Sociopragmatic Competence in Online Gaming Discourse: A Corpus-based Study of Politeness Strategies among Multilingual Youth

Lect. Dr. Rafal Hassoon Obaid

University of Babylon, College of Education for Human Sciences, Department of English
hum918.rafal.hasson@uobabylon.edu.iq

Abstract

This study investigates sociopragmatic competence as manifested in politeness strategies in multilingual youths' online gaming communication. Through corpus-based approaches, the study analyzes actual chat contents in multiplayer online games to observe how players negotiate face-threatening acts, avoid disagreements, and establish social harmony in linguistically and culturally diverse settings. Guided by Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and current digital pragmatics, the analysis finds a fine-grained relationship between strategic politeness, game-specific communicative conventions, and multilingual identity enactment. The findings suggest that politeness in gaming is not simply performativity but highly context-specific, shaped by both the affordances of the digital environment and users' sociocultural backgrounds. This study is a contribution to the emerging field of digital sociopragmatics and highlights the promising potential of computer games as pragmatic learning spaces, intercultural communication spaces, and spaces for youth identity-making.

Keywords: Sociopragmatic Competence, Politeness Strategies, Online Gaming Discourse, Multilingual Young People, Corpus Linguistics, Digital Communication, Intercultural Pragmatics, Brown and Levinson.

1. Introduction

The onset of online multiplayers has created vibrant communicative environments where youth belonging to various linguistic and cultural backgrounds engage in real-time communication. Such communication is likely to require participants to practice sociopragmatic competence—the ability to use language efficiently across various social contexts (Taguchi, 2022, 85). That more youth belonging to various languages join gaming communities, making it essential to understand how politeness strategies occur in these online environments, is timely and urgent.

Sociopragmatic gaming competence in online games is conditioned by culture-specific norms, power relations, and participance closeness. Politeness strategies in online games have universal and culture-specific tendencies that are conditioned by the nature of the game, community norms, and speakers' language backgrounds (Vásquez, 2022, 211). Nevertheless the literature has only recently set out systematically to investigate politeness in online games using empirical, corpus-based research (Sharma & Lu, 2021, 334). Additionally, the majority of the studies have been conducted on native speakers or monolingual communities, leaving a void in our knowledge on how multilingual gamers achieve politeness across language and culture.

Computer-mediated communication (CMC), which online gaming is an example of, presents special challenges to conventional politeness theories, including Brown and Levinson's (1987) model, because of its hybrid format of synchronous text, voice chat, and multimodal interaction. These contexts need to be supported by other models which consider the fluidity,

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ambiguity, and competition of play (Sifianou, 2019, 15). With this in mind, this research seeks to examine the sociopragmatic ability of multilingual youths in gaming communication with focus on the strategic use of politeness in real gaming interactions.

1.1 Problem Statement

Despite the rapid expansion of multilingual interaction in online games, few large-scale studies have investigated how multilingual youths utilize politeness strategies in online game talk. Existing research mostly ignores how sociopragmatic competence is adapted for real-time goal-oriented and emotionally charged environments such as online games. Additionally, there is minimal corpus-based empirical research available to investigate how players manage face-threatening acts, solidarity, or conflict management in multilingual environments. Therefore, there is a need for more understanding of how multilingual youths can manage politeness and pragmatics when gaming. Thus this study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most common politeness strategies used by multilingual youths in online gaming texts?
2. How do multilingual gamers negotiate face-saving actions in game-play interactions?
3. To what degree do players' self-identified linguistic and cultural backgrounds influence their use of politeness strategies in online gaming discourse?
4. How can corpus analysis be used to better comprehend sociopragmatic competence in online game worlds?

1.2 Research Objectives

This study aims at:

1. Identifying and analyzing the most common politeness strategies used by multilingual youths in online gaming discourse.
2. Examining how multilingual gamers negotiate face-saving actions during real-time gameplay interactions.
3. Investigating how players' self-identified linguistic and cultural backgrounds influence their use of politeness strategies.
4. Utilizing corpus analysis to explore and better understand the nature of sociopragmatic competence in online gaming environments.

