



ISSN: 2957-3874 (Print)

Journal of Al-Farabi for Humanity Sciences (JFHS)

<https://iasj.rdd.edu.iq/journals/journal/view/95>

مجلة الفارابي للعلوم الإنسانية تصدرها جامعة الفارابي



Stylistic Realizations of Power and Politeness in English and Arabic: A Speech Act Perspective

Written by: Inst. Hayder Alwan Salman Khamis (PhD)

haidar.alwan1103a@coart.uobaghdad.edu.iq

Ministry of Education / The General Directorate of Education / Rusafa II

Department of Research and Educational Studies

Research Paper in English Language and Linguistics

April, 2025

التجليات الأسلوبية للسلطة والتهذيب في اللغتين الإنكليزية والعربية: من منظور أفعال الكلام

إعداد: م.د. حيدر علوان سلمان خميس

وزارة التربية / المديرية العامة لتربية بغداد / الرصافة الثانية / شعبة البحوث والدراسات التربوية

بحث علمي في اللغة الإنكليزية وعلم اللغة

Abstract

This paper examines how differences in the use of politeness formulas in English and Arabic can lead to intercultural misunderstandings. While both languages may share similar expressions, they often differ in their illocutionary force and social expectations. For example, the English phrase "Thank God" does not always align with the Arabic "Alḥamdulillāh" in use or meaning. In Arabic, certain contexts demand obligatory polite responses, whereas in English, a neutral or no response may be more appropriate. The paper presents a logical framework for understanding how speech acts may appear impolite and how indirectness helps avoid offense. It focuses on conventional indirect speech acts, identifying the beliefs behind them and how politeness strategies mitigate potential offenses. Politeness aims to create a comfortable atmosphere among speakers, though it can also be used to impose or shame. The paper includes four sections: Power and the Cooperative Principle, Politeness Strategies, Speech Act Theory, and Analysis and Discussion.

Keywords: Stylistic Realizations, Power, Politeness, Speech Act, Solidarity.

المُستخلص

تتناول هذه الورقة البحثية الكيفية التي قد تؤدي بها الفروقات في استخدام صيغ الأدب في اللغتين الإنكليزية والعربية إلى حدوث سوء فهم ثقافي. فعلى الرغم من أن اللغتين قد تشتركان في تعبيرات متشابهة، إلا أن هذه التعبيرات غالبًا ما تختلف في قوتها الإنجازية وفي ما تفرضه من توقعات اجتماعية. فعلى سبيل المثال، لا يتطابق التعبير الإنكليزي "Thank God" دائمًا مع نظيره العربي "الحمد لله" من حيث الاستخدام أو المعنى. وفي اللغة العربية، تتطلب بعض السياقات ردودًا مهذبة إلزامية، في حين قد يُفضل في الإنكليزية رد محايد أو حتى عدم الرد. تقدم هذه الدراسة إطارًا منطقيًا لفهم كيفية ظهور أفعال الكلام بصيغة غير مهذبة،

وكيف تسهم الصيغ غير المباشرة في تجنب الإساءة. وتركز الدراسة على الأفعال الكلامية غير المباشرة التقليدية، من خلال تحديد المعتقدات الكامنة وراءها، وبيان دور استراتيجيات الأدب في الحد من الإساءة المحتملة. تتكون الورقة من أربعة محاور: السلطة ومبدأ التعاون، استراتيجيات الأدب، نظرية أفعال الكلام، والتحليل والمناقشة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحقيقات الأسلوبية، السلطة، اللباقة، فعل الكلام، والتضامن.

1. Introduction

This paper explains the mechanisms behind impolite speech acts and how conventional indirect speech acts help prevent offense. It focuses on linguistic forms of politeness, underlying assumptions, and cultural dependency, using English examples. Language is seen as a vital social tool enabling human interaction. Chaer & Agustina (1995, p. 19) note that communication would be nearly impossible without it, as language expresses emotions, desires, and opinions. Language uses meaningful spoken symbols reflecting real-life experiences. In communication, speakers choose strategies to maintain politeness, which is essential for smooth, effective interaction.

This study explores the relationship between power and politeness in the workplace, examining how individuals manage power dynamics and maintain politeness in daily interactions. Linguistic politeness—the paper's focus—refers to strategies used to soften communication that might threaten the listener's positive (e.g., criticism) or negative (e.g., requests) face. In social settings, individuals are expected to adapt their language and behavior to promote politeness, supporting social harmony and effective communication. Politeness fosters lasting relationships and is often seen as a diplomatic communication strategy shaped by cultural values. Since each culture defines politeness differently, expressions of politeness vary across societies. Power, meanwhile, influences politeness by shaping the dynamics of interactions and determining conversational dominance. (Kummer, 1992, p. 325).

