Abstract—Language and culture are interrelated and the social context of a particular utterance is one of the fundamental factors that need to be taken into consideration as performing speech acts. There are quite number of speech acts in the area of sociolinguistics study, namely apologies, complaints, requests and many more. To be precise, this study focuses on requests speech act, in which specifically concentrating on the alerters used by the person doing the act of request without considering another two segments of requests i.e. the head act and the supportive move in it. Alerter refers to the language used in initiating a conversation or the way of choosing the form of calls. The choice of requests is basically because it may be culturally and linguistically different since the way they are accepted in one culture might be inappropriate in another. In the Malaysian context, the study of alerters has yet to be ventured. This study attempts to classify and compare the Malay categories of alerters used in request speech acts by Malaysians speakers in alerting their hearer's attention with English categories of alerters and to examine whether or not the pragmatic competence of L1 speakers can be transferred to L2.

I. INTRODUCTION

Alerter is one of the major aspects to be taken into consideration in the process of initiating a conversation. According to Abdul Sukor Shari, Nuraini Yusoff dan Mohd Isa Awang (2003), alerter refers to the language used in initiating a conversation or the way of choosing the form of calls following the rules and the norms which are based on several social variables including age, social status, social distance and context of the utterance.

There are quite number of speech acts in the area of sociolinguistics study, namely apologies, complaints, requests and many more. To be precise, I am only focusing on request speech act, in which specifically concentrating on the alerters used by the person doing the act of request without considering another two segments of request i.e. the head act and the supportive move in it. To make a request, the action request must be an action done by the speaker, and the speaker requests for the effects of that particular action. The expected effect is that the hearer wants to do the action and the way a request is accomplished is by getting the hearer to do the action.

Moreover, a speaker needs to be aware not only for the attempt of the request itself, but also of the culturally appropriate ways of addressing people as well as expressing gratitude to someone. Requests need to be carefully expressed in order to achieve compliance of the hearer and gratification of the speaker's desire. For the request to be such a successful attempt, the speaker and hearer must correspond to each other, such as they speak or understand the same language and the two of them must play their own role well. The address forms used is also one of the components that will help the speaker to get his request to be fulfilled by the hearer. In addition, both the speaker and the hearer must be mutually intelligible so that there will never be any communication breakdown appear in the middle of the conversation.

Awad Mohamed S Youssef (2012:147) further discussed that:

“...When making a request, the speaker expresses a desire that the hearer does an action. The hearer is, therefore, asked to do something, which is mainly for the benefit of the speaker. Requests can be face-threatening acts, which call for considerable expertise on the part of
the learner.”

Additionally, the use of address forms can be affected by certain factors such as the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, the existence of surrounding audiences, the age, the sex or the socio-economic background of the speaker. These are not the only elements that may give an impact on a person’s address behavior because language use somehow pervades social life; so, there should be more interrelated factors might arise from time to time.

According to Wei (2005:56), language has two different characters. The first character means communication and the second one depicts carrier of culture. Language without culture is absurd, as well as human culture without language. Brown (1994:165) discussed about the relation between language and culture as follows: “A language is a part of culture and a culture is a part of language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture”. Both language and culture are intertwined with each other and are inseparable no matter what. They have a reciprocal relationship and they need to move hand in hand in an effort to develop the society.

Language communication in Malaysia at all times can be classified into two levels namely the official and the unofficial. The official communication is being used in the official ceremonies or meetings as well as in report writings while the unofficial communication is meant for the social interaction outside the meetings or any official ceremonies (Asmah Haji Omar, 1987). Apparently, a conversation between interlocutors should depend on the situation or context in order for both the hearer and the speaker to be considered as competent in terms of pragmatic. By knowing how to start the conversation effectively with the perfect choice of address terms according to the suitable situation can reveal a person’s personal ability after all.