٢. Literature Review
2.1 Sociopragmatic Competence and Politeness in Digital Communication

Sociopragmatic competence refers to the ability of the speaker to interpret and produce language in a manner that accommodates the sociocultural norms of a specific context. It consists of awareness of such factors as interlocutors' social status, the type of relationship (e.g., solidarity or distance), the setting (formal or informal), and the communicative purpose of the interaction (Taguchi, 2022, 85). This type of competence falls under successful communication since it regulates not just what is communicated, but also how and when.

In computer-mediated communication settings—such as email, discussion forums, gaming websites, and instant messaging—sociopragmatic capacity is made more complex by the absence of many of the normal contextual cues of intonation, facial expression, or stance. As Locher and Graham (2021, 57) note, interlocutors online must compensate for this lack of physical presence by relying more heavily on linguistic markers, punctuation, emojis, gifs, and other paralinguistic cues to express politeness, emotion, and intention. The meaning of these markers, however, is highly context-dependent and can vary significantly across cultures and platforms.

Gaming discourse is a particularly rich territory for research on computer-mediated sociopragmatics and politeness. Unlike more formalized settings such as business email or university discussion forums, game communication tends to be fast-paced, emotive, and spontaneous. It often involves strategic collaboration or oppositional competition and often takes place in multicultural, semi-anonymous groups where interlocutors may not share a linguistic or cultural background. This setting defies traditional politeness conventions and requires adaptive sociopragmatic strategies (Sifianou, 2019, 14).

Initial research on CMC politeness largely focused on written modes such as email (Chen, 2020, 213) or asynchronous media such as blogs and forums. More recent studies have also adopted synchronous communication platforms such as Slack, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams (Locher & Bolander, 2021, 64), where the synchronicity of interaction introduces heightened immediacy and complexity in politeness negotiation. Despite the growing body of work on CMC politeness, nonetheless, the gaming sphere remains relatively under researched, especially in the context of sociopragmatic norms' establishment, maintenance, or challenging between players.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness theory has been the dominant paradigm for politeness research for many years. Their distinction between positive politeness (group membership and solidarity oriented) and negative politeness (respect for personal space and minimization of imposition oriented) offers a default stance for analyzing interaction. Their concept of "face"—both positive (need to be approved and liked) and negative (need to be unobstructed)—still shapes the examination of face-threatening and face-saving acts in communication situations.

However, the applicability of this model to the examination of online gaming discourse has been under increasing doubt. The dynamic, spontaneous, and multilayered nature of gamers' discourse—as it tends to occur simultaneously with task-related activity—does not always lend itself to the binary oppositions of politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson's theory (Sharma & Lu, 2021, 334; Locher & Graham, 2021, 59). For instance, players might use teasing, irony, or aggressive language as a means of camaraderie, which would typically be classified as impolite but is understood as solidarity-building in the gaming community (Terkourafi, 2023, 49; Sifianou, 2019, 15). This suggests a need for more flexible, context-sensitive models that account for the co-construction of meaning, emergent norms, and the hybrid functions of language in digital environments.

Scholars such as Terkourafi (2023, 49) and Sharma and Lu (2021, 334) argue for a discursive and interactional conception of politeness, one that emphasizes co-construction of meaning over time and explains how politeness is negotiated in specific moments more than it is determined by stable universal strategies. These newer approaches take into account the fluid identities that participants enact—leader, supporter, or opponent, for instance—and how these identities shape expectations and interpretations of politeness behavior. They also focus on relational work (Locher & Watts, 2005, 62), whereby all interpersonal language use—polite, impolite, or otherwise—works to construct and uphold relationships.

In light of these trends, research on sociopragmatic competence in online gaming must transcend static models and adopt more dynamic, context-sensitive approaches attuned to the

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realities of online interaction. Researchers must also be sensitive to the different cultural, generational, and subcultural norms that players bring to these interactions. What might be interpreted as a face-threatening act in one sociocultural environment will be good-natured teasing in another, particularly in globalized online groups where players are likely to come from vastly different sociolinguistic backgrounds.