Holmes (2013, p. 284) emphasizes that politeness is a complex matter in any language. Learning to be polite requires understanding not only the language itself but also the social and cultural norms of the community. Language is intrinsically linked to the community using it, and its use must be appropriate to the social context. Key factors influencing this context include the relationships and relative status of the participants in a conversation. Different cultures may prioritize certain forms of politeness, and some societies, like England and Japan, are particularly known for their emphasis on politeness.

2.

The Concept of Power

Power can be defined in various ways. Herk (2012, p. 208) characterizes it as "an unusual or non-reciprocal relationship between two or more speakers, predicting who (whose norms) will dominate an interaction". From a sociological or psychological standpoint, power is seen as a relative concept that encompasses both the ability to control others and the capacity to achieve one's goals. This is reflected in how one individual or group can enforce their plans and judgments, often at the expense of others. Language plays a key role in exercising power and is also essential in shaping social reality (Holmes & Stubbe, 2014, p. 4).

Brown & Levinson (1987, pp. 243 & 287) propose classifying societies based on their approach to politeness, with a focus on whether they prioritize status differentiation (high politeness values) or equality (low politeness values). They further argue that politeness (P) can be measured on a scale ranging from 1 to n, typically from 1 to 7. However, this method of quantifying politeness is problematic because it reflects a cultural bias, favoring the culture of the person creating the scale.

Ogiermann (2009, p. 29) suggests that politeness, as a measure of relative status between speakers, can be seen as universally applicable. In cultures with low politeness values, the highest possible level of politeness will be lower than in societies with high politeness values. This indicates that politeness may be evaluated differently depending on the situation, and the range of possible politeness values varies across different cultures.

3. Power and Solidarity

When discussing politeness, two key concepts frequently arise: power and solidarity. Brown & Gilman (2003, p. 158) explain that power is defined as one person's ability to influence the behavior of another. It exists in a relationship between at least two individuals, and it is asymmetrical—meaning both individuals cannot possess power in the same area of behavior. Power, therefore, indicates a

hierarchical relationship between people. Solidarity, in contrast, refers to the social closeness or distance between individuals. Brown & Gilman suggest (2003, p. 160) that solidarity arises from frequent interaction and shared similarities between individuals. As they note, "power superiors may be solidarity (such as parents or older siblings) or not solidarity (like officials who are rarely encountered)."

Politeness is tied to both power and solidarity. It represents behaviors that show positive regard for others. Two types of politeness are commonly recognized: negative politeness and positive politeness. Negative politeness is linked to power, while positive politeness is associated with solidarity. Negative politeness focuses on protecting the addressee's autonomy and personal space, emphasizing the hierarchical gap and distance between the speaker and the listener. In contrast, positive politeness emphasizes the shared qualities between speakers and is connected to solidarity. Further details about negative and positive politeness will be explored in the following section (Bassiouney, 2009, p. 138).

4. Cooperative Principle

Grice (1975, p. 45) suggests that in conversations, participants generally adopt cooperative communication behaviors. These behaviors are encapsulated in the Cooperative Principle, which states: "contribute to the conversation in a way that meets the requirements of the current stage and purpose of the exchange." The Cooperative Principle consists of four maxims:

1. *Quantity Maxim*: The information should be sufficient.
 - Provide as much information as necessary.
 - Avoid giving more information than required.
2. *Quality Maxim*: Contributions must be truthful and dependable.
 - Do not state anything you believe to be false.
 - Avoid making statements without adequate evidence.
3. *Relation Maxim* (also known as the Relevance Maxim):
 - Be relevant.
4. *Manner Maxim*:
 - Avoid unclear expressions.
 - Avoid ambiguity.
 - Be concise.
 - Be organized.

Grice argued that speakers adhere to these guidelines to ensure effective information exchange. He viewed cooperation as central to verbal communication and believed that statements naturally create expectations that help listeners interpret the speaker's intended meaning. Grice considered communication to be both rational and cooperative, asserting that the process of inferential meaning recognition follows the cooperative principle and the associated maxims—quality, quantity, relevance, and clarity—which speakers are expected to follow (Mey, 2009, pp. 106-107).

5. Language and Gender

The study of language and gender focuses on two main aspects: differences in male and female communication styles, and the portrayal of men and women in language, with claims of bias against women. This entry addresses both, though some linguists argue only the first is purely linguistic. The way language addresses gender has been a major topic in feminist discourse, highlighting broader issues of representation and bias (Malmkjær & Anderson, 2006, p. 345).

As Talbot (2010, p. 3) points out, gender is a crucial distinction in every society. It plays a significant role in shaping human experience, as being born male or female has profound effects on an individual. This influence extends to behavior, social treatment, and the language people use, as well as how others speak about them.

