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## THE SPEECH ACTS OF REQUESTS IN CAMEROON FRANCOPHONE ENGLISH

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**ABSTRACT:** *Cameroon Francophone English (CamFE) is a fast-growing sub-variety of English in Cameroon. The field of pragmatics and especially the speech acts of requests remain unexplored in this sub-variety of English. This paper aims to investigate the types of requests in CamFE, their structure, as well as the lexical and syntactic features. Data were collected through Discourse Completion Test (DCT) administered from some 40 students in the Department of English Language and Literature of the University of Maroua. The DCT was made up of six described situations, and 240 request utterances were elicited. The data were analysed through the coding scheme of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Patterns propounded by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984). The results of the study show that CamFE speakers have six types of request content structures established as S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub>, S<sub>3</sub>, S<sub>4</sub>, S<sub>5</sub> and S<sub>6</sub>. The most preferred request strategy is the reference to preparatory conditions technique (81.67%) followed by the mood derivable technique (10%). In addition to this, the analysis further reveals that CamFE requests display some specific lexical and syntactic features.*

**KEYWORDS:** requests, Cameroon Francophone English, speech acts, pragmatics, varieties of English

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### INTRODUCTION

Pragmatic researches available on Cameroon Francophone English (henceforth CamFE) are very few. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, investigations on the speech act of requests, specifically, are non-existent in CamFE studies. The present paper aims at exploring request speech acts in CamFE, a new emerging variety of English in Cameroon. This paper attempts to answer the following questions. What types of requests do CamFE speakers most commonly use in their discourse? What is the typical structure of request that occurs in their speech acts? What are the typical lexical and syntactic features of requests in the speech act of CamFE speakers? Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984)'s theoretical and methodological frames are used in this research. The same instrument as they have used (the Discourse Completion Test) was used to collect data. This study will display the pragmatic features of requests typical to CamFE speakers.

Pragmatics, which is the study of language in context, is a linguistic field that explores the relationships between human beings, their words, and their worlds (Mey, 2001). Since the 1970s, pragmatics started to develop as an independent subfield of linguistics that has some areas of study including politeness, felicity conditions, implicature, references and speech acts. The latter are particularly much more productive with the development of the Speech Act Theory as a subfield of pragmatics by Austin (1962), and improved on by Searle (1969). Thus,

Searle (1969) classifies speech acts in many categories namely representatives, declaratives, directives, expressives and commissives. Directive speech acts are acts that are designed by the speaker with the intention of getting the hearer do something. Some of directive speech acts, as cited by Searle (1969), are orders, commands, advice, suggestions, warnings, instructions, requests, etc. Some of these directives might sound similar (order and request for instance, in an utterance like *'give me that cup of tea'*) but are actually different. A request, unlike an order, is a kind of directive speech act which is intended to get the hearer do something under a circumstance in which it is not obvious to the speaker (S) that the act (A) will be performed by hearer (H) (Searle, 1969). Actually, request is the kernel of the current study.

The work is subdivided into three main sections framed as follows: (2) the framework of analysis and review of request studies in Cameroon, (3) methodology and (4) analysis and discussion of the findings. These are taken in turns below.

### **The framework of Analysis and review of request studies in Cameroon**

The present paper is processed according to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) frame of analysis of request. This frame was designed to investigate cross-cultural variation of speech acts in eight languages namely English (American, Australian and British English), Danish, Canadian French, German, Hebrew and Russian in the same 16 social contexts. This framework seems appropriate for analysing requests in any culture as shown by the proponents of the theory (Blum-Kulka, 1982; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984) and many other scholars including Kasper (1990) and Kouega (2018).

One of the pragmatic researches carried out in Cameroon research industry is that of Kouega (2018) on request in Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE). In his paper that aims at outlining the structure and features of requests in Cameroon Pidgin English, he collected a set of requests from some thirty fluent Pidgin English speakers. The instrument used was not Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) DCT but a completion of writing exercise. The respondents were asked to write down a possible conversation between two familiar equals in which one of these fragments like "Put the potatoes in the bucket" could fit squarely. This frame stipulates that there are three levels of directness:

- the most direct level, which is realised by requests containing imperatives, performatives and hedged performatives;
- the conventionally indirect level, which is realised by indirect speech acts marked syntactically by expressions such as "could you do it" or "would you do it"; and
- the non-conventional indirect level, which realises the request by referring to an object in the vicinity e.g. "Why is the window open" or "It's cold in here" to mean "close the window!" (Kouega, 2018:16). This last level of directness in request is what Brown and Levinson (1987) refer to as 'off record strategy'.

