Pragmatic Strategies in Cross-Cultural Communication: A Comparative Study

Asst.Lect. Alaa Abdullah Hussain
Asst.Lect. Sumaya Zaidan Khalaf
Tikrit University/ College of Arts – English department
alla.hussain122@tu.edu.iq
S.zidan@tu.edu.iq

الاستراتيجيات البراغماتية في التواصل عبر الثقافات: دراسة مقارنة

م.م. الاء عبدالله حسين

م.م. سميه زيدان خلف

جامعة تكريت/ كلية الآداب قسم اللغة الانكليزية

Abstract

This study explores the pragmatic strategies employed in cross-cultural communication, focusing on a comparative analysis between native English and native Arabic speakers. Grounded in the theoretical framework of speech act theory and intercultural pragmatics, the research examines how cultural norms influence the use and interpretation of pragmatic elements such as assertive, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. The study adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing authentic speech transcripts, transcriptions, translations, and background knowledge as core data collection tools. Examples from public speeches and participant interactions are analyzed to highlight how communicative strategies vary across cultures in terms of politeness, directness, and face-saving techniques.By integrating insights from sociolinguistics, high-context/low-context culture theory, and intercultural communication studies, the research identifies key similarities and differences in pragmatic performance. Findings reveal that Arabic speakers tend to employ more indirect and honor-based expressions, while English speakers often favor directness and clarity. The study concludes that effective cross-cultural communication requires not only linguistic competence but also pragmatic awareness shaped by cultural background. The results have implications for language teaching, translation studies, and intercultural competence development.**Keywords:** Pragmatic strategies, cross-cultural communication, speech acts, intercultural pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and Arabic-English comparison.

ملخص

تستكشف هذه الدراسة الاستراتيجيات البراغماتية المستخدمة في التواصل عبر الثقافات، مع التركيز على تحليل مقارن بين الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أم والناطقين باللغة العربية كلغة أم. يستند البحث إلى الإطار النظري لنظرية أفعال الكلام والبراغماتية بين الثقافات، ويدرس كيفية تأثير المعايير الثقافية على استخدام وتفسير العناصر البراغماتية، مثل التأكيدات، والتوجيهات، والتكليفات، والتعبيرات، والتصريحات. تعتمد الدراسة على نهج نوعي، باستخدام نصوص الكلام الأصلية، والنسخ، والترجمات، والمعرفة السابقة كأدوات أساسية لجمع البيانات. يتم تحليل أمثلة من الخطب العامة وتفاعلات المشاركين لتسليط الضوء على كيفية اختلاف استراتيجيات التواصل عبر الثقافات من حيث اللباقة، والصراحة، وأساليب حفظ ماء الوجه.من خلال دمج رؤى علم الاجتماع اللغوي، ونظرية الثقافة في السياقات العليا/المنخفضة، ودراسات التواصل بين الثقافات، يحدد البحث أوجه التشابه والاختلاف الرئيسية في الأداء البراغماتي. تكشف النتائج أن الناطقين بالعربية يميلون إلى استخدام تعبيرات غير مباشرة وقائمة على الشرف، بينما يفضل الناطقون باللغة الإنجليزية الصراحة والوضوح. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن التواصل الفعال بين الثقافات لا يتطلب كفاءة لغوية

فحسب، بل يتطلب أيضًا وعيًا عمليًا يتشكل وفقًا للخلفية الثقافية. وللنتائج آثار على تدريس اللغة، ودراسات الترجمة، وتنمية الكفاءة بين الثقافات.**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الاستراتيجيات البراغماتية، التواصل بين الثقافات، أفعال الكلام، البراغماتية بين الثقافات، علم اللغة الاجتماعي، والمقارنة بين اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية.