In order to become a competent speaker, linguistic competence must be accompanied by the awareness of the values and cultures of that particular language itself. Linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners who are learning a language to be proficient in that language (Krasner 1999). Language and culture are interrelated and the social context of a particular utterance is one of fundamental factors that need to be taken into consideration as performing speech acts. This is the reason why the values and norms of the local community are very important; since they have resulted to the formation of a culture, and then will be assimilated by every members of the society.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Speech Act

This theory was found by J.L. Austin, who is the British philosopher, in 1962. It concerns on how sentences are being used in a language. Austin (1962) pointed out that there are a large number of speech acts and more than a thousand of verbs in English that refer to them. People do more things with words in conveying information and by then, they often convey more than their words encode. Speech acts are being categorized under an extensive category of action, in which they share certain universal elements no matter what is the medium of their performance.

B. Request Speech Act

Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) defined a request as a preventive act by a speaker toward some prospective action to be done by the hearer. It can also be defined as the explicit intention of the speaker for the hearer to perform an action.

In English, the request segments in the scope of Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP) by Blum-Kulka & Olshain (1984) have been divided into three categories and they are the alerters, head act and supportive move with the head act being the only core part.

a) Alerter/Attention Getter (address terms, etc.):

“An alerter is an element, which often precedes the requests and whose function is to alert the hearer’s attention to the ensuing speech act. Since alerters serve as attention-getters, they are equal in function to all verbal means used for this purpose”. Alerters constitute the opening move of the request sequence and, besides gaining the hearer’s attention. Below are the coding categories of Alerters found in English and at the same time this will be the framework of data analysis in this study. This classification by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) was used as the coding framework in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor, waiter,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick, Judith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stupid cow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey, excuse me, listen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE I

ALERTERS CATEGORIES BY BLUM-KULKA ET AL. (1989)
b) Head Act (core of the request sequence, the request proper):

“The head act is that part of the sequence which might serve to realize the act independently of other elements; namely it is the minimal unit which can realize a request: the core of the request sequence”. For instance, “Can you remind me later to bring the book for you on Monday?”.

c) Supportive Move(s) (before or after Head Act):

“In using specific types of supportive moves, a speaker intends to mitigate or aggravate his request. Supportive moves are external to the head act occurring either before or after a head act”. For example, “Otherwise it may slip out of my mind…”.

Another approach for the classification of speech acts is Searle’s (1979) distinction between direct and indirect speech acts according to the relationship between the structural forms and communicative functions. A direct speech act refers to utterances whose meaning can be understood through linguistic forms, while indirect strategies are used to show an appropriate level of politeness.

**C. Studies on Speech Acts**

Marlyna Maros et al. (2010) conducted a study on “A Sociopragmatic Study On Greetings Patterns Among Male and Female Students At A Higher Learning Institutions” mainly to describe the strategy of address terms used by the students in institutions of higher learning in Malaysia, particularly the difference in strategy by male and female students. There were 264 respondents who participated in the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) questionnaire who answered 14 situations that require greetings, giving 3960 responses altogether. More than 30 respondents were interviewed and ethnography observation has been conducted for about 3 months. The findings revealed that robust address strategies were used if the social distance between students are close and female students are more comfortable using names while the male students most likely just nodding or say ‘hi’ to greet others. From the result, it shows that those first year students have mastered efficiency of communication appropriate to the context of speech even though some still need to understand the culture of greeting behaviour in this context.

Furthermore, in their study “Contrastive Pragmatic Study and Teaching Culture in English Language Classroom – A Case Study”, Maryam Farnia and Raja Rozina Raja Suleiman (2009) employed a contrastive pragmatic approach in conducting their research. It was done by comparing and contrasting the specific behaviours in which two cultures, to be exact the Iranian and the American, to express gratitude. This study involved 20 Iranian native speakers of Farsi and 20 American native speakers of English and the data was elicited from the Discourse Completion Task (DCT). From the findings of the study done, they found that particularly it helps teachers to enhance their students’ awareness of the social and cultural differences of the native language and the language they are learning. This is where the cross-cultural and contrastive pragmatics studies become an important or significant endeavor in helping people to cultivate their pragmatic awareness.

