



## Pragmatic Markers and Politeness Strategies in Cross-Cultural Digital Communication: A Comparative Corpus-Based Study

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### Abstract

In spite of the increasing use of cross-cultural digital communication, there remains limited empirical understanding of how pragmatic markers systematically function within politeness frameworks in online discourse. Previous studies have often examined pragmatic markers or politeness strategies separately, leaving a theoretical and empirical gap regarding their integrated use across cultures. The present study investigates how pragmatic markers operate as interactional devices for realizing politeness strategies in digitally mediated cross-cultural communication. The study aims to: firstly, identify and categorize the most frequently used pragmatic markers in cross-cultural digital interaction. Secondly, it examines how these markers align functionally with different politeness strategies. The data consist of one million words of naturally occurring digital discourse collected from publicly accessible online platforms, including social media comments (e.g., users' responses to public posts on Facebook and YouTube), online discussion forums, and public live-chat interactions. The study utilizes a corpus-based pragmatic approach. As far as the data analysis is concerned, it adopts Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model which focuses on positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on-record, and off-record strategies. The study has concluded that there are systematic cross-cultural differences in both the frequency and functional realization of pragmatic markers. Also, it has revealed that pragmatic markers play a central role in enacting positive and negative politeness strategies and contribute to bald on-record and off-record realizations depending on interactional context. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that pragmatic markers are core interactional devices for managing face, stance, and interpersonal relations in digital communication. Lastly, it provides corpus-based evidences that enhance understanding of pragmatic marker-politeness alignment in cross-cultural digital discourse.

**Keywords:** Corpus Pragmatics; Cross-Cultural Communication; Digital Discourse; Politeness Strategies; Pragmatic Markers.

المؤشرات التداولية و استراتيجيات التأدب في التواصل الرقمي عبر الثقافات: دراسة مقارنة قائمة على المدونات اللغوية

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### المستخلص

على الرغم من الإستعمال المتزايد للتواصل الرقمي عبر الثقافات، لا يزال الفهم التجريبي لكيفية عمل المؤشرات التداولية بشكل منهجي ضمن أطر التأدب في الخطاب الرقمي محدوداً. فقد ركزت الدراسات السابقة غالباً على دراسة المؤشرات التداولية أو استراتيجيات التأدب بشكل منفصل، مما ترك فجوة نظرية وتجريبية تتعلق باستعمالهما المتكامل عبر الثقافات. تبحث الدراسة الحالية في كيفية عمل المؤشرات التداولية كأدوات تفاعلية لتحقيق استراتيجيات التأدب في التواصل الرقمي عبر الثقافات. تهدف الدراسة إلى أولاً: تحديد وتصنيف المؤشرات التداولية الأكثر استعمالاً في التفاعل الرقمي عبر الثقافات. ثانياً، دراسة كيفية موازنة هذه المؤشرات وظيفياً مع استراتيجيات التأدب المختلفة. أما فيما يخص البيانات فهي تتكون من مليون كلمة من الخطاب الرقمي الإعتيادي والذي تم جمعه من منصات إلكترونية متاحة للعموم، بما في ذلك التعليقات في وسائل