2.2 Gaps in Multilingual and Gaming Pragmatics Research

While multilingualism in computer-mediated communication, specifically in online gaming, has become increasingly prominent, research has yet to address the intersection of multilingual pragmatics, politeness theory, and interactive digital discourse. While numerous studies identify internet users as multilingual, there is a significant absence of close analysis of how speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds negotiate pragmatic norms—particularly politeness, face-work, and discourse strategies—in the gaming environment (Taguchi, 2022, 91).

In multilingual online environments, gamers are prone to mixing languages, code-switching, translanguaging, and pragmatic borrowing from diverse speech communities. These practices challenge the application of traditional, monolingually grounded politeness theories. For instance, the implication of directness or sarcasm can be understood in such drastically different ways in high-context and low-context speakers, yet there has been little empirical work examining such cross-cultural differences in online game talk. In addition, the use of two or more languages in one communicative act—common in real-time voice chat, in-game text chat, or community forums—poses a challenge for traditional theories of pragmatics which assume linguistic homogeneity.

More specifically, research on face-threatening acts (FTAs) and politeness mitigation strategies in game communication is undertheorized in multilingual contexts. Students from different cultural backgrounds may perceive FTAs differently or employ different means to circumvent them, such as humor, indirectness, hedging, or appeals to shared identity. Nevertheless, as Vásquez (2022, 144) observes, most work in this area remains descriptive and largely anecdotal. It relies on small-scale observation or interview data and does not employ systematic, corpus-based, or ethnographic methods, which would yield more penetrating insights or replicable results. This methodological gap limits the generalizability of findings and hampers theory-building that could accommodate the complexities of multilingual digital interaction.

Moreover, much of the existing research tends to focus on well-documented CMC platforms—such as email, discussion forums, or corporate communications—while largely overlooking the discursive practices within online gaming communities. Gaming discourse is special in that it is not only multilingual and multimodal, but also typically embedded within high-stakes, time-pressured, and goal-oriented environments. This is favorable to fast turn-taking, speedy shift in power dynamics, and the need for adaptive and dynamic pragmatic strategies. However, without the presence of robust, longitudinal studies or large datasets of multilingual gaming interactions, it is difficult to assess how these dynamics shape politeness practices or how pragmatic norms emerge and change in these spaces.

A second fundamental gap regards how youth are positioned in gaming pragmatics studies. Youths and young adults are among the most enthusiastic members of online gaming communities, yet their language has seldom been examined from a standpoint that innovates and legitimates their language use. When their discourse is studied, it is often evaluated against prescriptive native-speaker norms, especially in English-dominant studies (Chen, 2020, 216).

Many studies of digital communication continue to rely on normative models of pragmatic competence, which often assume native-speaker ideals and standard language usage as the benchmark for effective or appropriate communication (Chen, 2020, 216; Taguchi, 2022, 90). These models tend to prioritize grammatical accuracy, fixed politeness strategies, and monolingual norms, overlooking the complexity of language use in dynamic, multilingual, and digital settings. Such normative criteria fail to account for the sociolinguistic realities of multilingual youths, who may draw upon a wide range of linguistic resources not only for utilitarian purposes—such as achieving in-game goals—but also for expressing identity, humor, and group solidarity.

For example, a multilingual youth who plays video games online might seamlessly blend English with Arabic, Spanish, or Tagalog—not out of linguistic deficiency, but as a strategic and creative resource for inclusion, exclusion, or even playful resistance to dominant norms. These fluid communicative practices allow players to negotiate belonging, signal insider status, or challenge authority within their communities. Increasingly, such behavior is being referred to in scholarly literature as emergent multilingual practices—flexible, context-sensitive ways of using language that reflect the hybrid and trans lingual nature of contemporary communicative environments (Vásquez, 2022, 137; Locher & Bolander, 2021, 67).

Aside from overlooking emergent practices, a lot of research has failed to deal with political and ideological issues of language in online gaming. For instance, questions of linguistic hegemony, exclusion of non-English speakers, or effects of language policies on gaming websites are infrequently addressed. This gap limits a more critical investigation of how power and privilege are mediated in multilingual gaming communities and how such phenomena intersect with pragmatic behavior.