Other than that, Holoch (2009) reported that she found a lot of similarities between the requests made in English by German, Danish and British students. However, in terms of alerters, she said that most German English learners use surnames in situations that the British students use first names. On the other hand, Danish respondents seem to match British speakers’ use of both first names and surnames better. She concluded that the German English speakers most likely used a higher formality level as compared to the British speakers of English.

Abdul Majeed Al-Tayib Umar (2004) reported the research results on the request strategies used by the Arab learners of English as compared to those strategies used by native speakers of English. It involved 20 Arab students graduating from English courses in four Arabic universities and 20 British students pursuing graduate programs in three British universities. A Discourse-Completion-Test was the instrument used to generate data related to the request strategies used by each group. The data analysis showed the differences and similarities between the two groups. It revealed that the two groups agreed to similar strategies when addressing or doing their request to equals or people in higher positions. However, when requests were addressed to people in lower positions, the Arabic students tended to use more direct request strategies in performing their request compared to the British samples. The researcher found that the native speakers of English employ more semantic and syntactic modifiers compared to their Arabic counterparts and for this reason their requests sound more polite and thoughtful. These might be due to the culture that the Arabic students have where certain utterances may be polite enough to them, but not to others especially the native speakers of English as this research compared them both.

**D. Rules of Speaking in Malay**

Traditionally, the Malays signify indirectness in speaking as to save face of others and preserving good relationship among the interlocutors and the society as a whole. When they experience any uncomfortable circumstances, they will try to regulate their anger, to
avoid saying anything or even to deal with those situations face to face (Mustafa 2002:103-104; Asma Abdullah 1996:30; Jamaliah Ali 1995:34). Malays are expected to communicate decent manners and be subtle to those with whom they interact on a more formal basis. If these cultural rules are not conformed, these people are generally considered as unrefined for not be able to select the content and form of conversation, nonverbal cues, and the forms of greetings (Asmah Hj. Omar 1996, Asmah Abdullah 1996, Teo Kok Seong 1996).

E. Language Transfer and Sociopragmatic Competence

First language (L1) is termed by dissimilar names such as native language, primary language, and mother tongue. It is assumed to be one which is learned during early childhood, before the age of about 3 years old. According to Houmanfar, Hayes, and Herbst (2005), the first and second languages are interconnected, and the history of the first language is a contributing factor in the acquisition of the second language (L2).

However, Selinker (1972) suggests that we might also expect more learning difficulties and thus more likelihood of performance interference at those points in L2 which are more distant from L1, as the learner would find it difficult to learn and understand a completely new and different usage. So, contrastive analysis was used as an attempt to identify areas of convergence and divergence between the L1 and the L2 in order to predict elements of the L2 which would be easier or harder for the learner to learn.

The notion of sociopragmatic competence raised out of the concept of communicative competence in language acquisition. Leech (1983) describes sociopragmatics as “the sociological interface of pragmatics” involving speakers’ and hearers’ views built on relevant social and cultural values. Meanwhile, Harlow (1990) defines sociopragmatic competence as the ability to modify speech strategies properly according to dissimilar social variables such as the degree of imposition, social dominance and distance between participants of conversation, and participants’ rights and obligations in communication.

Inability to use the language appropriately would be considered as a sociopragmatic failure, and speakers are assumed as having trouble of adjusting to the social conditions placed on language use. There are three different contributing factors that lead to sociopragmatic failure, namely linguistic, sociocultural and sociopsychological factors. These factors can be influenced by aspects of the speaker’s first language (L1) and target language (TL) and also by his or her proficiency or awareness of the culture of the target language.

III. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine how Malay speakers use alerters in their request speech act. It seeks to fulfil the following objectives:

1. To classify and compare the Malay categories of alerters used in request speech acts by Malaysians speakers with English categories of alerters.
2. To examine whether or not the pragmatic competence of L1 speakers can be transferred to L2.