Since the 17th century, explorers noted differences in male and female language use, sometimes claiming they spoke entirely different languages. This is exaggerated; typically, gender influences the likelihood of choosing specific phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical forms, while limiting other options, varying across different societies. (Coates, 1986, p. 35).

6. The Concept of Politeness

Crystal (2008, p. 373) describes "politeness phenomena" in sociolinguistics as linguistic behavior reflecting social norms and expectations, such as showing respect, maintaining distance, or building rapport. This can involve expressions like "please," polite intonation, or appropriate forms of address, such as choosing between formal and informal pronouns.

Similarly, Yule (2010, p. 292) defines politeness as showing consideration for another's public self-image or social identity. According to Malmkjær (2006, p. 481), politeness exists on a scale, with indirect expressions typically viewed as more polite because they allow listeners greater freedom to respond. For example, "Answer the phone" offers little choice, whereas "Could you possibly answer the phone?" is softer. Malmkjær also notes that politeness principles vary across cultures. Pragmatics, the study of language in context, helps analyze these differences and reveals that stereotypes about cultural politeness often arise from misunderstandings of communicative norms.

Raatma (2002, p. 5), in his turn, defines politeness as caring for and respecting others through thoughtful behavior. This aligns with Aitchison's (2003, p. 111) view that politeness across cultures fulfills two main social expectations: avoiding criticism and respecting autonomy. People generally seek approval and prefer not to impose, leading socially aware individuals to refrain from open criticism and limit encroachment on others' freedom.

6.1 Face-threatening Act

Yule (2010, p. 135) explains that politeness involves behaving respectfully, humbly, and considerately toward others. In linguistic pragmatics, "face" is crucial, referring to an individual's public self-image—the social identity they seek to project and have respected. Politeness requires sensitivity to this self-image. Herk (2012, p. 120) adds that "face-threatening acts" can affect both positive and negative face. Negative face-threatening acts include offering unsolicited advice or excessive familiarity, while positive face-threatening acts involve interrupting, openly disagreeing, or using overly formal language in casual contexts.

6.2 Negative and Positive Face

Brown & Levinson (1987, p. 61) center their study of politeness on "face," the socially constructed image individuals wish to project and have accepted by others. They distinguish between positive face—the desire for social acceptance and approval—and negative face—the wish to act freely without interference. Positive face emphasizes unity and social cohesion, while negative face requires mutual respect for personal boundaries, making it more delicate to maintain. Social interactions involve continuous "face work," balancing the preservation of both types of face. Supporting this view, Stockwell (2002, p. 23) also ties politeness to face, defining it as the public version of oneself. He describes negative face as the need for autonomy and independence, and positive face as the desire for acceptance and belonging within a group or community. Together, these perspectives highlight how politeness operates by respecting both the need for individuality and the desire for social connection. Brown & Levinson (1987, p. 65) further argue that certain actions inherently threaten the face of those involved—these are known as Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs). Because face is sensitive, both speakers and listeners use various strategies to protect it. These include:

- Positive Politeness Strategies (PPS), which strengthen relationships in close social settings,
- Negative Politeness Strategies (NPS), which are used to show deference in more formal or distant interactions,
- Off-Record Strategies (ORS), where the speaker communicates indirectly to soften the impact of their message, and
- Avoiding the act altogether, especially if it could cause offense.

However, when clarity and directness are more important than politeness—for example, in urgent or task-focused communication—speakers might choose Bald-On-Record (BOR) strategies, where they speak in a straightforward and unambiguous manner. This aligns with Grice's (1975: 49) Cooperative Principle, which values efficiency in communication. The politeness scale can therefore be visualized from least to most polite as follows:

1. BOR → 2. PPS → 3. NPS → 4. ORS

In this model, BOR represents minimal concern for politeness, while ORS reflects a high level of sensitivity to the listener's face, as it involves indirect, often ambiguous, expressions.

6.3 Politeness across Cultures

All languages and cultures develop structured communication systems that allow members of a speech community to interact effectively. Understanding both cultural norms and linguistic practices greatly enhances cross-cultural communication. Before analyzing politeness across cultures, it is important to define culture within this research. Although complex and resistant to a singular definition, culture is central to understanding communication. One common view sees culture as a set of shared beliefs, values, and assumptions internalized by members of a social group. This "socially transmitted knowledge" is acquired much like a first language; subconsciously and through immersion. Yule (2010, p. 267) notes that individuals acquire cultural knowledge unconsciously, even before they are fully aware of their own language and culture. Through cultural transmission, individuals inherit a pre-established linguistic and conceptual system, which shapes how they interpret and organize their environment and life experiences.