From this frame, syntactic analysis shows that three main elements constitute a request. They are: an Address Term, a Head Act and an Adjunct to the Head Act. The head act being the nucleus of the request, it can realise the request on its own. Let us consider the following illustration taken from Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984): "*Dany, could you lend me £100 for a week. I've run into problems with the rent for my apartment*". This can be analysed as shown below:

*Dany* = address term, *could you lend me £100 for a week* = head act, *I've run into problems with the rent for my apartment* = adjunct to head act.

For the purpose of evaluating the degree of directness, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) have identified some requests strategies that they classified under nine categories. These requests sub-levels are the following:

1. Mood derivable: The grammatical mood of the verb in the utterance indicates that it is a request. Such utterance is '*leave the room*'.
2. Explicit performatives: the speaker explicitly states the illocutionary force of the utterance (*I ask you to leave the room*).
3. Hedged performative: the speaker utters a request by embedding the naming of the illocutionary force (*I would like you to leave the room*).
4. Locution derivable: the illocutionary point is directly derivable from the semantic meaning of the locution, example: *Madam, you'll have to move your car* (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984:202).
5. Scope stating: the speaker expresses his/her intention, desire or feeling on the fact that the hearer do the act (*I really wish you would leave the room*).
6. Language specific suggestory formula: the speaker suggests doing the act to the hearer (*why don't you leave the room*).
7. Reference to preparatory conditions: the speaker makes reference to preparatory conditions (e.g. ability or willingness, the possibility of the act being performed) as conventionalized in the language (*would you mind leaving the room?*).
8. Strong hints: the speaker uses hints to imply the doing of the act by H, by making a partial reference to the object or action needed (*it's quite boring to stay in this room* to mean *leave the room*). It is the pragmatic implication of the act with a small indication of the request.
9. Mild hints: the speaker uses hints that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable as requests through the context (*the weather is quite good outside* to mean *leave the room*).

#### 10.

Applying this theory, Kouega's (2018) research endeavoured to answer the following research questions: What are the constituents of a typical request act? What common request strategy types are used? What syntactic and lexical features are used in the formulation of requests? What is the overall discourse structure of a request conversation? His results showed that the features and structure of a request utterance were similar to the previous researchers' findings. The most frequent request strategy type used in Kouega (2018) was "reference to preparatory conditions" (31.57% of 38 utterances) followed by "hedged performatives" (26.31%).

Some other works that dealt with requests in Cameroon are Nkemleke (2008), Mulo Farenkia (2016) and Tabe and Faissam (2018). Nkemleke (2008) investigated requests in letter writing in Cameroon and Kenya with the aim of comparing the frequencies of please-requests in these African varieties of English. His data were the written production of these two countries and he found out that please-requests are more frequent in Cameroon English than Kenyan English. According to this author, this can be accounted for by the fact that in the colonial periods, Cameroonians were taught to say '*please sir*' each time they would talk in front of the colonisers: it is a colonial legacy (Nkemleke, 2008). Another scholar, Mulo Farenkia (2016) has examined politeness in Cameroon French requests. His data were also elicited from written texts (requests addressed to the administration by university students). Mulo Farenkia (2016)

explains that the characteristics of Cameroon French requests especially politeness strategies such as honorifics, respectful greeting formulae, complementing the addressee, etc. figure out the sociocultural and linguistic mindsets of Cameroonians. Tabe and Faissam (2018) on their part explored requests in their paper entitled 'Politeness in the English of Fulfulde Native Speakers in Maroua'. Their data were collected through Discourse Completion Test. They used Brown and Levinson's (1987) face-saving theory to analyse their data. The findings they elicited from Fulfulde native speakers of English in the University of Maroua showed that requests with negative politeness strategies (as indicated by Brown and Levinson (1987)) and please-requests are very frequent.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study used Discourse Completion Test (DCT) as used by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) to collect data. The DCT was made up of six request situations consisting of incomplete discourse sequences that represent socially differentiated situations (see Appendix). The situations described in the DCT were designed based on some observed linguistic behaviours and circumstances in and around the University of Maroua. The first situation displays a communication among students (in a students' apartment), the second situation is a classroom situation (communication among students), the third one is still a classroom situation (but here, the communication is between a teacher and a student). The fourth situation is a request communication between two students of different levels, in the same department (of English) in the university campus. Situation 5 is a family setting, a university student asking for some money from his father. The last situation of the DCT is a communication between two friend students.