2.3 Theoretical and Methodological Innovations

In response to the limitations and criticisms of the classical theories of politeness—particularly Brown and Levinson's (1987) universalist and strategy-model perspective—researchers in pragmatics and discourse analysis have increasingly shifted to frameworks that account for the dynamic, contextual, and multimodal nature of contemporary communication, and more so in digital and multilingual contexts. Criticisms of the static and idealized notion of politeness have led to a paradigmatic shift towards frameworks that approach politeness as an emergent, interactional, and relational phenomenon.

Among the key theoretical developments is Terkourafi's (2023) frame-based model of politeness, which challenges the notion of politeness as a set of predetermined strategies and instead views it as arising from participants' expectations within specific social and interactional frames. According to this model, politeness is not a fixed property of utterances but is co-constructed by interlocutors based on shared norms, activity types, and contextually relevant cues. It is particularly useful to the analysis of game discourse, where cooperative, competitive, joking, and aggressive frames are moved in and out of very quickly during an interaction. The negotiability of roles—where one can be a teammate, competitor, or commentator within a few seconds—demands an equally negotiable understanding of how politeness is constructed and interpreted.

To add to this is the relational work model of online interaction put forward by Locher and Graham (2021), which reframes online interaction as an ongoing negotiation process and not as a sequence of independent, intention-driven speech acts. This model emphasizes that politeness, impoliteness, and other examples of relational language usage are embedded in broader discourses of identity, alignment, and power. Especially in CMC, where textual, visual, and auditory cues intersect, meaning is a shared accomplishment shaped by multimodal

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affordances such as emojis, GIFs, avatars, and tone of voice. In online gaming, where communication is by typed chat, voice channels, gestures, and game mechanics, relational work is not only linguistic but also incorporated in gameplay actions such as healing a team member or sabotaging an opponent.

These theoretical advances have been matched by significant methodological ones, particularly through the development of corpus pragmatics—a subdiscipline that weds pragmatic analysis to the empirical power of corpus linguistics. The availability of large-scale, digitally stored interactional data—such as chat logs, in-game text, voice comms recordings, and game replay files—has enabled researchers to move away from small, anecdotal samples and conduct analyses that are simultaneously qualitative and quantitative in nature.

Sharma and Lu (2021, 336) highlight how such corpora can be exploited for the detection of recurring pragmatic patterns, e.g., mitigation strategies, face-threatening acts (FTAs), and alignment or disalignment markers, across thousands of interactions. Such data-driven approaches also facilitate in-depth comparative studies across variables like language background, age, gender, game type, and platform (e.g., console vs. PC vs. mobile). For example, one can look at how English and Arabic differently structure refusals and requests in cooperative gameplay, or how emotive language differs between competitive single player and team games.

In addition, multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) has developed as a complementary methodology, allowing analysts to investigate not only written or verbal language, but how text, image, sound, and movement communicate with one another. In online gaming, where avatar movement, screen layout, interface design, and sounds in the game all contribute to making meaning, MDA is particularly well-suited to the breadth of communication. For instance, a sarcastic comment combined with a specific avatar emote or background music has the potential to entirely alter the intended pragmatics of an utterance.

These methodological innovations have not only improved the level of granularity of pragmatic analysis but also facilitated interdisciplinarity. Theoretic understandings from disciplines like game studies, media studies, applied linguistics, and sociolinguistics are being integrated increasingly to study the ways digital spaces constrain, enable, and shape communicative action. Ethnographic methods have been transferred to online environments as well (frequently referred to as netnography), which enables researchers to immerse themselves in online communities and witness naturalistic interactions spanning several months or years. This is particularly valuable for studying gaming communities, which form elaborate, insider norms and metapragmatic understandings of what constitutes appropriate or strategic communication.

2.4 Bridging the Gap

This study aims to address several overlapping gaps in current research by combining sociopragmatic theory, multilingualism, and digital interaction—three fields traditionally explored separately or with little cross-fertilization. Despite a growing understanding of the necessity for pragmatic competence in digitally mediated contexts, especially among young people, detailed research that systematically explores multilingual online gaming discourse remains limited. This study is at the nexus of these disciplines and seeks to fill the gap in the representation of multilingual youth communication in the field of digital pragmatics, and to add

greater theoretical nuance and empirical depth to studies of politeness and facework in computer-mediated communication.