6.4 Leech's Politeness Principle

To account for instances where speakers appear to deviate from Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle (CP), Leech (1983) introduced the Politeness Principle (PP) as a complementary framework. While acknowledging the validity of Grice's maxims, Leech proposes that conversational violations often arise from a simultaneous adherence to politeness norms that prioritize social harmony over literal informativeness. He formalizes the Politeness Principle through a set of six maxims, each aimed at regulating interpersonal relations during communication Leech (1983, p. 132):

1. *Tact Maxim* (relevant to directives and commitments):
 - (a) Reduce the imposition on others.
 - (b) Enhance the perceived benefit to others.
2. *Generosity Maxim* (also applied to directives and commitments):
 - (a) Minimize emphasis on benefits to oneself.
 - (b) Maximize acknowledgment of costs to oneself.
3. *Approbation Maxim* (linked to expressive and assertive speech acts):
 - (a) Limit expressions of disapproval toward others.
 - (b) Amplify expressions of approval toward others.
4. *Modesty Maxim* (also tied to expressives and assertives):
 - (a) Downplay self-praise.
 - (b) Emphasize self-criticism.
5. *Agreement Maxim* (associated with assertives):
 - (a) Reduce instances of disagreement with others.
 - (b) Promote alignment and consensus.
6. *Sympathy Maxim* (also linked to assertives):
 - (a) Reduce expressions of antipathy.
 - (b) Increase expressions of empathy and support.

Leech prioritizes the Tact and Approbation Maxims, emphasizing that politeness primarily benefits the interlocutor rather than the speaker. He argues that avoiding conflict generally carries more communicative weight than fostering agreement, making sub-maxims minimizing negative expressions ("a" sub-maxims) more important than those encouraging positive expressions ("b" sub-maxims) (Locher, 2004, pp. 64-65). On the other hand, Finch (2005, pp. 153-154) adds that the Politeness Principle explains why speakers often use indirectness. According to Finch, the principle encourages maintaining tact and courtesy unless a strong reason demands otherwise. He frames it in two parts: the negative form—"minimize, where possible, the expression of impolite beliefs," and the positive form—"maximize, where possible, the expression of polite beliefs." This dual approach highlights the pragmatic balance individuals strive for to preserve interpersonal rapport.

6.5 Politeness – Techniques

According to Lakoff (1975, p. 105), politeness in communication can be conveyed through a range of linguistic strategies that reflect social sensitivity and attentiveness to others. Among these strategies are:

1. *The use of hedges and indirect expressions*, which introduce ambiguity or uncertainty to soften assertions and avoid imposing on the listener.
2. *Polite deception*, where socially acceptable falsehoods are employed to maintain harmony or spare someone's feelings.
3. *Euphemistic language*, which relies on both ambiguity and the connotative meanings of words to address sensitive topics more delicately.
4. *The preference for tag questions over direct statements*, which serves to soften speech acts and invite engagement from the interlocutor. These tag questions can take several forms:
 - *Modal tags*, used when the speaker is uncertain and seeking confirmation, e.g., "You didn't go to the store yet, did you?"
 - *Affective tags*, which signal emotional concern or empathy, such as "You haven't been waiting long, have you?"
 - *Softeners*, which reduce the directness of commands, for instance, "Pass me that, could you?"
 - *Facilitative tags*, which invite input or agreement, e.g., "You can help with this, can't you?"

Research in sociolinguistics has shown that women tend to employ these politeness strategies more frequently than men. However, the exact nature of this gender difference remains a subject of scholarly debate. Contemporary studies suggest that these patterns are not solely based on biological sex but are influenced by social norms—especially those associated with middle-class white female speech in English-speaking contexts like the UK and the US. Thus, linguistic behavior traditionally associated with women is often evaluated against societal expectations of politeness, reinforcing the perception that women are more polite communicators (Lakoff, 1975, p. 105).

6.6 Arabic Politeness Formulas

The term "politeness formula" has been criticized for its limitations, as it may not capture the full nuance of the expressions it describes. Ferguson (1996, p. 145) notes that many utterances labeled as polite may, in certain contexts, be neutral or even impolite. This focus on politeness can overshadow their role as ritualized forms of social interaction. Belnap & Haeri (1997, pp. 198–199) emphasize that Arabic-speaking communities have a rich set of expressions used in specific social exchanges, often following initiator–response patterns. Despite their cultural importance, these exchanges have received little attention in linguistic and folkloric studies. Arabic politeness formulas are characterized by paired structures, where an initiatory phrase prompts a specific, culturally appropriate response. For example, "*alla ma'ak*" ("May God be with you") elicits "*alla yihfazak*" ("May God protect you"). Other expressions, like "*alla ykhalleelak yahum*" ("May God preserve your children"), reflect specific references but lack enough commonalities for a unified pattern. Belnap & Haeri (1997, pp. 198–199) also highlight a broader cultural tendency toward reciprocal or amplified goodwill in responses. Here are additional examples provided:

- The standard greeting "*marhaba*" ("hello") might be answered with "*marhaba, marhabtayn*" ("hello, two hellos"), "*mīyat marhaba*" ("a hundred hellos"), or "*marāhib*" ("many hellos").
- Similarly, a morning greeting such as "*ṣabāḥ al-khayr*" ("good morning") might be returned with an equally pleasant or more enthusiastic response.
- In other expressions, such as "*kull sana winta bikhayr*" ("May you be well all year"), "*ṭfaddal*" ("Please, have some [food]"), "*ṣahtayn*" ("double health"), or "*ma' al-salāma*" ("go with safety"), the interaction reflects a culturally ingrained practice of enhancing social bonds through verbal goodwill and reciprocal respect.

7. Speech Act Theory

7.1 Overview

Linguists have applied the principles of speech act theory across a wide range of linguistic disciplines, including syntax, semantics, and second language acquisition. Within the field of pragmatics, speech acts—alongside concepts such as presupposition and implicature—continue to represent foundational elements that any comprehensive pragmatic framework must address (Levinson, 2003, p. 226).

Birner (2013, p. 175) characterizes speech act theory as intrinsically pragmatic, emphasizing that it hinges on the speaker's communicative intent and the hearer's interpretive inference. Similarly, Hornberger & McKay (2010, p. 459) describe speech acts as social actions that are conducted through language, highlighting their function in facilitating interaction. Cruse (2006, p. 167), building upon Austin's (1962) seminal work, defines speech acts as communicative behaviors that inherently involve language use. He categorizes these acts into three fundamental types: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary.

1. *Locutionary Act*: This refers to the act of producing a linguistic expression with a particular structure, meaning, and referential intent. It distinguishes deliberate human speech from automatic or non-intentional language production, such as that by machines or mimicking animals.

2. *Illocutionary Act*: This involves performing an action through the very act of speaking, provided it occurs within a suitable context and with appropriate intent. For example, by stating "I order you to leave now," the speaker executes the act of issuing a command through the utterance itself, regardless of the listener's compliance.

3. *Perlocutionary Act*: This category focuses on the effect a speech act has on the listener. For a perlocutionary act to be realized—such as in the act of persuasion—it is not sufficient for the speaker to merely express certain words. The crucial factor is whether the listener is influenced to respond in a particular way, such as changing their behavior or attitude based on what was said.

7.2 Speech Act Classification

Austin (1962, p.150) originally classified speech acts into five types, each reflecting a distinct communicative function: verdictives (delivering judgments or assessments), expositives (integrating utterances into discourse), exercitives (exercising authority or rights), behabitives (expressing social behavior and attitudes), and commissives (committing the speaker to future actions, such as promises or vows).

Building on Austin's work, Yule (2008, pp. 53–54) groups speech acts into five functional categories: *declarations*, *representatives*, *expressives*, *directives*, and *commissives*, each with specific pragmatic purposes:

a. *Declarations* bring about real-world changes when uttered by someone with recognized authority, e.g., "I now pronounce you husband and wife" or "We find the defendant guilty." Here, speech acts directly alter external circumstances.

b. *Representatives* express beliefs or convey information, as in "The earth is flat" or "It was a warm, sunny day," reflecting the speaker's view of reality.

c. *Expressives* articulate the speaker's emotional or psychological state, including sentiments like "I'm really sorry" or "Congratulations!" These reveal internal reactions to events or experiences.

d. *Directives* aim to prompt action from the listener through commands, requests, or suggestions, such as "Could you lend me a pen, please?" or "Don't touch that," seeking to align reality with the speaker's intentions.

e. *Commissives* commit the speaker to future actions, encompassing promises, threats, or refusals, e.g., "I'll be back" or "We will not do that."

Each speech act category illustrates how language transcends mere information exchange, functioning to perform actions, build relationships, and influence the social world.

7.3 Speech Act Theory and Politeness: Requests and Apologies

Reiter (2000, p. 31) asserts that language use goes beyond constructing isolated sentences; it is action-oriented. Verbal communication allows individuals to perform actions such as apologizing, requesting, thanking, or making promises. These speech acts occur within real-life contexts, reinforcing the idea in speech act theory that the core of communication is the performance of meaningful, intentional acts. Regarding politeness and speech acts, Sifianou (1999, p. 95) notes that specific speech act categories align with certain politeness strategies. Negative politeness often correlates with directives, while positive politeness is seen in *commissives* and *expressives*. *Assertives* are typically neutral, and declarations, often institutional, do not engage politeness mechanisms. The communicative context, roles, and cultural backgrounds of speakers significantly influence politeness levels.