1.1 The Problem

As the world becomes increasingly globalized, the need and ability to communicate across cultures have become inescapable facets of educational, professional, and social life. Such interactions, however, are frequently marked by communicative misunderstanding not because the speakers are linguistically challenged, but rather because of pragmatic failures — that is, the inability to use language appropriately within a cultural context. What is polite, appropriate, indirect — any number of cultural, social behaviors — in one culture may be read as rude, evading, ambiguous in another. Such pragmatic mismatches can unfortunately also result in miscommunication that can cause tension and stereotyping — and even conflict between groups. Even if there is an increasing awareness of the problems raised by intercultural communication, fine-grained comparative studies on the pragmatic strategies used by different cultural groups with a focus on each other are still rarely conducted. This research aims to fill this void, as it analyzes and compares strategies applied by speakers from various cultures to create understanding and mutual dialogue.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What pragmatic strategies are commonly employed by speakers in cross-cultural communication?
2. What cultural norms and values influence the choice and use of pragmatic strategies?

1.3 Aims of the Study

1. To identify and analyze pragmatic strategies used in cross-cultural communication.
2. To explore how cultural norms influence the use of specific pragmatic strategies.

1.4 Research Importance

There are several reasons which make this study important. First, it adds to the emerging field of intercultural pragmatics by providing a theoretical and practical comparative perspective. Secondly, it provides insight into how cultural norms affect communication strategies, which is vital in an increasingly global world. Third, the findings can also facilitate curriculum designers, educators, and language instructors to design their language teaching that includes pragmatic awareness. Finally, diplomats, international business and intercultural trainers will benefit from this study by exploring strategies for effective communication that will transcend cultural barriers and minimize potential misunderstandings.

2.1 Theoretical Background of Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a subcontinental branch of linguistics that studies how people use and interpret language in actual scenarios. It engages with how meaning is communicated beyond the literal interpretation of words, including aspects such as context, intention, social relationships, and cultural norms. Pragmatics, according to George Yule (1996), is "the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and the users of those forms." More precisely, it analyzes the use of language in preparing to achieve communicative goals in given contexts. As pragmatic conventions can vary considerably across cultures, this is especially relevant in cross-cultural contexts. Cross-Cultural Differences in Pragmatic Strategies

Speech Act	English Speakers	Arabic Speakers
Assertives	Direct, assertive	Indirect, softened with religious/cultural cues
Directives	Polite through modal verbs	Polite through emotional or religious appeals
Commissives	Certainty through future tense	Hedged with religious expressions
Expressives	Neutral tone	Emotionally expressive, relational
Declarations	Concise, institutional	Formal, respectful, often ceremonial

Several core theories and concepts underpin the study of pragmatics:

2.1.1 Speech Act Theory

Initially developed by John Austin (1962) then later expanded by John Searle (1969), the theory categorizes utterances not only as expressions of meaning, but as actions. Austin developed the concept of three issues of acts:

• Locutionary act – pronouncing something.
• Illocutionary act – the intended function of the utterance (e.g., requesting, apologizing).
• Perlocutionary act – the impact of the utterance on the hearer.

For example, in cross-cultural communication, different cultures can perform the same speech act (for example, an apology) in different ways according to cultural demands and social norms.

2.1.2 Grice's Cooperative Principle and Conversational Maxims

Following H. P. Grice (1975), effective communication is predicated upon adherence to the Cooperative Principle, whereby speakers generally abide by four maxims:

• Quantity – Give the appropriate amount of information.

• Quality – Be truthful.

• Relation – Be relevant.

• Manner – Be direct and organized.

However, these maxims are culture-dependent. For instance, in some cultures, more indirectness (as would occur when violating the maxim of manner or quantity) is preferred to preserve politeness or reduce the chances of confrontation.

2.1.3 Politeness Theory

This theory, proposed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson (1987), centres around the notion of "face", the public self-image that a person wants to protect. According to them, politeness strategies (e.g., hedging, indirectness, honorifics) are used to soften face-threatening acts (FTAs). Cultures have different kinds of orientation toward politeness:

• Collectivist cultures product positive politeness (focusing on solidarity and friendliness) more than individualist cultures.

• Negative politeness (greater respect and autonomy): often present in individualist cultures.

These differences are key in cross-cultural pragmatics.

2.1.4 Relevance Theory This theory, developed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1986), argues that human communication is motivated by the expectation of relevance. Speakers can help themselves out by structuring their presentations to be as relevant as possible, offering enough information to provide understanding while not overloading. With cross-cultural interactions, an event can be interpreted differently in these two context frames, as the crossing cultures will determine what is considered "relevant", thus creating two distinct responses.

