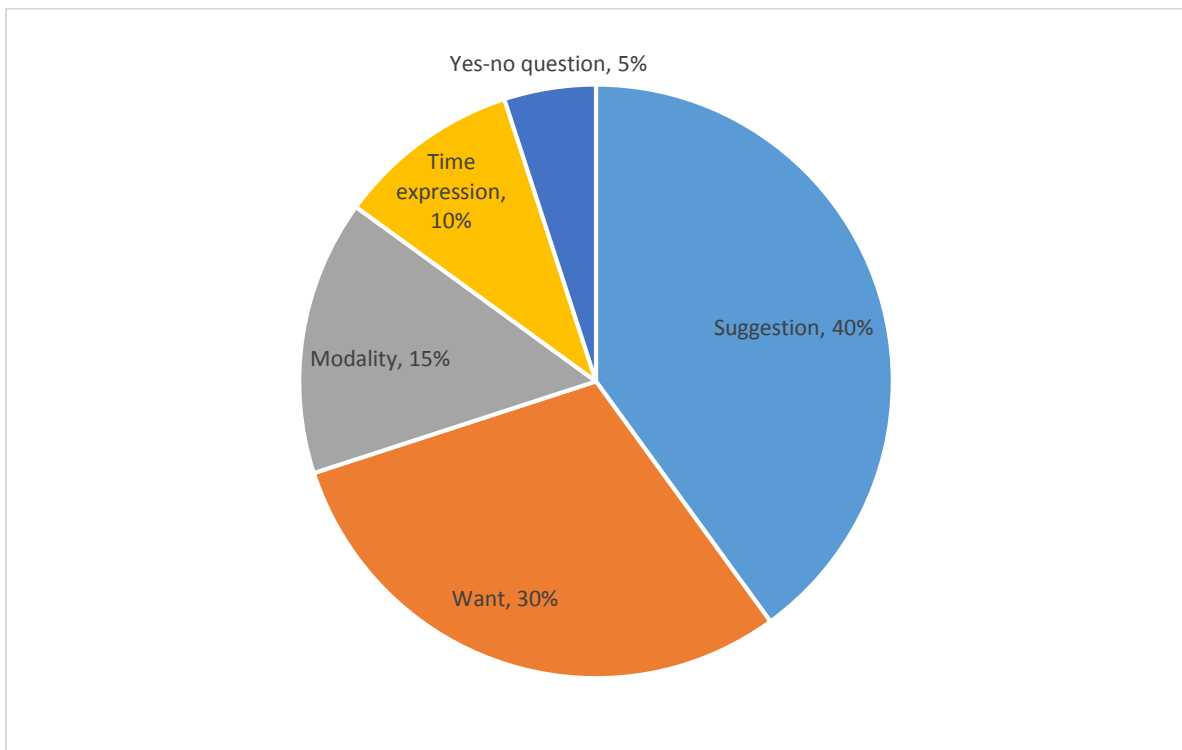


Figure 4: Inviting a Friend for a Drink outside in AE

Making an invitation in MA

To make an invitation, Moroccan respondents use a wide range of strategies depending on several factors. To invite their business partners, Moroccan participants use suggestion, direct invitation, asking about opinion, expressing desire, to mention but a few.