Actually, the test was administered during a course period, with the permission of the lecturer who lectures at the time of data collection. When administering the test, the DCT was read aloud and explained by the researcher. Then, the respondents, who are students from the English department of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences (FALSS) of the University of Maroua, were asked to put themselves in the situations described and react (by writing) as naturally as possible. They were also asked to ask questions on any DCT situation they do not understand. Four students asked questions consecutively on the same situation that has been finally discarded. In fact, more than fifty students were involved in the process. However, only forty scripts were considered because others were not properly filled in. A total number of 240 request instances have been recorded from the forty respondents. These will be analysed and discussed in the following section.

### **Analysis and discussion of the data**

This section concentrates on request constituents in CamFE (4.1.), CamFE requests coding strategies and level of directness (4.2) and lexical and syntactic features of requests in CamFE (4.3).

#### **Request constituents in CamFE**

As mentioned in the review, there are three main request constituents (address term, head act and adjunct to the head act). From the collected data, below are some ten examples of requests. The constituents of these ten requests will be described thereafter.

- (1) *Aissatou, can you help me by cleaning the kitchen because friends are coming for dinner tonight?*
- (2) *Please my elder, can you lend me your bottle so that I can drink water? I am thirsty and I don't have any.*
- (3) *Please neighbour, can you lend me your pen?*
- (4) *Daddy, can you please give me some money for taxi?*
- (5) *Can I have your bottle? I am very thirsty; I would like to drink some water.*
- (6) *Please can you lend me your pen? mine has no more ink.*
- (7) *Could you give me a pen?*
- (8) *Can you lend me your bottle?*
- (9) *My pen just disappointed me. Can you lend me one?*
- (10) *Please dear friend, I am in deep need of some 10.000Fcfa. Can somebody help me?*

In the two first examples (1) and (2) above, the three basic constituents of requests are present. There are:

- one address term in each request (*Aissatou* in (1) and *my elder* in (2));
- one head act (*can you help me by cleaning the kitchen* in (1) and *can you lend me your bottle so that I can drink water* in (2)) and
- an adjunct to the head act (*because friends are coming for dinner tonight?* in (1) and *I am thirsty and I don't have any* in (2)).

In the second pair of requests, two constituents are observed. There is an address term (*neighbour* in (3) and *daddy* in (4)) and a head act (*can you lend me your pen?* in (3) and *can you please give me some money for taxi?* in (4)).

The third pair of requests also has two constituents. Unlike in (3) and (4), in (5) and (6) a head act is firstly observed (*Can I have your bottle?* in (5) and *Please can you lend me your pen?* in (6)) and an adjunct to the head act (*I am very thirsty; I would like to drink some water* in (5) and *mine has no more ink* in (6)).

In the fourth pair of requests, there is only one request constituent that makes up the utterance: the head act (*Could you give me a pen?* in (7) and *Can you lend me your bottle?* in (8)).

The last pair of requests ((9) and (10)) is somehow peculiar. (9) is made up of double head acts (*My pen just disappointed me*: an unconventionally indirect way of requesting for a pen, and *Can you lend me one?*: a conventionally indirect way of requesting for a pen). In (10), there is an address term (*dear friend*) and double head acts (*I am in deep need of some 10.000Fcfa* and *Can somebody help me?*).

As assumed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) CamFE requests attest that there are three main request constituents: an address term, a head act and an adjunct to the head act. Nonetheless, our results show that CamFE requests have six constituent structures that we codify as S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub>, S<sub>3</sub>, S<sub>4</sub>, S<sub>5</sub> and S<sub>6</sub> below, **S<sub>1</sub>** standing for 'structure 1', **AT** for 'address term', **HA** for 'head act' and **AHA** for 'adjunct to head act'.

S<sub>1</sub>: AT + HA + AHA

e.g. Please my elder (**AT**), can you lend me your bottle so that I can drink water? (**HA**) I am thirsty and I don't have any (**AHA**).