With specific interest in online game communication among multilingual youths, this research acknowledges the unique communicative arena provided by games—one characterized by spontaneity, rapid turn-taking, goal-oriented cooperation or competition, and heightened emotional involvement. Online multiplayer games, and more particularly games of real-time strategy or action, often require players to make split-second decisions not only within the game but also in communication. Consequently, they offer an interesting site for the study of real-time sociopragmatic negotiation, where identity, power, and politeness are renegotiated. The presence of players from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds introduces further levels of complexity, making such environments ideal sites for scrutiny of how multilingual speakers negotiate face-threatening acts (FTAs), engage in relational work, and use politeness or impoliteness strategies to maintain group cohesion or exert control.

By employing a corpus-based methodology, this study makes a dual contribution—both theoretical and methodological. Theoretically, it extends the application of contemporary sociopragmatic frameworks, such as Terkourafi's frame-based model and Locher and Graham's relational approach, to digital and multilingual interaction. This broadens the scope of existing politeness studies, which have predominantly focused on monolingual or formal digital settings like emails or professional platforms. The present study therefore focuses its attention on informal, highly interactive, and hybridized contexts, where discourse is regularly carried out in a multiplicity of languages and registers, and norms are more under negotiation in practice than imposed by institutional structures.

Methodologically, the use of corpus pragmatics instruments—i.e., discourse tagging, pragmatic annotation, and frequency analysis—enables the retrieval of repetitive communication patterns, strategic language use, and code-switching practices in a vast amount of naturally occurring data. This allows for empirically driven generalizations about multilingual digital pragmatics with an analytical level of detail not always found in earlier studies relying on small, anecdotal, or elicited data samples. Furthermore, by taking into account multimodal features such as voice chat, emojis, emotes, and in-game actions, this research recognizes that the full spectrum of resources players use to accomplish interpersonal work is taken into consideration.

In this manner, this research also contributes to broader academic debates within fields such as digital pragmatics, applied linguistics, intercultural communication, and second language acquisition. It fights the temptation to assess multilingual speakers' pragmatic skills against native-speaker norms and instead draws our attention to the emergent, adaptive, and creative character of language use among digital natives. This refocus aligns with recent calls for a broader conceptualization of pragmatic competence—one that takes into account the daily linguistic lives of youths juggling multiple identities, platforms, and interactional pressures.

Last but not least, the repercussions of this research reach out beyond academia. In digital literacy and language learning, what is learned here can help to inform curriculum development that reflects real-world digital communication, and particularly that of multilingual learners. Educators can apply this research to develop pedagogical resources that make learners more aware of the use of politeness, face negotiation, and intercultural sensitivity in online communication. Lastly, this study also provides practical contribution to intercultural communication training, specifically in areas such as online community management, game development, and international education programs, where effective cross-cultural interaction is of the utmost concern.

Ultimately, this research not only theoretically and empirically addresses a lacuna in the literature but also reasserts the importance of examining language use in actual, high-stakes, and socially rich environments. By illuminating the ways multilingual youth collectively construct

meaning and negotiate relationships through language on online gaming sites, this study underscores the evolving profile of pragmatic competence in the digital age.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative corpus-based perspective which combines some of the features of discourse analysis and pragmatics to investigate politeness strategies employed by multilingual youths in virtual gaming contexts. Corpus-based pragmatics allows systematic enquiry into authentic, naturally occurring material to produce insights into language use in context (Aijmer & Rühlemann, 2015, 4). Emphasis is placed on the identification of recurring pragmatic patterns and the sociopragmatic variables that influence them, such as age, language background, and whether or not gameplay is cooperative or competitive.

The study is exploratory and interpretive in nature, aimed at discovering how multilingual game players negotiate politeness, deal with face needs, and establish relationships in virtual environments. The approach conforms to emerging trends in sociolinguistics and digital pragmatics emphasizing ecological validity and using large interactional data sets (Taguchi, 2022, 99).

3.2 Data Collection

The principal source of data is voice and chat logs from transcribed multiplayer online games such as Valorant, Fortnite, and League of Legends. These were selected since they have a diverse pool of players, high interaction frequency, and linguistic diversity. Data was recorded from public servers and gaming communities wherein players consented to the use of their chat interactions for research.