IV. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Questionnaires are the most effective instruments that make it possible to collect a large number of data relatively and easily. The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) questionnaire has been employed by researchers for more than years in order to investigate speech act behaviour and pragmatic transfer and the researcher found that it is convenient to this particular research.

The DCT questionnaire used in this research comprises of fourteen open-ended questions based on the written discourses that provide the context or situation for the request speech act to be studied further. It consists of structured written discourses, which provide the context or situation for the speech act being studied. In addition, the written questionnaire incorporates varying degrees of social distance based on multiplicity of domains.

There are two types of situations involved, in which the formal and informal situations that may lead to differences in the form of address given by the speakers. The following diagram illustrates a clearer picture showing two situations that may be a significant factor influencing the utterances made by them.

Among all situations, the targeted areas for formal situation are the post office, immigration office, registry office, KWSP office, banks, and telecommunications office. In those premises, the more formal situation is expected to occur in front of the customer counter, while the informal situation is at the waiting area enabling customers to interact with each other using less formal language. Therefore, several questions have been formulated to describe the two situations in order to
obtain the types of alerter which may vary according to particular situations. For an informal situation, some places as shopping mall, grocery store, recreational park and neighbourhoods were selected to reflect situations in the process of constructing questions in the form of written discourse in this study.

20 questionnaires have been pilot tested at the first stage of the questionnaire development for the purpose of verifying the sets of the questionnaire and was conducted as a ‘snapshot’ survey conducted over a two-week period. Based on the data gathered at that particular time, a few amendments have been made to the questionnaire due to certain restraints. After that, the modified version of the questionnaire is then ready to be administered to all of the respondents involved.

The respondents involved were required to respond as naturally as possible and try to write their response as what they would say in the given situation. The answers given will then be analysed and this might shows interesting findings that illustrate how sociocultural norms are reflected in the language and are there any pragmatic transfer detected through examples of language use.

V. Methodology

The project coding scheme was based on frames of primary features in the realization of request and apologies, proposed by Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984). In order to analyse the alerters of requests elicited from the questionnaires, the researcher have adapted the coding categories based on the frameworks employed by the Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) by Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984). These coding categories are equivalent to each other in some cases. These outlines were used as the guidelines or the framework in analysing the data collected. Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984) formulated 9 categories of alerters, i.e., title/role, surname, first name, nickname, endearment term, offensive term, pronoun and attention getter.

VI. Results and Discussion

This study sought to examine whether or not the pragmatic competence of L1 speakers can be transferred to L2. Determining the understanding of alerters in Malay will help school teachers to teach speech function in English.

There were ten categories of alerters in Malay found in this study. The researcher further elaborates all those categories in the following by providing examples and clarifications using tables for clearer explanations about each specified category.

### A. Family Name/Surname

**Tan**

Family name or surname is very synonymous among the Chinese population in Malaysia. In this research, some respondents tend to use their friend’s family name maybe due to the given situations in the DCT questionnaire in which the speaker is likely to live in a multiracial neighbourhood with a mixture of races and the existing relationship is conventional so that the speaker feels free to ask for help from his neighbour, who is a Chinese man.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation 13</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anda ingin meminjam tangga dari pada jiran anda.</td>
<td>“Tan, boleh pinjam tangga sekejap?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagaimanakah caranya anda memulakan pertanyaan kepada jiran?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B. First Name

**Aminah, Abu**

As we know, it is a normal thing to start a conversation by calling other people’s real name and this situation shows that there must be a tight bond or a close relationship between the two interlocutors and that was why the speaker knows how to address his hearer with names.