2.1.5 Context and Deixis Pragmatics also examines the utilization of contextual indicators (e.g., deictic expressions, such as here, there, now, you, that). These expressions rely a lot on shared knowledge and context (e.g. many cultures associate yellow with cowardice). The participants in a discourse can easily misunderstand one another's intentions and arguments if they do not share the same context or background information.2.2 Cross-Cultural CommunicationCross-cultural communication is the exchange of information and ideas between people with different cultural backgrounds. In addition to language, it is shaped by values, beliefs, social norms, and expectations of behavior. The net effect is that communicative behaviors can be viewed through one's own cultural lens, which can create misunderstandings. Hence, it becomes important to understand how cultures encode and decode messages, be it, verbal or non-verbal. (Gudykunst, 2003) High-Context and Low-Context Cultures One of the major frameworks in cross-culture communication is based on the idea of high-context vs. low-context cultures introduced by Edward T. Hall. Different cultural contexts will mean different implicit communication between parties. Low-context cultures (Germany, the United States) on the other hand, favor communication that is direct, explicit, and detailed. Such differences can cause pragmatic misunderstanding, notably if participants expect different kinds of directness or formality. (Hall, 1976) Communication styles are also influenced by cultural values like individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. For instance, in individualistic cultures, speakers may value self-expression and directness, while in collectivist cultures, maintenance of group harmony and avoidance of confrontation is prioritized. Such cultural dimensions can help understand pragmatic competence, which comprises making requests, engaging in criticism, or disagreeing. (Hofstede, 2001) Mastering these skills means going beyond language skills as sociocultural awareness and pragmatic flexibility are needed to navigate the complexities of cultural differences. This is one of the hardest things for language learners to learn — who can do what with whom, since people from their own culture have many expectations of politeness that would not be seen as appropriate in the target culture. Therefore, pragmatic failure—using speech acts inappropriately or wrongly interpreting implied meanings—can hurt relationships or cause communication breakdowns. (Thomas, 1983) In order to route cross-cultural interactions successfully, communicators should cultivate intercultural sensitivity — or the recognition that differences exist across cultures in how meaning is made and

communicative behaviors that make sense. That means a willingness to put aside one's own assumptions about how the world works, and your own adaptive processes, to respond more to contemporaneous cultural norms. Specialized training for about students and practitioners, especially the professions, is essential at the level of pragmatic awareness, which is an import factor in concurrent learning or cross-border dialogue. (Byram, 1997)

2.2.1 High-Context vs. Low-Context Cultures (Hall)The dichotomy of high-context vs. low-context cultures was introduced by Edward T. Hall (1976) as a framework to help us understand information and messages across cultural divides. In high context cultures (e.g. Japan, China, Arab countries), a good portion of the message is delivered through context, shared background knowledge, and non-verbal cues, as well as indirect expression. High-context cultures (e.g., China, Korea, and Japan), on the other hand, depend on implicit or indirect verbal messages and nonverbal cues where information is embedded in the context. These cultural communication styles where low-context is to high-context culture affect pragmatic strategies, where politeness and respect in high context might seem evasion and unclear sentence in low-context culture. (Hall, 1976)

2.2.2 Intercultural PragmaticsThe study of how language is used and interpreted by people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in interaction. It explores how pragmatic competence (for example, the performance of speech acts, e.g. requests, refusals, compliments; management of politeness, and interpretation of implicature etc.) differs by culture. This applies not only to the study of how this communicative behavior varies across cultures, but also to how and when misunderstandings and pragmatic failures arise in intercultural contact. Intercultural pragmatics combines the linguistic theory and real-language use, paying attention to the sociocultural and cognitive factors of a language. (Kecskes, 2014) One of the main issues in intercultural pragmatics is that of pragmatic transfer, in which speakers transfer L1 rules during the use of the L2. When pragmatic norms of the target culture diverge considerably, this can lead to inadvertent rudeness or confusion. Hence, successful intercultural communication requires both language and cultural knowledge. (Kecskes & Romero-Trillo, 2013)