Hundreds of words of interactional data were collected from 20 game sessions, played by multilingual gamers in the young age group. The players self-identified as English-fluent and at least one other language (e.g., Spanish, Arabic, Korean, Russian). Ethical online data collection principles were followed, such as anonymizing usernames and concealing private chat messages.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data were coded using corpus linguistics software, for example, AntConc, for frequency distribution, concordance lines, and collocational patterns of politeness strategies presented by Anthony, (2019, 2). Manual coding was performed for speech acts such as requests, compliments, apologies, threats, and refusals and then analyzed on the basis of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework and further contextualized based on context-sensitive models presented by Terkourafi, (2023, 52). Mixed methods were employed in the analysis:

Quantitative analysis pinpointed politeness marker frequency and mitigation distribution.
Qualitative analysis gauged to what extent sociopragmatic meaning was co-constructed in real interaction time, in particular regarding identity, group dynamics, and face management.

3.4 Analytical Framework

The study employs Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory as a starting point, categorizing utterances based on positive and negative politeness strategies. However, to capture the complexities of multilingual and digital interactions, this framework is supplemented with Terkourafi's (2023) frame-based model, which accounts for context-specific meanings and the dynamic nature of online discourse.

The analysis draws on digital pragmatics and interactional sociolinguistics as well to explain complex processes of politeness production using intertextuality, multimodality (text, emoji, voice), and code-switching. These theoretical approaches enable one to get a better sense of how young people take up politeness strategies in dynamic, rapidly evolving gaming environments that often blur play from social negotiation.

4. Results

4.1 Frequency and Types of Politeness Strategies

Multilingual youths, according to corpus analysis, employed a wide range of politeness strategies, the most frequent being positive politeness (i.e., in-group marker use, compliments, and appeals to solidarity) at 48% of all politeness-related turns. Negative politeness (i.e., indirect speech, hedging, and apologizing) was observed for 32%, and bald-on-record and rude turns were accounted for 20%, often in competitive or high-pressure game contexts.

For example, positive politeness such as "Nice shot, bro!" or "Let's stick together" arose continuously in team modes, which reflected cooperation. Negative politeness occurred when requesting assets or providing commands, e.g., "Could you cover me, please?" which mitigated the imposition.

By contrast, rudeness or simple orders—"Shut up" or "Move, idiot"—tended to surface in intra-team conflicts or clear incompetence.

4.2 Contextual Variation in Politeness Usage

The application of politeness strategies varied extensively across game types and interaction contexts. Cooperative games (e.g., Overwatch, Fortnite squads) witnessed users being more positive in their politeness to build trust and teamwork. For competitive or ranked play, negative politeness and impoliteness were seen more frequently, especially in conditions of time pressure or when players with different abilities interacted with one another.

Multilingual users were more probable to code-switch or introduce elements of their original languages in highly emotive exchanges, which served as politeness markers and markers of identity.

4.3 Sociopragmatic Sensitivity and Face Management

The data also revealed a high level of sociopragmatic sensitivity among multilingual youth. Players adapted their politeness based on perceived power relations, game roles, and linguistic familiarity. For instance, newer players often used more deferential forms such as "Sorry, I'm still learning," while experienced players sometimes used directives softened by humor or emojis to maintain authority without threatening face. Interestingly, some of the multilingual players used politeness not just to avoid conflict but tactically manage group life, such as claiming solidarity with high-performing group members through complimenting or warding off blame with hedged refusals ("I thought someone else was covering mid,". These practices illustrate the use of politeness as both linguistic and social resource within online gaming ecologies.

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5. Discussion

5.1 Sociopragmatic Competence in Multilingual Online Interaction

The findings of the study validate that multilingual youths demonstrate an extremely high degree of sociopragmatic competence in game talk that is supported by earlier studies showing that online settings promote the development of pragmatic competence (Taguchi, 2022, 119). Players skillfully alternated between politeness strategies depending on interlocutor familiarity, language background, and gameplay needs—confirming that online gaming is no "wild west" communicative space but one governed by unspoken norms and face-sensitive practices (Locher & Graham, 2021, 63). The ability to detect social cues and orient speech acts appropriately reflects the extent to which multilingual players internalize context-specific politeness norms and hence instantiate an emergent digital sociolinguistic repertoire.