التواصل الاجتماعي (مثل ردود المستخدمين على المنشورات العامة في فيسبوك ويوتيوب)، ومنتديات النقاش عبر الإنترنت، وتفاعلات الدردشة المباشرة العامة. تستعمل الدراسة طريقة تداولية قائمة على المتون اللغوية. وفيما يتعلق بتحليل البيانات، فتعتمد الدراسة على نموذج براون و ليفينسون (1987) للتأدب والذي يركز على أربع ستراتيجيات وهي **التأدب الإيجابي والسلبى والأسلوب الصريح و التلميحي (غير الصريح)** خلصت الدراسة إلى وجود فروق منهجية عبر الثقافات في كل من تكرار المؤشرات التداولية وتحققها الوظيفي. أيضاً، كشفت الدراسة على أن هذه المؤشرات تؤدي دوراً أساسياً في تحقيق ستراتيجيات التأدب الإيجابي والسلبى، كما تسهم في تحقيق أساليب الصراحة المباشرة وغير المباشرة بالإعتماد على السياق التفاعلي. فضلاً عن ذلك، فقد خلصت الدراسة إلى أن المؤشرات التداولية هي أدوات تفاعلية جوهرية لإدارة "الوجه"، و"الموقف"، والعلاقات بين الأشخاص في التواصل الرقمي. أخيراً، قدمت الدراسة أدلة قائمة على المتون اللغوية تسهم في تعزيز فهم المواءمة بين المؤشرات التداولية وستراتيجيات التأدب في الخطاب الرقمي عبر الثقافات.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تداولية المتون؛ التواصل عبر الثقافات؛ الخطاب الرقمي؛ ستراتيجيات التأدب؛ المؤشرات التداولية.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Digital communication is now a prevailing form of communication in modern societies, which cuts across geographical, linguistic as well as cultural boundaries. Social media, instant messaging application, online forums and email are some of the platforms that have transformed the nature of negotiation of interpersonal meaning, identity and social relations. In such digitally mediated spaces, pragmatic meaning can be expressed using subtle linguistic components, such as pragmatic markers, emojis, discourse markers, and formulaic expressions, and in combination they form the management of politeness and interpersonal stance (Friginal & Leymarie, 2020; Landert et al., 2023). Consequently, the question of how politeness is performed and perceived in different cultures on the digital plane has become one of the primary issues in pragmatics and discourse analysis.

Although early models of politeness were universalistic in nature, modern theories have developed in a direction with discourse-based and context-oriented views that focus on interaction practices and sociocultural variation (Baider et al., 2020; Eslami et al., 2023). Recent research also emphasizes that politeness is not only a series of linguistic strategies but a communicative value, which evolves in accordance with identity and ideology and contextual expectations (Fabian, 2025; Indriani, 2025). These processes are also complicated in the field of digital communication due to diminishing contextual cues, multimodality, and the amplified use of pragmatic markers and paralinguistic devices to indicate stance and prevent the threat of face (Li and Yang, 2018; Tingting et al., 2024).

Corpus-based pragmatics have been especially useful in the description of such patterns as they allow conducting systematic analysis of large-scale, naturally occurring data across cultures and communicational contexts (Almuways, 2022; Hawamdeh et al., 2025). Pragmatic markers, including like, but, and expressions of evaluation, have also been studied in order to identify their interactional, ideological, roles in spoken and mediated speech (Fu, 2024; Furko, 2025; Kusevska, 2020). Similar studies have investigated politeness in online greetings, complaints, apologies, compliments, and humor and found that there is extensive cross-cultural diversity in online performance of relational work (Alonso-Marks and Bayonas, 2023; Dendenne, 2023; Jegede, 2025; Kaloi et al., 2025; Ozcelik and Harmia, 2025).

In more recent times, this focus has been on how multimodal pragmatic resources (specifically emojis) can be used to indicate politeness, affect, age, gender, and cultural affiliation (Ajmi, 2025; Li and Yang, 2018; Tingting et al., 2024). These results highlight the fact that pragmatic



markers and politeness strategies cannot be learned in isolated terms but need to be studied as a part of a unified pragmatic system that is conditioned by cultural norms and digital affordances.

Although research on digital pragmatics and cross-cultural politeness has expanded considerably, most of the studies remain fragmented and leave several important theoretical and empirical gaps unaddressed. To begin with, several studies focus on either pragmatic markers or politeness strategies alone, but very few studies have tackled the relational interdependence of pragmatic markers and politeness strategies in the same analytic framework especially in online discourse. Secondly, cross-cultural research tends to concentrate on particular communicative acts—such as apologies, complaints, and greetings—which fall under broader speech act categories including expressives and directives—rather than examining wider pragmatic patterns across interaction (Maiklad and Numtong, 2025; Salim et al., 2025).