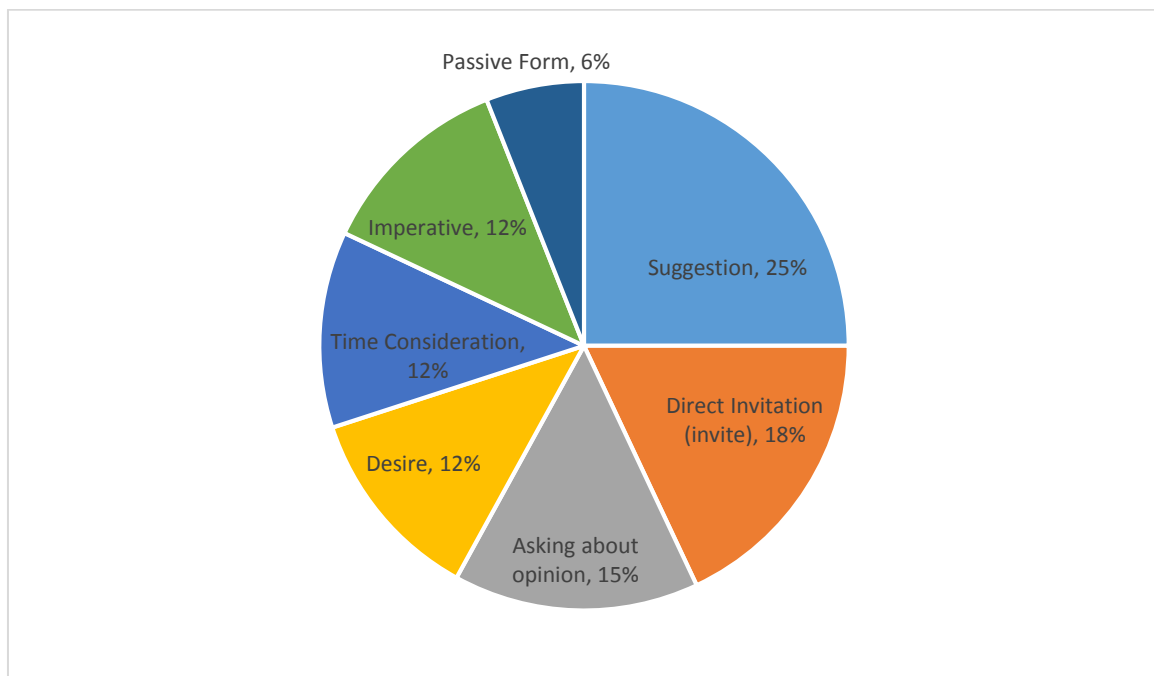


Figure 5: Inviting a business partner in MA

25% of Moroccan respondents use suggestion to invite their business partners. 18% use direct ways of invitation by using the word ‘invite.’ 15% of participants ask about their interlocutors’ opinion in order to make an invitation. 12% of respondents use expressions of desire to invite their business partners for dinner. 12% of participants consider their business partners’ time when inviting them as in the following example: “Are you free to go for dinner together?” 12% of respondents use the imperative form, while 6% use the passive one as follows: “You are invited for dinner at our place.”

To invite their boss, Moroccan respondents use several strategies such as conditional, desire, welcome, expressing possibility, imperative form, and time consideration.

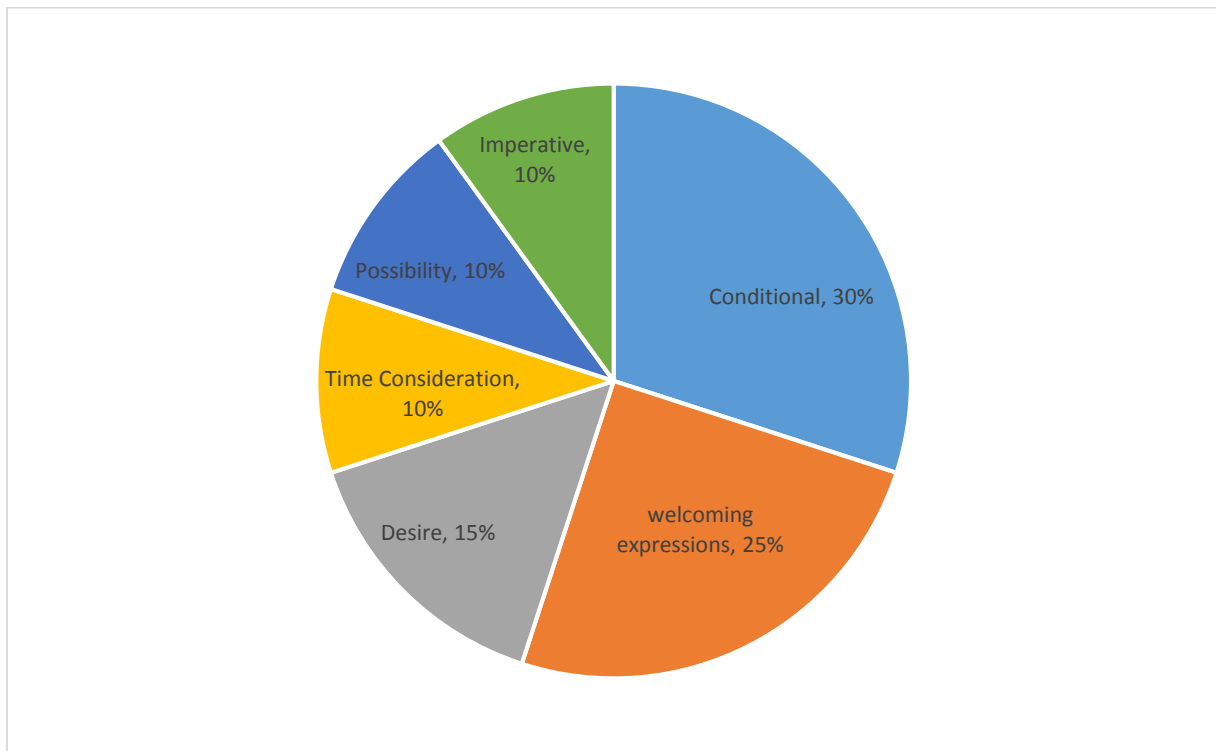


Figure 6: Inviting one's boss in MA

30% use conditional to express invitation. 25% use welcoming expressions to invite their boss as in the following example: *“Mr X, you are welcome to my home for dinner. I wish to be honored by your presence.”* 15% express desire when inviting their boss or ask about the interlocutor's desire to go for dinner. 10% use possibility expressions to invite their boss and 10% use the imperative form to invite their boss as in the following example: *“Come over for dinner with me today.”* 10% of Moroccan respondents put emphasis on time when inviting their boss.