Some respondents said that it is even friendlier to use the hearer’s first name in order to request for help or in an effort to seek the assistance of a person. It is also said to be the norm that often occur in clusters of society regardless of whether they live in the urban or rural areas. Furthermore, so as to ensure that the request made by the speaker is accomplished by the listener, the conversation should begin with a fair, decent and prudent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation 13</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anda ingin meminjam tangga dari pada jiran anda.</td>
<td>“Fiqih, umah ko ade tangga tak? Aku nak pinjam leh?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagaimanakah caranya anda memulakan pertanyaan kepada jiran?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### C. Nickname

**Bob**

In this globalization era, the nicknames are widely being used as a suitable replacement for or additional to a particular person’s real name. Most of the nicknames are meant to obscure others about the true identity of a person. For example, Bob, which stands for ‘badan orang besar’ is a nickname to the shopkeeper and he may be a fat guy indeed.
the given situation in the DCT questionnaire. The use of “Abang”, “Kakak”, “Adik”, “Pak Cik”, “Mak Cik” were meant to show respect to the hearer. “Wak” is a pronoun means uncle in Javanese language while “Aya” also means the same in Tamil. “Nyonya” and “Tauke” symbolize the same meaning but as they are said to be the monopolist of groceries commerce, the kinds of pronouns have been used by most people in our country.

Additionally, the address term “bro”, which means “brother” has been shortened and is used by the youngsters to address people within their ‘so called’ urban population or generation. It goes the same or equivalent with “Amoi” as well as “Sis” in a certain condition or situation. Examples given below somehow illustrate that the speaker knew the most appropriate address term to be used in order to begin his or her inquiries with an employee of the Registration Department counter that was about the same age as his or her father. The speakers still practice the Malay customs and norms that have been handed down for ages in the sense of initiating a conversation by taking into account the context or circumstances surrounding it. It is because the speaker started his request statement with the pronoun “Encik” at a formal setting and that was the best thing to do while addressing the department’s personnel at the counter.

F. Greetings

Assalamualaikum, Salam 1 Malaysia, Selamat Pagi, Selamat Petang, Hello, Hai, Apa khabar, Good Day, Good Morning

It has become a norm to all communities to start a conversation with greetings especially with the Malays to greet or start their words with “Assalamualaikum”. Those who use “Selamat Pagi Malaysia” or “Selamat Pagi” usually applied these kinds of greetings at the service or government counters to show formality and respect. Not all counter workers are the Malays since we are living in a multi-racial country; hence, it would be even more appropriate to use “Selamat Pagi”, “Good Morning” or “Good Day” to a certain extent.

By starting with a good greeting, the speaker expects the demand for help will be rewarded with the best. The example below is given by the respondent in seeking for help from the staff at the government and private

### TABLE IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation 7</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anda menerima pesanan makanan yang salah di sebuah restoran dan ingin meminta menu yang sebenar.</td>
<td>“Boy, tukar pesanan lain boleh tak?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagaimanakah anda memulakan pertanyaan tersebut kepada pelayan?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE V

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation 2</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anda ingin menghantar pos laju tetapi tidak menjelaskan bagaimana caranya. Bagaimanakah anda memulakan pertanyaan kepada orang di sebelah anda yang juga sedang menunggu giliran bersama anda?</td>
<td>“Sayang, hantar pos laju?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE VI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation 4</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
department counter. The speaker began to request for related information by greeting the personnel at the counter with the purpose of showing respect and for comfortability purposes.

**TABLE VII**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of Greetings Category</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anda ingin mendaftar talian telefon bimbit tetapi tidak mengetahui bagaimana caranya, Bagaimanakah anda memulakan pertanyaan kepada petugas di kaunter?</td>
<td>“Good morning, could you tell me how?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anda ingin mendaftar talian telefon bimbit tetapi tidak mengetahui bagaimana caranya, Bagaimanakah anda memulakan pertanyaan kepada petugas di kaunter?</td>
<td>“Good day, may I know..?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**G. Sound**

**Noisy sound (nudge sound)**

However, some Malaysians are still unaware of the language courtesy in conversations. It is because the younger generation most likely started a request conversation by making a nudge sound like a sound of a mouse in order to call or to notice his hearer. This kind of behaviour is totally inappropriate and can somehow be considered as rude. Even though not everyone did this, but this kind of behavior has been spread out among young people in Malaysia. It begins just with pleasure, but this may be a very serious problem if it is not being addressed wisely.