In addition, the available studies often use small or special datasets, which limits the possibility to discover strong usage patterns and statistically-based contrasts (Baider et al., 2020; Landert et al., 2023). Although cultural variation in understanding of (im)politeness and respect has recently been highlighted, particularly between Western and Asian contexts, these findings have frequently been supported by a perceptual or qualitative analysis of them, as opposed to corpus-scale evidence (Chair, 2025; Yusupova, 2025).

This means that a comparative, corpus-based study is, strictly speaking, necessary, which directly correlates pragmatic markers and politeness strategies when using digital communication between different cultures, combining quantitative frequency analysis with qualitative functional interpretation.

The present study examines the role of pragmatic markers as key linguistic devices in the realization of politeness strategies in cross-cultural digital communication. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Identify and categorize the most frequently utilized pragmatic markers in digital communication across cultural groups.
2. Examine how these markers align with positive and negative politeness strategies.
3. Compare similarities and differences in the distribution, frequency, and functional use of pragmatic markers across cultural groups.
4. Investigate how pragmatic markers contribute to face management, stance-taking, and relational work in digitally mediated interaction.

The study makes several contributions to research on digital pragmatics and cross-cultural politeness. Empirically, it provides large-scale corpus evidence on the relationship between pragmatic markers and politeness strategies in digitally mediated interaction. Theoretically, it extends discourse-based approaches to politeness by demonstrating how pragmatic markers function as flexible devices for managing face and interpersonal alignment across cultures. Methodologically, it integrates quantitative corpus analysis with qualitative pragmatic interpretation, offering a replicable framework for examining pragmatic phenomena in online communication.

Further, the present study seek to answer the following research questions:



1. What types of pragmatic markers are most frequently used in cross-cultural digital communication?
2. How are pragmatic markers functionally aligned with positive and negative politeness strategies in online interaction?
3. What similarities and differences exist in the frequency and functional use of pragmatic markers across the examined cultural groups?
4. How do pragmatic markers contribute to face management, stance-taking, and relational work in digitally mediated communication?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research on politeness and digital communication has established that politeness is a discourse-driven, context-sensitive phenomenon shaped by cultural norms and interactional expectations. Corpus-based studies have demonstrated that pragmatic resources such as discourse markers, stance expressions, and interpersonal signals play a crucial role in managing face and relational work in both spoken and digitally mediated communication. However, many previous studies examine either politeness strategies or individual pragmatic features in isolation, rely on limited datasets, or focus on specific speech acts or platforms. As a result, the pragmatic mechanisms through which politeness is systematically constructed across cultures in digital discourse remain underexplored.

The conceptual change to research on politeness has been profound where old models were based on rules and universalist perspectives to discourse-based and interactional and culturally responsive models. Baider et al. (2020) insist on the idea that politeness is an emergent property of discourse, not on the predetermined set of strategies, and refer to the significance of context, co-construction, and orientation of participants. Eslami et al. (2023) share such an opinion, as they emphasize that the practices of politeness are tightly connected with identity formation and the changing social norms in the globalized and digitally mediated environment.

Recent research has conceptualized politeness as a communicative value rather than merely a set of linguistic strategies. According to Fabian (2025), corpus research shows that politeness is an evaluative resource that is dynamic, is influenced by the intentions of the speaker, the expectations of the audience, and social-cultural norms. Likewise, Indriani (2025) fills the gap between the traditional theory of politeness and the online discourse and computationalism, claiming that the integrative theoretical frameworks can reflect both stability and variability of pragmatic behavior in different communicative contexts.

The cultural context has been proved to exert a conclusive influence on the perception and assessment of politeness and impoliteness. In a comparative study of Western and Asian approaches to understanding (im)politeness, Chair (2025) explains that the understanding of (im)politeness is entrenched in culturally specific norms of hierarchy, indirectness and social harmony. These dynamics are also complicated by gender and respect, which is demonstrated by Yusupova (2025), who presents her cross-linguistic study and shows that there are systematic differences in respect marking between Uzbek and Japanese (as well as English and German).