S<sub>2</sub>: AT + HA

e.g. Daddy (**AT**), can you please give me some money for taxi? (**HA**)

S<sub>3</sub>: HA + AHA

e.g. Please can you lend me your pen? (**HA**) Mine has no more ink (**AHA**).

S<sub>4</sub>: HA

e.g. Can you lend me your bottle? (**HA**)

S<sub>5</sub>: HA + HA

e.g. My pen just disappointed me (**HA**). Can you lend me one? (**HA**)

S<sub>6</sub>: AT + HA +HA

e.g. Please dear friend (**AT**), I am in deep need of some 10.000Fcfa (**HA**). Can somebody help me? (**HA**)

As it can be observed, **HA** (the head act) is present in every structure. This justifies the appellation ‘nucleus’ by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) which implies that the head act is a compulsory element of a request. However, each structure is not as frequent as another structure in the request speech acts of the CamFE speakers. The table below shows the frequencies of S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub>, S<sub>3</sub>, S<sub>4</sub>, S<sub>5</sub> and S<sub>6</sub>.

Table1: Request constituent structures in CamFE

Frequencies S Types	Number	Percentages
S <sub>1</sub>	24	10%
S <sub>2</sub>	100	41.7%
S <sub>3</sub>	16	6.7%
S <sub>4</sub>	74	30.8%
S <sub>5</sub>	8	3.3%
S <sub>6</sub>	18	7.5%
Total	240	100%

As it can be observed in table 1 above, the most recurrent request content structure is S<sub>2</sub>: AT + HA (address term + head act) with a frequency of 41.7% of the overall elicited CamFE request speech acts. The shortest structure, S<sub>4</sub>: HA (head act only), is also very frequent with a percentage of 30.8%. The high frequency of these two request content structures demonstrate that CamFE speakers are more inclined to being brief and direct (conventionally indirect) in their request speech acts. The first and foremost structure (S<sub>1</sub>: AT + HA + AHA) described by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) is not as frequent as they would suggest in their framework. Only 10% of the 240 elicited request speech acts present all the three elements (address term, head act and adjunct to the head act). S<sub>5</sub> (HA + HA) with a frequency of 3.3% and S<sub>6</sub> (AT + HA +HA) of 7.5% are particularly used by our respondents to lay more emphasis on their desire to have the act performed by the addressee.

### CamFE Requests coding strategies and level of directness

In the coding scheme propounded by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), nine sub-strategies can be used in rendering request speech acts (see section 2 above). Nonetheless, not all these nine sub-strategies are observed in CamFE requests. Table 2 below shows the CamFE speakers’ preferences in the use of the nine categories of requests rendition.

Table 2: CamFE request coding preferences

<b>Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984)'s coding Strategies and examples</b>	<b>Examples of coding Strategies from CamFE requests</b>	<b>Frequencies (CamFE)</b>
1. Mood derivable e.g. Leave me alone.	Please clean the kitchen because friends are coming.	24 10%
2. Explicit performatives e.g. I am asking you not to park the car here	-	-
3. Hedged performative: I would like you to give your lecture a week earlier	Please Aissatou, I would like you to clean the kitchen	6 2.5%
4. Locution derivable: Madam you'll have to move your car	-	-
5. Scope setting: I really wish you'd stop bothering me.	Please sir, I wish to go out (meaning: I wish you give me the permission)	8 3.33%
6. Language specific suggestory formula e.g. Why don't you get lost? How about cleaning up?	-	-
7. Reference to preparatory conditions e.g. could you clean up the kitchen, please?	Could you lend me your bottle, because I don't have any?	196 81.67%
8. Strong hints (partial reference to object or to elements needed for the implementation of the act e.g. You've left the kitchen in a right mess.	My dear father, I am invited for a party and I don't have money for taxi.	6 2.5%
9. Mild hints (utterances indirectly pragmatically implying the act): I'm a nun. (in response to the persistent boy, i.e., I cannot listen to your flirtatious moves)	-	-