Sifianou (1999, p. 112) also stresses that the literal meaning of requests impacts politeness perception. Requests that prioritize the addressee's benefit or autonomy are seen as more polite. For example, "May

I ask you what time it is?" is more courteous than *"Won't you tell me what time it is?"* The former minimizes imposition. Wardhaugh (2006, p. 283) views apologies as politeness forms that address social or emotional harm, restoring social harmony by attending to the listener's face needs. He also highlights adjacency pairs (2006, p. 297), where specific utterances elicit predictable responses, emphasizing the cooperative nature of communication.

8. Arabic Speech Acts

Ryding (2005, p. 297) notes that certain Arabic adverbs, used in both written and spoken contexts, serve a performative function, expressing actions like gratitude, welcoming, or offering forgiveness. Examples include:

- *shukr-an* ('thank you')
- *afw-an* ('pardon me' or 'you're welcome')
- *ahl-an wa-sahl-an* ('welcome')
- *marhab-an* ('hello')

Almanna (2016, p. 169) explains that while English often uses indirect strategies for commands and requests, Arabic speakers often use religiously inspired phrases like *ya'tik al-'āfiyah* ('may God give you health') and *Allāh lā yihīnak* ('may God not dishonor you'). Arabic also includes softening expressions like *idhā yumkin* ('if possible') to convey politeness.

Bouchara & Qorchi (2016, p. 51) highlight that indirectness is a key politeness strategy in Arabic, especially with expressions like *insha' Allah* ('God willing'), indicating future intention without commitment. This lack of a direct English counterpart reflects a cultural distinction. Kádár & Mills (2011, p. 28) explain how Arabic speakers are often seen as blunt or impolite in English, due to differing politeness norms. In Arabic, direct forms, including imperatives, signal closeness, while indirectness can indicate social distance, revealing cultural misinterpretations rather than rudeness.

9. Analysis and Discussion

This study conducts a comparative analysis of the most commonly used exchange units in two languages, focusing on whether these interactions exhibit characteristics associated with Bald-On-Record (BOR), Positive Politeness Strategies (PPS), Negative Politeness Strategies (NPS), and Off-Record Strategies (ORS), or whether they lack these pragmatic features.

Example 1: (Greetings)

Arabic A: "كيف حالكم؟"

Arabic B: "الحمد لله"

English A: "How are you?"

English B: "Fine, thanks."

Table (1): Analysis of Example 1.

Language	Speaker	BOR	PPS	NPS	ORS
Arabic	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
English	A	Yes	Yes	No	No
	B	Yes	Yes	No	No

Yes: Indicates alignment with the corresponding strategy.

No: Indicates a lack of alignment with the corresponding strategy.

Greetings exemplify Bald-On-Record (BOR) strategies. Speakers, aiming for effective communication, generally adhere to Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP), often resulting in BOR usage. Simultaneously, greetings can act as speech acts incorporating positive politeness to affirm the addressee's positive face, observed in both English and Arabic. In Arabic, the speaker (A) uses the plural second-person form attached to the preceding noun to show deference. Functionally, English and Arabic greetings perform similarly. As shown in Table (1), these greetings are appropriate for both formal and informal interactions, expressing politeness across a range of social contexts.

Example 2: (Offering)

Arabic A: "تفضلوا الى الطعام، إن شاء الله يعجبكم."

Arabic B: "سلمت يداكم."

English A: "Have some of my lovely biscuits"

English B: "They are so nice, I'd love to"

Table (2): Analysis of Example 2.

Language	Speaker	BOR	PPS	NPS	ORS
Arabic	A	No	Yes	Yes	No
	B	No	Yes	Yes	No
English	A	No	Yes	No	No
	B	No	Yes	No	No

It has been observed that Positive Politeness Strategies (PPS) are employed in offering contexts across both languages; however, distinctions emerge concerning the use of Negative Politeness Strategies (NPS) and Off-Record Strategies (ORS). Overall, English speakers tend to prefer PPS, whereas Arabic speakers demonstrate a broader range of pragmatic strategies in such interactions.

Example 3: (Question and Answer)

Arabic A: (A says something to B)

Arabic B: "عفواً، ماذا قلت؟"

Arabic A: (He repeats himself)

English A: (A says something to B)

English B: "What did you say?"

English A: "I said..."

Table (3): Analysis of Example 3.

Language	Speaker	BOR	PPS	NPS	ORS
Arabic	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
English	A	Yes	Yes	No	No
	B	Yes	Yes	No	No

Speakers and listeners of both English and Arabic employ suitable expressions in such contexts to ensure effective communication, typically through Bald-On-Record (BOR) strategies. However, the two languages diverge in their application of other politeness strategies, particularly Negative Politeness Strategies (NPS) and Off-Record Strategies (ORS).

Table (4): English and Arabic lingua-pragmatic formulas.