A foundational model in politeness research is Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, grounded in the concept of "face". They (Ibid.) distinguish between positive face



(the desire to be approved of and appreciated) and negative face (the desire for autonomy and freedom from imposition). According to their framework, communicative acts that potentially threaten face—termed Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs)—are strategically mitigated through four super strategies: positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on-record, and off-record strategies. Positive politeness emphasizes solidarity and shared identity, while negative politeness minimizes imposition through hedging, indirectness, and deference. Bald on-record strategies involve direct, unmitigated expressions, whereas off-record strategies rely on ambiguity and implicature. This theoretical model continues to provide a central analytical foundation for examining politeness in both spoken and digital interaction.

Corpus pragmatics has become a very strong methodological tool that can be used to exploring pragmatic phenomena in a natural language use. Landert et al. (2023) present a detailed description of the corpus pragmatics, its ability to blend quantitative frequency measuring with qualitative functional interpreting. This combined methodological orientation enables researchers to leave judgment-based assertions in order to present empirical based generalizations.

Corpus based techniques have been effective in a number of studies that have investigated cross-cultural pragmatic variation. Almuways (2022), provides a comparison of the Irish and Canadian English, showing the variation in pragmatic preferences among the varieties that should be considered quite closely related. Hawamdeh et al. (2025) also explain the use of corpus-based research to reveal hidden patterns of pragmatic in different communicative areas which underscores the usefulness of large-scale data in pragmatic research.

Incorporated into corpus pragmatics, metadiscourse has also been the focus of an growing area of attention. Alonso-Almeida (2025) has noted the importance of metadiscursive resources as pragmatic resources that facilitate interpretation, control interaction, and negotiating interpersonal relationships between intercultural situations. These findings especially apply to the digital discourse where explicit markers tend to counterbalance the lack of physical and prosodic expressions.

Pragmatic markers have traditionally been viewed as fundamental aspects in discourse and interaction organization. Kadar and House (2021) re-examine the notion of “politeness markers”, claiming that the effects of using these markers are multifunctional resources, their politeness impacting varies by context, order of occurrence, and cultural anticipations. This functional diversity by genres and settings has been established through studies with corpus.

Kusevska (2020) examines the role of the pragmatic marker like in non-native conversation by demonstrating the hedging, approximation, and interpersonal alignment of the marker. Fu (2024) shows that pragmatic markers may indicate stance, contrast, and face management. On the ideological level Furko (2025) uncovers how the pragmatic markers can be used to position and persuade in an institutional discourse like EUROPARL<sup>1</sup> debates.

These findings indicate that pragmatic markers are not structural fillers, as they are significant to the process of regulating interpersonal relations, which is why the study of politeness in online communications is particularly relevant to them.

<sup>1</sup> ) **EUROPARL**: refers to the European Parliament Proceedings Parallel Corpus, a large multilingual corpus consisting of transcribed debates from the European Parliament, commonly used in corpus linguistics and discourse-pragmatic research.



As digitally mediated interaction has emerged, an increasing number of scholars have looked into how the traditional politeness strategies have been re-appropriated to online situations. Alonso-Marks and Bayonas (2023) examine the concept of greetings within the virtual language learning setting, showing that the greetings are strategically employed by learners to establish interpersonal alignment and reduce social distance through the use of the markers of politeness. Likewise, Salim et al. (2025) give a practical explanation of politeness strategies in English conversation with a focus on their capacity to be flexible in different communication modes.

Corpus-based studies have led to the spread of speech acts research into the digital world. In his study, Jegede (2024) discusses the concept of social media interaction, which is redefined by the rules of platforms and the design of the audience. Noor et al. (2025) also put speech acts and implicatures in a broader context of modern pragmatics and emphasize the role of situation and culture.

Cross-cultural comparison has detected a significant difference in particular politeness strategies. Kaloi et al. (2025) compare the apology strategies in the British and American English, whereas Maiklad and Numtong (2025) compare politeness and speech acts in Thai and Chinese interviews on YouTube. The cross-cultural perspective on online complaints has been also considered, and the study by Ozcelik and Harmia (2025) has revealed the culturally patterned variations in directness and mitigation of directness of online complaints in Turkish and English.