From the data gleaned in CamFE, as presented in table 2 above, out of the nine sub-strategies advocated by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) only five are observed in the CamFE speakers' speech acts. The 'reference to the preparatory conditions' strategy is the most used by CamFE speakers. Out of the 240 elicited requests, 196 (81.67%) are of this type. Kouega (2018)'s research on request in Pidgin English also shows that Cameroon Pidgin English speakers have great preference of this strategy. The second recurrent way of formulating requests by CamFE speakers is the most direct strategy (referred to by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) as the mood derivable technique), with a frequency of 10%. The three other strategies encountered are scope-setting technique (3.33%), hedged performative (2.5%) and strong hints (2.5%). From these illustrations, we can evaluate the degree and level of directness of CamFE speakers in making requests. Three of these strategies (the mood derivable, scope-setting and hedged performative techniques) fall under the most direct, explicit level of request (15.83%). The reference to the preparatory conditions technique falls under the conventionally indirect level (81.67%). And the last strategy, strong hints, falls under nonconventional indirect level (2.5%). Therefore, the level of directness of requests classification in CamFE, from the most frequent to the least would be as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> conventionally indirect, 2<sup>nd</sup> direct, 3<sup>rd</sup> non-conventionally indirect.

### **Lexical and syntactic features of requests in CamFE**

In CamFE like in any other language variety, there are word choices and word preferences according to the language habit, the context of communication, the purpose of the utterance and the interactants involved. In requests, CamFE speakers make frequent use of some lexical items and some syntactic mitigations. Each of these features is taken in turn below.

#### ***Please***

*Please* is a pragmatic particle frequently used in the request speech acts of the CamFE speakers. From the data collected for the purpose of this investigation, 76.25% of the requests contain the threat mitigator *please*. *Please* is the most used pragmatic particle in requests in Cameroon. As says Nkemleke (2008), *please* is a colonial linguistic legacy Cameroonians have inherited at or against their will from their former English leaders. In fact, Cameroonians (not only Francophones) tend to use this linguistic device in any circumstances where requests occur. That has been attested by some former researchers including Nkemleke (2008) who investigated please-requests in CamE (Cameroon English) and Tabe and Faissam (2018) who explored politeness in the speech acts of Fulfulde native Cameroonians and also Faissam (2018) who explored apologies and requests in the speech acts of Fulfulde Natives and Chadian learners of English.

A syntactic look at the use of *please* from CamFE requests shows that 91% of participants put this pragmatic face saving device at the beginning of the requests. See the following examples:

(10) *Please* can you lend me your pen?

(11) *Please* could you give me your bottle for a while?

Only 9% of the population use the threat softener, *please*, in the middle of the utterances. Such instances are as follow:

(12) Will you *please* help me?

(13) Would you *please* give me your pen?

Such instances where *please* occurs at the end the utterances as in *Clean up this mess, please!* (illustrated by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984) have not been observed in CamFE requests.

#### ***Dear***

The term *dear* is frequently used by the population of this study. This term is used as either address term or address term modifier (meaning that it is just part of the address term). Let's have a look at the following illustrations:

(14) Please *dear*, can you lend me some 10,000Fcfa?

(15) Please *dear* classmate, could you give me a pen?

This term of endearment is used by a requester to show his/her affection, consideration and familiarity to the requestee. By so doing, he/she reduces the weight of his/her request and would make the hearer believe that it is not such a great charge to perform the requested act. The word *dear* has only one syntactic position: always embedded in the address term.

#### ***Help***

The verb *help* is used regularly in the CamFE speech acts of requests.

(16) Dear brother, can you *help* me drink with your bottle?

(17) Please, I would like you to *help* me by cleaning the kitchen.

By using the verb *help*, the speaker (S) shows the hearer (H) that he/she is not imposing upon him/her to do the requested act. Actually, the speaker does not mean to tell the hearer that it is



his/her responsibility to do the act (A). Rather, he/she shows, with the use of *help*, that he/she is begging H to grant him/her a favour by doing A, though the real intention might be just to tell H to do A. Otherwise, *help* is used for politeness sake, not to sound rude by bluntly telling H to do A. For syntactic situation, the word *help* always occurs in the head act.

### **Greeting**

It is considered impolite in all speech communities or so (in Cameroon) to start uttering a word to someone without first of all having greeted them. This might be the reason behind the fact that at the beginning of some requests we have elicited, participants provided some greeting phrases such as *hi, hello, how are you, etc.*

(18) Hi! May I have your bottle?

(19) Hello! Please excuse me, would you mind giving me your bottle?

In the utterances above, the requesters use greeting particles to set a conducive environment for the success of their illocutionary force. From the researchers' personal observations, requesting without having previously greeted the hearer sometimes leads to the following responses:

- Goodmorning/ goodafternoon/how are you doing (to mean *why didn't you greet me first*);

- Is that how your parents taught you to request? (to say that he/she is rude).