**TABLE VIII**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of Sound Category</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anda menerima pesanan makanan yang salah di sebuah restoran dan ingin meminta menu yang sebenar. Bagaimanakah anda memulakan permintaan tersebut kepada pelayan?</td>
<td>Produce certain sound to alert the waiter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**H. Apologizing**

**Maafkan saya**

The Malays are full of politeness in every action they do. So, they would start their conversation by apologizing others in order to request for something to be done in return.

**TABLE IX**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of Apologizing Category</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anda ingin mendaftar talian telefon bimbit tetapi tidak mengetahui bagaimana caranya, Bagaimanakah anda memulakan pertanyaan kepada petugas di kaunter?</td>
<td>“Maafkan saya, boleh saya bertanya?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Maslida Yusof et al. (2011), an apology can follow the request verb in formal situations and can appear as the initiator element of discretion or (alerter) that precedes the actual request made by speakers. This situation happened probably due to the uncomfortable feeling to interfere others in order to get help from them.

1. **Attention Getter / Exclamation**

**Tumpang Tanya, Sebentar ya, Errr.., Wei, Oi, Deii, Weh, Hmm.., Emm.., Eh..**

Those respondents who used this kind of alerters did not sure of what would be the most appropriate address term should be used in order to start their conversation in making requests. It might be used by a speaker who does not know whom the addressee is and does not know what types of address terms to be used in initiating a request conversation. They tried to alert their hearer by mumbling around with those “emm..” or “hmm..” or else started to play safe by saying “tumpang tanya” instead of calling names or address term “Encik” since some people may seem quite simple on the outside, but in fact they were the dignitaries who must be honored. But, those who used “wei”, “oi”, “deii” and so on were just using sort of alerters with their close friends especially among the youngsters. None of the respondents used that kind of words to address people in the formal situation.

Another example is a request statement made by a speaker who requested for information about the food court around a shopping mall area. He asked for help from someone who passed by and who is more or less at the same age with him by saying “Excuse me”. This situation shows that the Malays are concerned with language courtesy and politeness in which they simply started their conversation with a stranger by using suitable alerters.

**TABLE X**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of Attention Getter Category</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anda ingin menghantar pos laju tetapi tidak mengetahui bagaimana caranya, Bagaimanakah anda memulakan pertanyaan kepada petugas di kaunter?</td>
<td>“hmm..nak tanya boleh? Bagaimana cara hendak menghantar pos laju?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**J. Zero Alerters**

**Smiles, waving hands**

For this particular category, the respondents did not know the best way to start their conversation in making request from others. They choose to delete or eliminate the alerters and straight away start making request. Most respondents did this when they wanted something from the waiter in one of the situations given in the questionnaire.
a) A comparison between Malay and English categories of alerters

Based on the study, there were ten categories of alerters used by Malay speakers. In the following, I described my data analysis by discussing the similarities and differences of alerters categories found in this study with the categories acknowledged in Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP) by Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984). From the analysis, the researcher found that there were some differences in terms of categories of alerters in Malay and in English.