2.2.3 Sociolinguistics and Culture Sociolinguistics studies the use of language in the social context, investigating how social variables (for example, social class, gender, age, and ethnicity) impact the choice of language. Cultural norms provide an underpinning of sociolinguistic rules, like how to address others, what politeness strategies work with whom, or when to change dialects or switch languages. These patterns of sociolinguistic awareness are essential in cross-cultural communication, where pragmatic misunderstandings can arise if social cues or hierarchical norms are misinterpreted. (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015)For sociolinguists, language is not just a means of encoding and decoding messages, but a representation of social identity and cultural system. This means pragmatic strategies, such as the way to show respect, assert power or express disagreement, are embedded in cultural values and social expectations. Therefore, the first step to understanding pragmatic variation is a recognition that sociolinguistic differences are foundational to that goal, and any comparative study of cross-cultural communication must account for that distinction. (Holmes & Wilson, 2017)

2.3 Cultural Variables in Cross-Cultural Communication In addition to individual differences, the use of language as a means of communication can also be significantly affected by cultural values. These variables affect not only the linguistic teambuilding that speakers employ, but also how people interpret and respond to others. Cultural context influences speech acts, politeness strategies, as well as directness and indirectness.

2.3.1 Politeness Strategies and Face Theory Cultural variables also is relevant to how people manage face—the social self-image that individuals project in interaction. Politeness theory (Brown&Levinson,1987) Shows how speakers maintain face for themselves and others using strategies. In individualistic cultures like the English-speaking world, politeness strategies are more often explicit and often hedging and indirect to prevent confrontation. This could perhaps explain the more indirect communication style so often found in Arabic speakers, whose communication is often a direct reflection of their embeddedness in collectivist cultural contexts, maintaining group harmony and respect for the authority. (Brown, 1987)

2.3.2 Cultural Sensitivity in Communication Styles Different cultures have unique communication styles that may lead to miscommunications if they are not recognized. Culturally, in many Arab cultures, there is a strong emphasis on in-group utility and respect for authority, which can play out in how individuals express disagreement or ask for a favor. While Western cultures often place weight on directness and individualistic rights, resulting in more open disagreement / request expressions. If communicators are not sensitive to the cultural norms which condition the way each other acts, these differences can lead to misunderstanding. (Gudykunst, 2017)

2.3.3 Religious and Societal Influences on Pragmatics

There is too great a stratification of pragmatic strategies in relation to religion and social values. Islam is a well-respected way of life in many Arab-speaking countries, and its teachings govern social interactions, which tend toward politeness, humility and respect of elders and authority. Core social values are often manifest in particular types of speech acts, e.g., the use of religious phrases such as Insha'Allah ("if God wills") as part of a promise or the offering of a commitment. In contrast, secular societies of the West might be more expressive in their acceptance of commitment through clear and unambiguous statements of intent in commitment. (Al-Omari, 2019)

2.3.4 Non-verbal Communication and Its Role in Cross-Cultural Interactions Another one cultural variables which influence the pragmatic strategies of the participants are non-verbal communication. The Arab world is known as a high-context culture, meaning that much of the communication relies on non-verbal cues like a raise of the eyebrows and even silence to convey what mere words cannot. As an example, eye contact in some Asian cultures is a sign of disrespect, while prolonged eye contact can be seen as a show of respect or attentiveness in several Arab cultures; yet in some Western cultures, prolonged eye contact can be appropriated to be assertive, threatening or uncomfortable. Being aware of these nuanced differences can help us avoid misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication. (Gumperz, 1972).