So, to avoid such frustrations, greeting before requesting would be ideal. Logically and as shown in our data, greetings always occur before the request proper. They are introductory to directive speech acts in CamFE, especially requests.

### **Apology**

Some requests contain apologetic terms such as *excuse (me), (I am) sorry, etc.* These types of requests are referred to as *apologetic requests* (Tabé & Faissam, 2018; Faissam, 2018).

(20) Sorry for disturbing you, could you give this bottle?

(21) Excuse me dear, can I have your pen?

Given that requests are face threatening acts by nature, apology should be used to mitigate the face threat of H or S or even both S and H (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 2014). This strategy is used especially to save the negative face of H. In CamFE requests, apologetic terms have been observed always at the beginning of the speech acts.

### **If embedded clauses**

Another strategy used by CamFE speakers to mitigate the threat of requests is the *if embedded clause*.

(22) Please can you lend me 10,000Fcfa, *if you have*?

(23) Please classmate, can you give me one pen, *if you have*?

(24) Please could you give your bottle, *if you don't mind*?

The *if-clauses* in the utterances above are just complementisers to the intentions expressed. To take after Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), they are adjuncts to the head acts (the preceding portions). In fact, CamFE speakers use this strategy to reduce the degree of imposition that would be interpreted by the hearer. S literally means that H will do A at a condition. In (23) for instance, H will give money to S if and only if H has. However, in some circumstances it might be somehow obvious to S that H can do A, but for politeness sake and may be because S does not have the power to make H do A, S just poses the conditionality.

## CONCLUSION

This investigation has attempted to explore the speech acts of request in CamFE, an emerging English sub-variety in Cameroon. The aim was to examine the types of requests, their structure, lexical and syntactic features. 240 request speech acts were collected from 40 English-speaking francophone university students through Discourse Completion Test. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984)'s coding scheme of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Patterns has been used to analyse the data. Thus, our results showed that CamFE speakers have six types of request content structures which are Address Term + Head Act + Adjunct to the Head Act, Address Term + Head Act, Head Act + Adjunct to the Head Act, Head Act (only), Head Act + Head Act and Address Term + Head Act + Head Act. The most preferred request strategy is the reference to the preparatory conditions technique (81.67%). This is conventionally indirect strategies. The second recurrent strategy is the mood derivable technique (10%), the direct level of requests. Finally, CamFE speakers frequently make use of *please* in their requests (76.25%). Some lexical and syntactic features of the CamFE is the omnipresence of such terms as *dear*, *help*, *excuse(me)*, *(I am) sorry* and some *greeting phrases* and *if embedded clauses*.

The scope of the present investigation is limited to the speech act of request. Further studies could explore other speech acts such as apologies, orders, greetings, etc. Moreover, even this same speech act could be investigated again using for example other instruments of data collection, other population (e.g. teachers), etc.

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**Appendix**

Below is the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) administered to the respondents of the present investigation.

**Discourse Completion Test**

**Informants' Background Information**

Sex	Age	Specialty	Level	Nationality

Please, read the following short descriptions of situations. Now, imagine yourself in these situations. Think what you might naturally say in response to these situations. Write your response in the space provided. Say as much or as little as you wish. You may choose to say nothing if required by the situation.

**1. At a students' apartment**

Aissatou is Hamadou's roommate. He had a party the night before and left the kitchen in a mess.

**Hamadou:** (*Hamadou is requesting Aissatou to clean the kitchen*). Aissatou! Some friends are coming for dinner tonight and I will have to start cooking soon; .....

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**Aissatou:** OK, I will do it right now.

**2. In a classroom situation**

The lecturer is lecturing and everybody is taking note. You realise that your pen has no more ink. You want your neighbour to give you one. (*ask for the pen*)

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3. The lecturer is in class. You are feeling very constipated. You want to go out.

(*Ask for permission*) .....

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4. You are very thirsty. You are next to a tap but you don't have any bottle. An academic elder is sitting not far, holding an empty bottle. (*ask for the bottle*) .....

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5. You are invited in a party and you don't have money for your taxi. You want your father to give you. (*Ask your father*).....

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6. You find yourself in a sudden need of some 10,000Fcfa. You want your friend to lend you 10,000Fcfa. (*ask for it*). .....

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