To invite their employee, Moroccan respondents use a number of strategies, specifically suggestion, the imperative form, asking about desire, conditional, and so on.

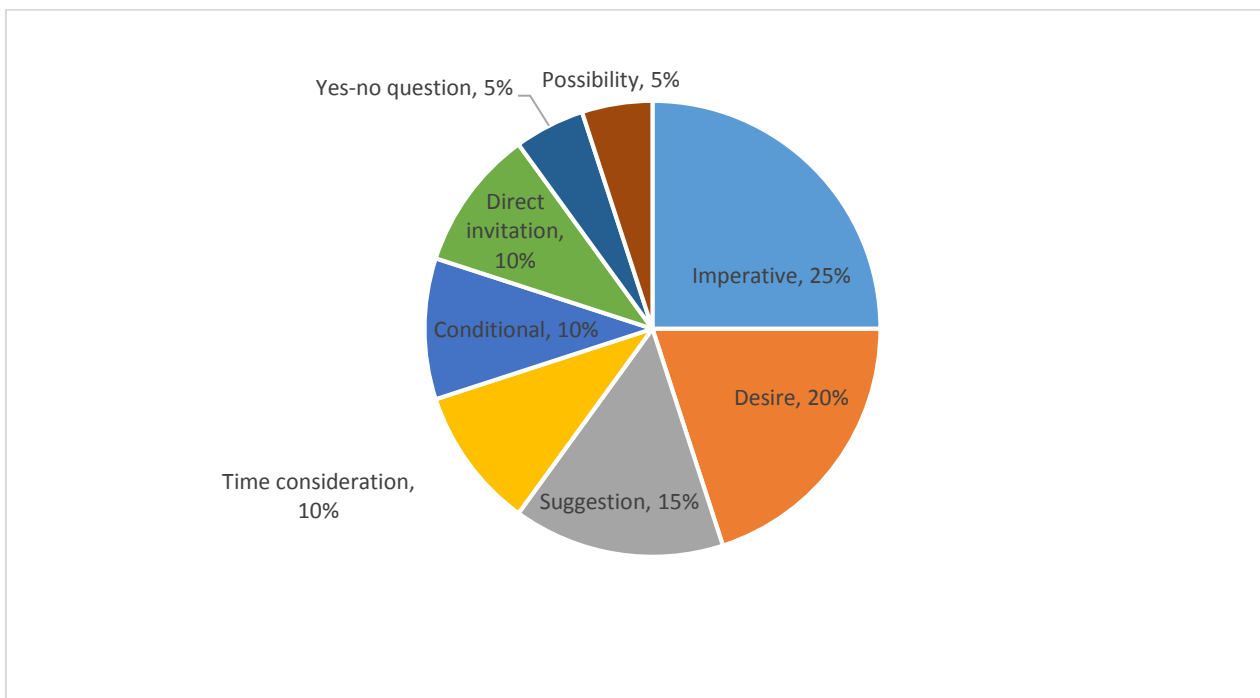


Figure 7: Inviting one's employee in MA

25% of Moroccan participants in the present study use the imperative form such as: “*Come over to have dinner with us in the evening.*” 20% of the respondents ask about their interlocutors’ desire. 15% use suggestion as a way of inviting for dinner. 10% of Moroccan respondents use conditional. 10% use time consideration to invite their employee over dinner. 10% of participants invite in a direct way using the verb “invite” like in the following: “*Look! I am inviting today for dinner.*” 5% of participants use possibility and 5% use a yes-no question.

Moroccan respondents invite their friends for a drink using a variety of ways.