2.4 Previous Studies We have witnessed several studies that revealed how cultural norms influence pragmatic strategies in cross-cultural communication. These studies provide a fundamental understanding of how speakers from different backgrounds negotiate politeness, perform on speech acts, and react to pragmatic cues.A major work published around that time was Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper (1989), setting up the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project, CCSARP, which included comparative data on the realization of requests and apologies in a number of languages and cultures. The results showed, among others, large differences in directness levels, politeness strategies, and mitigating devices use. For instance, the English speakers in their samples employed more indirect strategies than did the Hebrew or German speakers, which aligned with cultural value systems around face and interpersonal distance. (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989)In pragmatic failure, a term coined by Thomas (1983) in the field of intercultural communication, non-native speakers may have no problem in using grammatically appropriate forms; instead, they violate sociopragmatic norms of the target language. She showed that even very advanced speakers make pragmatic errors like being too direct or failing to compensate for politeness, causing something to be offensive or confusing. (Thomas, 1983)In his study of American and Chinese speakers' responses to compliments, Chen (2001) found that Chinese speakers were most likely to reject the compliment or respond with modesty, which foregrounds their cultural values of humility and collectivism. Americans, by contrast, accepted compliments more openly, consistent with individualistic and self-affirming cultural norms. (Chen, 2001)Another study related to refusal strategies was conducted by Al-Issa (2003) on Jordanian EFL learners' use of English refusal strategies. Findings suggested a trend toward negative pragmatic transfer that imposed Arabic strategies into English interaction, often producing refusals that were subsequently inappropriate or unduly blunt. The authors of the study suggested language teaching that draws attention to a phenomenon that the learners may not notice: the norms of the target language. (Al-Issa, 2003)In this regard, Kecskes (2014) has introduced intercultural pragmatics as an emerging field which deals with the transience of meanings in intercultural contexts in a more comprehensive way. According to his lines of inquiry, meaning is co-constructed by participants and shaped by their cultural backgrounds, shared history, and immediate interactional purposes. (Kecskes, 2014)Together these studies show the value of a more culturally grounded perspective on pragmatics, and they set the stage for the current study, which aims to compare pragmatic strategies across two or more cultural contexts while accounting for the potential for misunderstanding and implications for EFL instruction.

3.Methodology This study adopts a comparative qualitative research design aimed at exploring and analyzing the pragmatic strategies used by speakers from different cultural backgrounds—specifically, native English speakers and native Arabic speakers—in cross-cultural communication contexts. The design is appropriate for uncovering the socio-pragmatic norms that influence communication patterns, politeness strategies, and the performance of speech acts in culturally distinct communities.

3.1 Research Design A comparison of these strategies enables a comparison of cross-cultural communication pragmatics among recent speakers from different cultural backgrounds. This design is especially well-suited to uncover the sociocultural and pragmatic norms underlying communicative behavior across cultural contexts. (Gass, 2003)A qualitative perspective enables exploration of naturally-occurring or elicitation-based natural spoken or written discourse focusing on participants performing speech acts like requests,

refusalscompliments, and apologies. This design allows the researcher to contextualise meanings and to appreciate the ways statements are mediated around issues of politeness, of face-saving, and of indirectness across cultures. (Creswell, 2013)The study investigates pragmatic choices between two cultural groups (two pragmatic groups, e.g., native English speakers versus native Arabic speakers) in comparable communicative contexts to achieve a comparative perspective. The aim is to recognize the differences and similarities they exhibit in pragmatic strategies as well as examine how cultural customs shape communication. (Holmes, 2013) Data will be collected using a combination of:

• Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) to elicit specific speech acts in controlled contexts,

• Semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative insights into participants' awareness of cultural norms and communicative preferences,

• And naturally occurring conversations (where available) to analyze authentic pragmatic behavior.

3.2 Sample

This study sample was selected according to criteria related to cultural diversity. Purposive sampling was utilized to provide representation from the two cultures. The study sample includes few samples that symbolize (Assertives, directives, commissives, expressive and declarations) with great care selected from different famous speeches with a focus on cross-cultural communication.

3.3 Data Collection Tools The method used to investigate pragmatic strategies in cross-cultural communication in this study relies on three main data collection tools which are speech transcripts, transcribing and translating as well as background knowledge. They enable rich, authentic and culturally contextualized data, which is useful for comparative pragmatic analysis.

1. Speech Transcripts This study examines pragmatic strategies cross-culturally using authentic speech transcripts from ten such examples well known in the public eye — five given by native English speakers, the other five delivered by native Arabic speakers. These transcripts effectively act as one of the primary data sources with naturally occurring examples of speech acts enacted by speakers within public communication. The transcripts were selected with a focus on five speech acts proposed by Searle (1969): assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations.

2.Transcribing and Translating In this research transcription and translation are of paramount importance, as they are both the mechanisms for storing and analysing the pragmatic content of spoken discourse. Due to the bilingual and cross-cultural aspect of the research, speeches delivered in both English and Arabic were included in the analysis and carefully transcribed and translated when necessary.