### TABLE XII

**A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE MALAY AND ENGLISH CATOEGORIES OF ALERTERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of Alerters</th>
<th>Malay</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title/Role</strong></td>
<td>Professor, Waiter, Teacher, Dr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Name/ Surname</td>
<td>Tan</td>
<td>Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Aminah, Abu</td>
<td>Judith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickname</td>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>Judy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endearment Term</td>
<td>Sayang</td>
<td>Honey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun</td>
<td>Tuan, Puan, Cik, Abang, Kakak, Adik, Saudara, Makcik, Pak cik, Awak, Wak, Tambi, Aya, Nyonya, Tauke, Amoi, Bro, Makwe</td>
<td>You</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Zero Alerters**

| **Sound** | Produce sound to alert waiter |
| **Apologizing** | Maafkan saya, Excuse me, hey! |
| **Exclamation** | Tumpang Tanya, Sebentar ya, Errr.., Wei!, Oil, Deal |

**Offensive Term**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Appears in English</strong></th>
<th><strong>Appear in Malay</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stupid cow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pragmatic Transfer from L1 to L2**

In Malay, there was no offensive term and title/role being used to initiate the request they made. The use of title/role is usually dependent on the situation that they are in. In the DCT questionnaire, there was a situation at the restaurant in regards with calling the waiter for mistaken food order. But, none of the respondents use the role of ‘waiter’ to start their request conversation. The researcher believed that those respondents involved imagined that they were in a small restaurant instead of the exclusive one. Usually, typical Malay people thought that ‘waiter’ is only to be used at hotels and other exclusive places.

Malay speakers prefer openers with neutrals, an alteration from the forms utilized in some situations (Austin, 1962). Besides that, the offensive terms were avoided by the Malay community in their request conversation as they are still aware of the language politeness or greeting courteous; therefore, they do not ever start their conversation with such rude words. This issue correspond to what Marlyna Maros (2006) have said, in which “Malays are expected to communicate good manners, breeding and sensitivity to those with whom they interact on a more formal basis.”

b) Pragmatic Transfer from L1 to L2

The pragmatic aspects of the language are frequently overlooked since the traditional language teaching methodologies accentuate the learner solely of the grammatical features of the language. Pragmatic competence in language teaching approaches is very important, as it is an essential component in the language learning process. Other than that, contrastive analysis was used as an attempt to identify areas of convergence and divergence between the L1 and the L2 in order to predict elements of the L2 which would be easier or harder for the learner to learn.
It is needed for L2 speakers to be rendered to or at least to be properly taught that pragmatic rules of other languages are not at all times the same as those of their own. However, the environment where the speakers are in may affect the effectiveness of such exposure or teaching. There is a chance that speakers will endure to prefer their own social and cultural rules to those of target language even after clear instruction and consciousness building, especially as in Malaysia, in the case of English as a Second Language.

It would be a pleasure to see how the Malays handle the situations that need requests in a different language, in which the second language, that is English. Numerous studies show that although learners may have learned the target language rules and the target language linguistic form, they are not able to comprehend the social and cultural rules which constrain the target language use. In their communication with native speakers of the target language, learners are likely to transmit their native social and cultural norms or customs into the target language, produce unsuitable linguistic behaviours, and prominent to pragmatic failure.

The results of the study show that the similarities mentioned somehow can help school teachers to teach speech function in English among the second language learners in Malaysia. Additionally, the findings also show that there is no significant difference in terms of the categories of alerters used in both Malay and English. Probably, the learners may use the pragmatic competency that they already have in L1 to help them acquire English, as their target language.

VII. CONCLUSION

This particular study can be used as a reference for further study by researchers who are interested in investigating other elements related to request speech acts. Since several factors have been identified to have an influence on the process of L1 pragmatic transfer, more empirical investigations are needed to determine conditions under which L1 pragmatic transfer occurs.

Based on the findings, the request pattern by Malay speakers has displayed their L1 linguistic and sociocultural rules, positively affecting their sociopragmatic competence in the production of request in English due to the similarities found in terms of the categories of alerters in both languages.

It also helps school teachers in understanding the needs of their students in order to perform better in learning speech functions of English. Additionally, educators should always have in mind that when it comes to teaching culture, the most important thing to be considered is the need to raise their students’ awareness of their own and target culture in order to develop their pragmatic consciousness. Teachers and program developers are suggested to take the learners' sociocultural background into consideration in selecting materials and employ suitable pedagogical approaches for particular contexts of teaching.

REFERENCES