Greetings		
- Hello. - Hi. - As-Salaam-Alaikum. - Peace be upon you. - Peace!	- May be peace upon you. - Hello everyone. - Good morning. - Good afternoon. - Good evening.	السلام عليكم
- God bless you. - God help you. - God give you the health. - Take a rest. - You've done good job. - Thanks.	- Thank you. - Nice work and thank you. - Good luck. - May god grant your health. - You must be tired. - How do you do?	الله يعطيك العافية

Condolences		
- May God make it the latest sadness. - My condolences. - Please, accept my deepest sympathies. - I am sorry for you. - The end of sorrows. - May it's the end of sadness. - He may rest in peace.	- May his/her soul rest in peace. - I am sorry for your lost. - May god forgive them. - End of condolences. - Inshallah to be the end of sorrow. - Hope it's your last sorrow.	خاتمة الاحزان
- I'm sorry. - My condolences. - Please accept my deepest sympathies. - Hope it's the end of your sadness. - I am sorry for your loss.	- To heaven Inshallah. - God greaten your "Ajer". - My respect. - I am sorry to hear about your loss. - The sadness ends.	عظم الله اجركم
- I'm sorry. - Please accept my deepest. - Rest in peace sympathies. - Have a long live.	- May he rest in peace. - My condolences. - Rest in peace.	اليقية بحياتكم
Congratulations		
A- At a wedding party		
- Congratulations! - Best wishes! - Happy for you!		ألف مبروك
- Congratulations! - Wish you a happy life. - May God give you good children. - Wish you a life of happiness.	- I wish you well. - Good health. - I wish you best of luck. - I wish you best of life.	بالرفاه والبنين
B- To congratulate a woman who has recently given birth		
- Welcome back. - Thank God for your safety. - Congratulation. - I am happy you are back. - Glad you are back.	- Thank God, you are in a good health. - Hope you are doing well. - Thank God! You are Okay. - Thank to God.	الحمد لله على السلامة
- May God bless him. - Nice taste! - The baby looks wonderful! - May god bless him. - God save him for you. - May god protect him.	- I hope he will have a happy life. - Soon he'll be a man who makes you proud. - Oh! He's gonna turn up nice. and be a good boy. - I wish him he is a good boy.	الله يحفظه

C- Congratulations for something newly bought		
- You look like a model. - You are beautiful. - You look great. - Beautiful, no matter what. - How nice.	- You really look nice. - This really suits you. - Beauty is within. - Such perfect (dress). - Well! Aren't you lucky?	القالب غالي
- Gorgeous! - It's amazing. - What a nice look. - Its beautiful, you have a nice taste. - How beauty is this. - What nice. - So pretty. - Wow!	- What is the beautiful. - What amazing is this. - Wow, sugar. - What is this? - You look beautiful. - Its good on you. - It's never good on anyone else. - What a beautiful...	شو هل الجمال
Apologies		
A- Apologizing about doing something wrong		
- Sorry. - Pardon! - I apologize... - I am sorry, please accept my apology	- Oops! Sorry. - My mistake. - My bad.	آسف
- I'm sorry. - On my head. - It's my fault. - I am so really sorry. - Please forgive me. - Your right on my head.	- My mistake. - My apology. - Really, I am embarrassed. - No offence! - I know I've committed a horrible fault.	حقك على راسي
B- To apologize about asking someone for a favor		
- Excuse me! - Could you please. - Can you please. - If I may.	- Would you mind. - If you let me. - If you please. - I hate to ask.	لو سمحت
- Please... - If you please... - Could you please... - I need a favor, can I ask you for your help.	- You can...please? - Could you please do me a favor. - Do you mind... - If you will.	من فضلك
C- To apologize or take a permission for leaving		

- Excuse me! - I have to go. - May I be excused. - I can leave, please? - Sorry but I have to leave. - Pardon me. - Excuse me, I have really to go. - Please let me.	- Let me go, please. - May I leave. - It's time for me to leave. - Allow me... - Enjoy... - It's time to go. - If you please let me go.	اسمحو لي
- Good bye. - God save you. - See you later, bye! - Bye, I see you again. - See you soon. - May god keep you.	- Allah may take care of you. - I'm leaving, you be safe. - God with you. - Catch you later. - You be safe. - I gotta hit the road.	استودعناكم الله

The table presents lingua-pragmatic expressions in English and Arabic. A general review shows that while many participants provided accurate English equivalents for Arabic expressions, others struggled. The expressions are categorized into four types: (1) greetings, (2) condolences, (3) congratulatory phrases, and (4) apologies. Each category includes at least two phrases, with one typically easier to translate than the other. For instance, within greetings, "السلام عليكم" was often translated into various English greetings, though only a few used direct equivalents like "peace" or "peace be upon you." The phrase "يعطيك العافية" proved harder to translate.