3. Background KnowledgeThe approach to this study primarily in the aspect of speech acts interpretation also relies on background knowledge specific to the context, culture and social aspects of the speakers of the two languages, English and Arabic, which goes beyond transcription and translation. Pragmatics, the study of the relationship between meanings and the context in which they occur, requires you to tap into information explicitly stated in the text, as well as knowledge you hold to be true outside the text.

٣,٤ Data AnalysisThe analysis presented here will adopt a qualitative, discourse-based approach, focusing on identifying and comparing pragmatic strategies in two cultural groups. To this end, the the proposed research will focus particularly on how participants from culturally diverse backgrounds realize speech acts like requests, refusals, compliments, and apologies. Your analysis will be structured around three main parts: speech transcripts, transcribing and translating, and background knowledge, with each section illustrated by examples to help explain a process.

1. Speech Transcripts Analysis: Focus on Speech ActsThis study uses speech transcripts to analyze how speakers from different cultural backgrounds use various speech acts during communication. The five types analyzed are: Assertives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives, and Declarations. Each type reflects a specific communicative function and is shaped by the speaker's cultural norms and pragmatic competence.

Speech Act	English Style	Arabic Style
Assertives	Direct, individual opinion	Often softened, community-oriented
Directives	Modal verbs + politeness	Directive + softening expressions
Commissives	Assertive future tense	Religious hedging ("إن شاء الله")
Expressives	Apologies with empathy	Emotional, religious, or poetic tones
Declarations	Institutional, formulaic	Formal, with cultural markers

A. Assertive (Statements that convey beliefs, descriptions, or affirmations of the truth)

- English Example:
- "I think this policy will benefit everyone in the long run."

A personal belief is asserted confidently and directly, typical in low-context cultures like the U.S.

- Arabic Example:

"أنا أعتقد أن هذا القرار في مصلحة الجميع."

("I believe this decision is in everyone's interest.")

Similar assertion, but the phrase "أنا أعتقد" is often softened in Arabic to maintain harmony or avoid confrontation.Analysis: Assertives in Arabic may use mitigating devices (like religious phrases or softeners), while English speakers tend to be more direct and individualistic in expressing opinions.

B. Directives (Attempts to get the hearer to do something: requests, commands, advice)

- English Example:
- "Could you please send me the report by tomorrow?" Indirect request using modal verbs and politeness markers.

- Arabic Example:

"ممكن ترسل لي التقرير بكرة؟"

("Could you send me the report tomorrow?")Similar structure, but Arabic speakers may also say:

"أريد التقرير غدًا، إذا سمحت."

("I want the report tomorrow, if you please.")

Mix of directness and softening phrase ("إذا سمحت").

Analysis: Arabic speakers often balance directness with politeness formulas (e.g., "لو سمحت"، "إذا أمكن") while English speakers rely more on modal verbs to show politeness.C. Commissives (Commitments to future actions: promises, offers)

- English Example:"I'll take care of it by next week."Clear personal commitment using future tense.

- Arabic Example:

"سأقوم بذلك الأسبوع القادم، إن شاء الله."

("I will do it next week, God willing.")Uses "إن شاء الله" (Insha'Allah) to express intent while acknowledging divine will.Analysis: Commissives in Arabic often include religious references that reflect humility and cultural norms, while English tends to make individual, assertive commitments.D. Expressives (Statements of psychological states: thanks, apologies, congratulations)

- English Example:

"I'm really sorry for the inconvenience."Formal apology showing empathy.

- Arabic Example:

"أنا آسف جدًا على الإزعاج."

("I am very sorry for the disturbance.")Arabic speakers may add intensifiers like "جدًا" or use poetic language:

"أرجو أن تسامحني على هذا الخطأ."

("I hope you forgive me for this mistake.")Analysis: Both cultures value expressive, but Arabic apologies often include emotional or religious tones, showing deeper concern for relationship repair.E. Declarations (Utterances that change the social reality: resigning, appointing, and marrying)

- English Example:

"I now pronounce you husband and wife."A formal declaration with institutional authority.