5.2 The Role of Positive Politeness in Community Building

The frequency of positive politeness strategies during cooperative gameplay demonstrates that multilingual young people use language to construct and maintain relationships within gaming communities (Sharma & Lu, 2021, p. 338). Compliments, solidarity-oriented pronouns, and shared humor serve to promote solidarity as well as trust, which is consistent with Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of positive face. Notably, such politeness is not merely superficially cosmetic—it serves a strategic function in advocating team synchrony, especially in linguistically diverse contexts in which participants have not necessarily enjoyed complete linguistic proficiency but desire to engage in collective understanding and goal cohesion (Aijmer & Rühlemann, 2015, 107).

This research's findings contradict traditional expectations that online environments facilitate impoliteness or face-threatening behavior. Instead, the findings point towards pragmatic flexibility that allows for politeness to be maintained even in high-stakes or affective communication. This aligns with new insights that online politeness is not a diluted version of facework but an advanced and responsive variety of interaction.

5.3 Politeness as a Strategy for Identity and Power Negotiation

The second important implication is strategic use of politeness for identity construction and power negotiation among multilingual speakers. Instances of hedging, indirect commands, and mitigated humor did not only mitigate imperatives but also situated actors within the group hierarchy, negotiated power, and indexed competence (Taguchi, 2022, 122). For instance, less experienced members used deferential speech acts to avoid face-threatening situations, while more assertive members used politeness to enforce control without direct confrontation.

Moreover, code-switching and convergence of multilinguistic features were used as politeness markers and as markers of in-group identity and as resources for cooperative management of cultural and linguistic heterogeneity tactfully (Aijmer & Rühlemann, 2015, 111). This research's findings suggest that online gaming is a good place for co-construction of social identities as well as performance of relational work through pragmatically rich discourse.

6. Limitations

Despite the fact that this study offers valuable information on politeness strategies in multilingual youth within online games, several limitations should be pointed out. First, it was a narrow corpus of politeness behaviors across certain multiplayer online games, and possibly it may not capture the diversity of politeness behaviors within various platforms and genres. Second, although a corpus-based approach provides spontaneous and contextually rich data, it limits the depth of understanding participants' intentions and inferences. Third, sociocultural variables such as age, gender, and education level were not systematically controlled, which may influence pragmatic alternatives.

Furthermore, ethical constraints prohibited personal identifiers from being recorded, further restricting individual multilingual histories and their overt influence on politeness practice. As Aijmer and Rühlemann (2015, p. 114) caution, pragmatic competence is often shaped by nuanced cultural and linguistic histories more subtle than can be noted as textual patterns.

7. Future Research

Future studies can extend this work in a mixed-methods design employing corpus analysis in conjunction with interviews or ethnographic fieldwork to examine the intentionality of politeness strategies. This would further assist us in knowing how multilingual gamers experience and negotiate face and identity in real-time.

There is also a need for longitudinal research that examines how sociopragmatic competence evolves over extended durations of online communication, particularly for younger users whose pragmatic and linguistic repertoires are still in the process of being built. Cross-genre comparisons of different types of games (e.g., role-playing vs. competitive shooter games) may also inform us about how game mechanics impact communicative norms and politeness expectations.

Lastly, future research should take intersectional factors like gender, ethnicity, and digital literacy into account to explain how these mediate the access to and performance of politeness within digital ecologies.

8. Conclusion

This research highlights the complex manner in which multilingual youths employ politeness strategies in online gaming contexts to navigate face, establish rapport, and negotiate power relations. Anything but a messy or rude environment, online gaming is a highly dynamic platform for sociopragmatic development, wherein gamers engage in culturally responsive and context-sensitive modes of communication.

The findings support that online communication is governed by emergent norms and practices reflecting users' linguistic versatility and intercultural competence. Specifically, politeness in this case is not a matter of social etiquette but a strategically negotiated tool for identity and group construction.