In the condolences category, all three expressions showed varying degrees of inaccuracy. While most participants easily translated "ألف مبروك", about 74.3% struggled with "بالرفاه والبنين", citing unfamiliarity. Phrases like "الحمد لله على السلامة" and "الله يخليك إياه" posed fewer issues. However, culturally embedded expressions like "استودعناكم الله" and "حفاك على راسي" were particularly challenging due to the lack of English equivalents. Translation errors fall into three types: (a) grammatical errors, (b) semantic errors, and (c) socio-cultural errors, reflecting differences between Arabic and English contexts.

10. Conclusion

This research explores key inquiries: What do social power and politeness mean? What strategies are associated with politeness? And how do social contexts influence polite behavior? These aspects, tied to the broader topic of politeness, are thoroughly examined. Importantly, politeness is not inherently linked to value judgments. Although it often carries positive connotations in daily use, academically and cross-culturally, politeness is seen as culturally relative. Comparing politeness norms across cultures should avoid moral rankings; anthropologists view such biases as ethnocentric.

Understanding conversational behavior's impact on social face—and the cultural variation in face-threatening acts—is crucial for professionals, especially managers in multicultural settings. While newcomers may initially make social missteps, long-term partnerships rely on trust, collaboration, and sensitivity to politeness norms. With the global spread of English business practices, politeness has gained recognition as vital to communication success. This study extends that view by comparing English and Arabic politeness, advocating a culturally sensitive approach to cross-cultural training.

Politeness connects to social power and solidarity, taking two forms: negative politeness (linked to deference and power) and positive politeness (linked to solidarity and friendliness). While English politeness closely follows Brown and Levinson's model, Arabic politeness often blends strategies. Despite similarities in using BOR (Bald on Record), PPS (Positive Politeness Strategy), and ORS (Off-Record Strategy), English and Arabic differ notably in applying NPS (Negative Politeness Strategy), reflecting deeper cultural distinctions in formality and relational behavior.

11. References

Almanna, A. (2016). *The Routledge Course in Translation Annotation: Arabic- English-Arabic*. London and New York: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.

- Bassiouny, R. (2009). *Arabic Sociolinguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Belnap, R. K., & Haeri, N. (1997). *Structuralist Studies in Arabic Linguistics*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill.
- Birner, B. J. (2013). *Introduction to Pragmatics*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Bouchara, A., & Qorchi, B. (2016). *The role of Religion in Shaping Politeness during Greeting Encounters in Arabic: A Matter of Conflict or Understanding*. Hamburg: Anchor Academic Publishing.
- Brown, P., & Gilman, A. (2003). *Sociolinguistics: The Essential Readings*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chaer, A., & Agustina, L. (1995). *Sociolinguistik: Perkenalan Awal*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Coates, J. (1986). *Women, Men and Language*. London and New York: Longman.
- Cruse, A. (2006). *A Glossary of Semantics and Pragmatics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2008). *A dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (6th ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Ferguson, C. A. (1996). *Sociolinguistic Perspectives: Papers on Language in Society, 1959-1994*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Finch, G. (2005). *Key Concepts in Language and Linguistics* (2nd ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). "Logic and Conversation" In P. Cole and S.L. Morgan (Eds), *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts*. 41-58.
- Herk, G. V. (2012). *What Is Sociolinguistics?* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Holmes, J. (2013). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (4th ed.). London: Pearson.
- Holmes, J., & Stubbe, M. (2014). *Power and Politeness in the Workplace*. New York: Routledge.
- Hornberger, N. S., & McKay, S. (2010). *Sociolinguistics and Language Education*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Kádár, D. Z., & Mills, S. (2011). *Politeness in East Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kummer, M. (1992). *Politeness in Thai*. In *Politeness in Language: Studies in its History, Theory, and Practice*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Levinson, S. C. (2003). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Locher, M. A. (2004). *Power and Politeness in Action: Disagreements in Oral Communication*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Malmkjær, K., & Anderson, J. (2006). *The Linguistics Encyclopaedia*. London and New York: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Mey, J. L. (2009). *Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Ogiermann, E. (2009). *On Apologising in Negative and Positive Politeness Cultures*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V.
- Reiter, R. M. (2000). *Linguistic Politeness in Britain and Uruguay: A Contrastive Study of Requests and Apologies*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V.
- Ryding, K. C. (2005). *A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sifianou, M. (1999). *Politeness Phenomena in England and Greece: A Cross Cultural Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stockwell, P. (2002). *Sociolinguistics: A Resource Book for Students*. London and New York: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Talbot, M. M. (2010). *Language and Gender* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Wardhaugh, R. (2006). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (5th ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Yule, G. (2008). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yule, G. (2010). *The Study of Language* (4th ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.