- Arabic Example:

"أعلن استقالتي من هذا المنصب."

("I announce my resignation from this position.")Declarations in Arabic may begin with formal markers like "أعلن" or "أقرر".For Analyze: Declarations are contextual and predominantly institutional in both languages. In such speech acts, Arabic is much more formulaic with regard to official language.

2. Transcribing and Translating To ensure accurate and meaningful analysis of the data, the process of transcribing and translating plays a crucial role in capturing not only the surface linguistic content of participants' speech but also the embedded cultural and pragmatic features.A. Transcribing the Data All recorded interactions—whether from discourse completion tasks, interviews, or role-plays—will be transcribed verbatim in their original language. Transcription will include:

- Spoken words
- Pauses and fillers (e.g., "uh," "um," "يعني")
- Hesitations or repairs (e.g., "I mean...")

• Paralinguistic cues (e.g., laughter, sighs, emphasis)This detailed transcription allows for the identification of pragmatic markers, such as indirectness, politeness strategies, or hesitation, which are key indicators of cultural communication norms.Example: English: "Um… I was just wondering if maybe, uh, you could give me a bit more time?"Arabic: "يعني... كنت أفكر إذا ممكن تمدد لي الوقت شوية؟"These transcripts help capture how both hesitation and indirectness operate pragmatically in each language.

B. Translating the Arabic Transcripts After transcription, all Arabic utterances will be translated into English for comparative analysis. The translation process will prioritize pragmatic equivalence over literal meaning to preserve the speaker's communicative intent and cultural nuance.Example:Arabic: "الله يخليك، ممكن تساعدني في هذا الطلب؟"

Literal translation: "God keep you, can you help me with this request?" Pragmatic translation: "Please, could you help me with this request?"In this example, the phrase "الله يخليك" is a cultural softener that conveys humility and a strong polite appeal. While it has no direct English equivalent, its pragmatic function is conveyed in the translation through the word "please" and the polite phrasing.C. Challenges in Translation The translation process must consider several cross-linguistic and cross-cultural challenges, such as:

• Idiomatic expressions (e.g., "إن شاء الله" → "God willing")

• Religious or cultural references (e.g., "الحمد لله" → "Thanks to God")

• Politeness strategies that do not have direct counterparts (e.g., "تعبتك معي" → "Sorry to trouble you")

• Indirectness or ellipsis common in high-context Arabic communicationTo mitigate these challenges, translations will undergo back-translation (if needed) and will be reviewed by bilingual experts to ensure the reliability and faithfulness of the pragmatic meaning.

D. Role in Analysis
The transcribed and translated data will serve as the foundation for:

• Coding speech acts (assertives, directives, etc.)
• Identifying pragmatic strategies (e.g., hedging, indirectness, face-saving)
• Comparing cross-cultural variations in expression and intention
The translation decisions will be carefully documented to maintain transparency in how meaning is transferred across languages and cultural frames.

3. Use of Background Knowledge In cross-cultural pragmatic research, background knowledge is essential for interpreting communicative behavior beyond literal meanings. It provides the contextual and cultural framework needed to understand the speaker's intentions, norms, and values embedded in their language use. This study utilizes both participant background information and the researcher's cultural knowledge to interpret and analyze the data accurately.A. Participant Background Information To ensure a meaningful and contextually rich analysis of pragmatic strategies, this study collected detailed background information about each example. The examples were divided into two cultural groups: native English examples and native Arabic examples, with the intention of drawing culturally grounded comparisons in cross-cultural communication.

Example: An Iraqi participant who has studied abroad may produce a more "westernized" refusal like:"I'd love to help, but I really can't this time."In contrast, a participant with no exposure to Western contexts might say: "إن شاء الله، سأرى ما يمكنني فعله." ("God willing, I will see what I can do.") which pragmatically functions as a polite refusal.This variation reflects the impact of background experience on pragmatic choices.