As multilingual communication grows in online spaces, an understanding of the pragmatics of politeness will remain useful both to linguistic theory and applied fields such as language instruction, game design, and online literacy.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Sample Data – Digital Politeness Strategies

No.	Context Type	Extract	Politeness Strategy	Platform
1	Online Forum	"Hi there! I hope you're doing well. Could you please help me with this issue?"	Positive politeness	Reddit
2	Email	"Dear Dr. Smith, I was wondering if it would be possible to reschedule our meeting?"	Negative politeness	Gmail
3	Online Game Chat	"GG everyone! That was a great match."	Solidarity/Positive politeness	Steam Chat
4	Customer Support	"Thank you for your patience. We appreciate your feedback."	Positive politeness	Website Chat
5	Social Media Post	"Sorry to bother, but does anyone know how to fix this bug?"	Negative politeness	Facebook Group
6	Text Messaging	"Can u pls send me the file?	Minimizing	WhatsApp

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		Thx!"	imposition	
7	Email	"I would be grateful if you could provide the documents by Friday."	Formal negative politeness	Outlook
8	Blog Comment	"Interesting read! Thanks for sharing your thoughts."	Positive politeness	Blogger
9	Online Discussion	"With all due respect, I think we should consider another approach."	Hedging/Negative politeness	Zoom Chat
10	Workplace Chat	"Hey, when you get a chance, mind reviewing this?"	Off-record indirectness	Slack
11	Video Game Forum	"You noob! Learn how to play!"	Impoliteness	Discord
12	Classroom Forum	"Thanks for your insights! They really helped clarify things."	Positive politeness	Moodle
13	Online Survey	"Please rate our service. Your opinion matters to us!"	Positive politeness	Google Forms
14	Text Messaging	"No rush, just letting you know I sent the file."	Negative politeness	Telegram
15	Academic Forum	"I respectfully disagree with your interpretation of Brown & Levinson."	Negative politeness	ResearchGate

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الكفاءة الاجتماعية التداولية في خطاب الألعاب الإلكترونية: دراسة معتمدةعلى مجموعة من النصوص حول استراتيجيات التأدب لدى الشباب متعددي اللغات

م.د. رفل حسون عبيد

جامعة بابل/ كلية التربية العلوم الانسانية/ قسم اللغة الانجليزية

hum918.rafal.hasson@uobabylon.edu.iq

الملخص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة الكفاءة الاجتماعية التداولية كما تتجلى في استراتيجيات التأدب ضمن تواصل المراهقين متعددي اللغات في بيئة الألعاب الإلكترونية. ومن خلال منهجية قائمة على على النصوص، تحلل الدراسة محتويات الدردشة الفعلية في ألعاب الفيديو متعددة اللاعبين لمراقبة كيفية تعامل اللاعبين مع الأفعال التي تُهدد الوجه، وتجنب الخلافات، وتحقيق الانسجام الاجتماعي في سياقات متنوعة لغويًا وثقافيًا.

وبالاستناد إلى نظرية التأدب لبراون وليفنسون والنُهج المعاصرة في التداولية الرقمية، تكشف التحليلات عن علاقة دقيقة بين التأدب الاستراتيجي، والأعراف التواصلية الخاصة بالألعاب، وتجسيد الهوية متعددة اللغات. وتشير النتائج إلى أن التأدب في الألعاب الإلكترونية ليس مجرد أداء ، بل هو مرتبط بالسياق إلى حد كبير ، ويتشكل من خلال إمكانيات البيئة الرقمية والخلفيات الاجتماعية والثقافية للمستخدمين. تمثل هذه الدراسة إسهامًا في مجال التداولية الاجتماعية الرقمية الناشئ، وتُسلط الضوء على الإمكانات الواعدة للألعاب الإلكترونية بوصفها فضاءات للتعلم التداولي، والتواصل بين الثقافات، وتشكيل هوية الشباب

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكفاءة الاجتماعية التداولية، استراتيجيات التأدب، خطاب الألعاب الإلكترونية، الشباب متعددو اللغات، اللسانيات النصية ، التواصل الرقمي، التداولية بين الثقافات، براون وليفنسون.