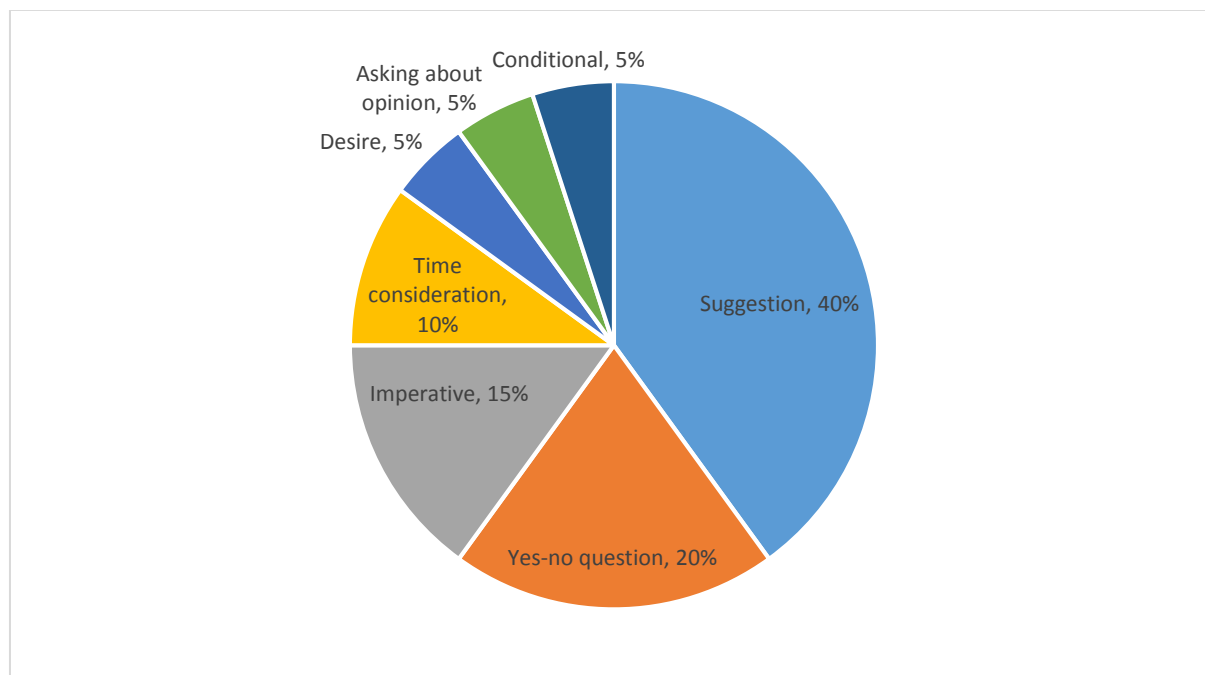


Figure 8: Inviting a friend for a drink outside in MA

40% of Moroccan participants use suggestion to invite their friends. 20% use yes-no question to invite their friends as in the following example: “*We go to a café somewhere?*” 15% of participants use the imperative form to make invitations such as “*Move so that we have some coffee.*” 10% use time consideration to make invitation. 5% of Moroccan respondents use conditional. 5% of participants express their desire to go to a café and 5% ask about opinion.

CONCLUSION

There are some similarities and differences between MA and AE in terms of the speech act of invitation.

American speakers use indirect strategies to invite their business partners, namely, modality, suggestion, expressing want or wish, imperative form and conditional. Moroccan speakers use in the same situation several indirect strategies like suggestion, asking about opinion, passive form, and time consideration as well as a direct strategy through using the verb “to invite.” The difference, therefore, between AE and MA when it comes to inviting a business partner is that in MA invitation can also be realized directly as opposed to AE wherein the invitation has not been direct at all. Yet, there are similarities related to the indirect strategies in MA and AE. In Moroccan Arabic inviting one’s boss can be realized via using conditional, welcoming expressions, desire, time consideration, imperative form, and possibility. However, in AE, it can be realized by the use of modality, conditional, request for time, suggestion, permission, and want or wish. What can be considered typically cultural in Morocco is the use of welcoming expression which is used in a number of invitations. Moroccan speakers can invite their employees using expressions of desire, imperative form, suggestion, time consideration, conditional, direct invitation (invite), yes-no question, and possibility. Nevertheless, American speakers can invite their employees using modality, suggestion, want or wish, request for time, conditional, and asking about interest. To invite their friends outside for a drink, one can use in AE numerous strategies such as suggestion, want, modality, time expression, and yes-no question, whereas in MA, one can invite a friend for a drink outside via the following strategies: suggestion, yes-no question, imperative form, time consideration, desire, asking about opinion, and conditional.

Implication

The present study has shed some light on the similarities and differences between AE and MA in terms of making invitation. Indeed, it is worthwhile to mention that awareness of the differences is very crucial to avoid socio-

pragmatic failure and hence cultural misunderstanding. For instance, the use of direct ways of invitation in MA as well as using the imperative form is not common in AE. Therefore, knowledge of such huge difference is important in social and cultural meetings as well as business settings.

Limitations of the study

This study can merely give an idea of how speakers of MA and AE make invitations. However, it does not cover a large number of speakers of MA and AE. For this reason, more research needs to be conducted in this respect to collect more data about the issue under investigation in order to highlight the importance of socio-cultural knowledge and awareness in order to avoid socio-pragmatic failure and cultural misunderstanding.

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