B. Researcher's Cultural Knowledge
The researcher's familiarity with both Arabic and English cultural contexts allows for nuanced interpretation of speech acts. This includes:

• Understanding culturally specific expressions (e.g., "تعبتك وياي""Sorry to bother you")

• Recognizing pragmatic conventions such as avoiding direct refusals or emphasizing group harmony in Arab cultures

• Identifying cultural concepts like face, honor, and modesty in Arabic, or individualism and clarity in Western discourse

Example: When an Arabic speaker says,"ما أعتقد أني أقدر أساعدك هالمرة، سامحني."("I don't think I can help you this time, forgive me.")The phrase "سامحني" adds an emotional, relational element to the refusal, which might be lost without cultural awareness.C. Application in Analysis Background knowledge will be applied in three key ways:

1.Clarifying Intention:Distinguishing between literal and implied meanings, especially in indirect speech (e.g., "إن شاء الله" may not mean commitment).

2.Identifying Cultural Patterns:

Spotting recurring pragmatic behaviors such as over-politeness, emotional appeals, or religious expressions in Arabic.

3.Explaining Differences:Recognizing when English speakers may initially favor conciseness and directness because they find a certain level of elaboration/indirectness disconcerting whereas Arabic speakers may favor this approach to maintain harmony.Pragmatic functions—particularly of politeness, refusal, or emotional expression—might be mistaken for or treated as less important without context. This expertise ensures that analysis of data is culturally aware and considerate, modified to reality, and interpretively and the outcome rich.'

4.FindingsThe study noted that while there are similarities in the formal structure of speech acts, there are considerable divergences in terms of the pragmatic strategies used, which suggests cultural differences in terms of values, social norms, and communication style. The analysis focused on five important speech acts—assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, anddeclarations— which yielded the following results:

1.Assertives:English speakers delivered pronouncements more directly and one by one, adopting phrases like "I think" or "I believe" to express what they felt were personal truths. In contrast,Arabic speakers often employed hedging strategies such as "I think" and religious hedging like "إن شاء الله" ("God willing") to construct their statements in less assertive ways that preserve a sense of humility and collective blame.

2.Directives:Most English directives, for example, were framed to use modal verbs (e.g., "Could you…?" and wereoften indirect, emphasizing politeness. Arabic speakers, however, fortifiedtheir directness with softening techniques. Some instructions were blunt (e.g., "I want …") but the majority were interspersed with politenessmarkers such as "إذا سمحت" ("if you please") or religious appeals to ease the demand.

3.Commissives:English users promised in clear terms, like, "I'll do it." In other words, while a speaker of Arabic could not (and likely still cannot) guarantee when they would be available to keep an appointment, god willing, a Hebrew speaker was also unwilling to promise to help with a task because they had no nogar, or "yes".

4.Expressives:English apologies, in contrast, were typically expressedbut simple empathy ("I'm sorry"). Arabic speakers, on the other hand, responded with longer and florid statements, usually comforted the other with religious and emotional appeals such as "أتمنى أن تسامحني" ("I hope you forgive me") or invoking who God intends a mistake. This suggests that Arabic expressives carried deeper emotional associations, which in turn would reflect a greater underlying cultural emphasis on preserving relational harmony.

5.Declarations:Resonance or silence about declarations were found in cultural variations, particularly in institutional or formal contexts. WhereasEnglish speakers focused on verbs of action and offered straight, authoritative statements (e.g., "I now declare…"), Arab speakers used more formalized — and sometimes religiously tinged — language, e.g., "أعلن استقالتي" ("I announce my resignation") that conveys formality, dignity and respect for social roles.ConclusionThe outcomes of this study revealed the distinctive strategies rendered by the English and Arabic speakers in realizing their pragmatics in their speech acts. One new finding shows how languages reflect broader cultural values, like the English emphasis on directness, individualism and efficiency versus the Arabic penchant for indirectness, politeness and religious or emotional expression. This approach has significant consequences for cross-cultural communication, especially when the speakers of these two cultures deliberately ignoreor fail to interpret pragmatic cues in their communication with each other.Thus, the study underscores the significance of pragmatic awareness in the intercultural communication processes. To communicate successfully, speakers should understand cultural variation in the performance of speech acts, and find themselves armed with gap-bridging strategies. Having this knowledge is not only important to enhance interactions in this type of globalized environment with diverseultural backgrounds, but also to understand how to deal with business in a different country or to socialize. Future researchers may harness these pragmatic differences to inform conflict resolution, relationship-building and collaboration.

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