Another significant area of digital politeness is represented by compliments, praise, and expressions of affection. In a corpus-pragmatic analysis of Virtual English as a Lingua franca (VELF), Dendenne (2023) demonstrates the role of the compliment as a solidarity-building tool that can be used in linguacultural contexts. Humour also acts as a practical tool, and Jegede (2025) proposes it as a tool to handle relationship and prevent face threats that may occur during multicultural online communication.

In digital communication, multimodal sources become vital elements of making pragmatic meanings, especially emojis. One of the first attempts to analyze the functions of emojis on a corpus level is Li and Yang (2018), who identified their use in depicting emotion, strengthening illocutionary force, and deescalating face-threatening acts. Further studies have developed this field of investigation in media and cultures.

In their study to understand the application of emojis in WeChat among Chinese undergraduates, Tingting et al. (2024) reveal that emojis aid interpersonal alignment and relational work. Ajmi (2025) continues this view with the help of a corpus-based sociolinguistic study where the author concludes that emojis are age, gender and cultural identities indicators, thus, serving as salient sources of social identity and politeness orientation.

Overall, these findings suggest that pragmatic markers and emojis tend to operate in compliment and can create hybrid pragmatic systems that counteract the lack of context features in the digital context.

There are still a number of gaps although the research is comprehensive. Although they have extensively been studied, pragmatic markers, politeness strategies, speech acts, and emojis have been studied in isolation or under a small scope of context. In addition, cross-cultural digital communication research is often made to concentrate on particular platforms or on single pragmatic constructs, which restrict comparative observations.



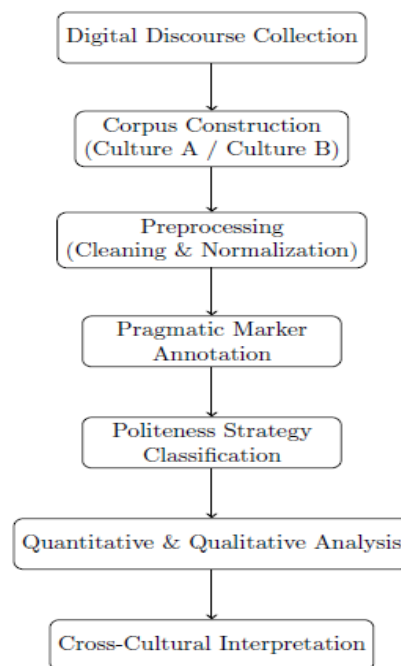
Consequently, a need remains for large-scale corpus-based research that systematically integrates pragmatic markers with politeness strategies across cultures in online discourse. The present study combines corpus pragmatics with discourse-based politeness theory to provide a comparative, data-driven account of how pragmatic markers function in cross-cultural digital interaction

### 3. METHOD

This section outlines the methodological framework adopted to examine the relationship between pragmatic markers and politeness strategies in cross-cultural digital communication. Since the interaction through the internet is rather complicated and the pragmatic behavior is unevenly distributed among cultures, A corpus-based comparative methodology is adopted to ensure empirical robustness and analytical transparency. This section is devoted to provide an overview of the research design, corpus generation, coding procedures and analytic methods to capture quantitative and qualitative approaches to digital discourse in a systematic manner.

#### 3.1 Research Design

The present study takes the form of a comparative corpus-based pragmatic research in order to explore the connection between the pragmatic markers and politeness strategies in online cross-cultural communication. The analysis combines the quantitative approach of corpus linguistics and qualitative method of pragmatic analysis to ensure that both frequency-driven and situational interpretations can be studied. This combination of corpus-pragmatic and mixed-methods is very appropriate in its way to identify the naturally occurring language use and retain analytical and interpretive soundness. Hence, figure 1 below illustrates the overall research design.



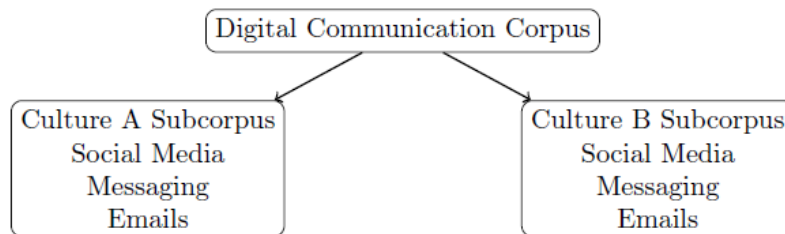
**Figure 1: The proposed corpus-based cross-cultural pragmatic analysis**



Contrasting design is used to allow systematic comparison between datasets which are culturally diverse. Instead of concentrating on individual speech acts or the particular pragmatic features, the study will look into pragmatic markers as multi-purpose discourse items integrated into larger politeness strategies in online interaction.

### 3.2 Corpus Collection

The data have been collected between 2023 and 2025 from publicly accessible digital communication platforms, including comment threads on Facebook and YouTube, discussion forums such as Reddit, and public live-chat sessions associated with streamed content. Only publicly available textual interactions have been included to ensure ethical compliance. For example, the social media data include users' responses to public posts on platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, where participants have engaged in opinion exchange, evaluation, and interpersonal negotiation. The two comparable subcorpora used in the study are shown in Figure 2. Balance in corpus size, platform diversity, and interactional context is maintained to ensure cross-cultural comparability.



**Figure 2: Structure and composition of the cross-cultural digital communication corpus**

#### 3.2.1 Data Sources and Platforms

The corpus comprises the naturally occurring digital discourse that is gathered in publicly available online sources that facilitate interactive and text-based communication. These platforms include:

- Social media comment threads.
- Online discussion forums
- Live chats with the snippets of public data.
- Commentary that goes with digital media content.

Mathews<sup>2</sup> platforms featuring asynchronous or semi-synchronous interaction have been selected to maintain comparability in interactional structure. Contrarily, private communications and restricted-access data have been excluded.

#### 3.2.2 Cross-Cultural Subcorpora

<sup>2</sup> ) **Mathews:** refers to a classification of digital communication platforms based on synchronicity and interactional structure, distinguishing between synchronous, asynchronous, and semi-synchronous modes of online interaction. This framework is commonly used in digital discourse and pragmatics research to ensure comparability across online genres.



For cross-cultural comparison, the corpus have been divided into two culturally distinct subcorpora representing different linguistic and sociocultural contexts. Both subcorpora have been compiled using identical selection criteria to maintain methodological symmetry.

- Each subcorpus will have around 500,000 words, which makes the total size of the corpus about (1) million words.
- The data have been produced by adult users and consisted of informal yet interactionally rich digital communication.
- Subjects of daily communication, opinion exchange, humor, giving advice, and evaluative commentary are all covered, which means pragmatic diversity.

The distribution of the subcorpora has carefully been balanced in terms of size, interaction type, and genre to prevent frequency distortion.

### 3.3 Data Cleaning and Preprocessing

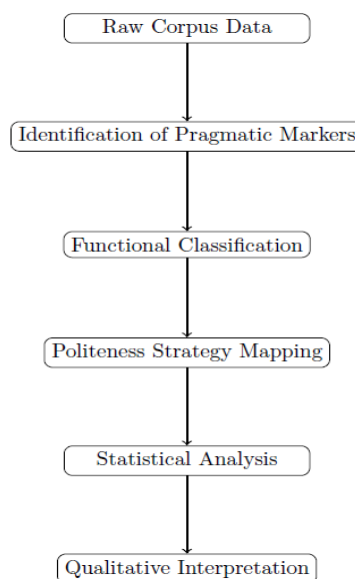
Systematic preprocessing of the corpus has been done before analysis:

- Elimination of non-linguistic noises (URLs, advertisements, duplicated posts).
- Orthographic deviation is normalized and pragmatically significant elements of language (e.g. elongation = soooo), capitalization and punctuation are maintained.
- The maintenance of emojis, emoticons and pragmatic punctuation which are considered as part of digital discourse.

Corpus analysis software has been used to tokenize and segment the texts. Pragmatically salient contexts have subsequently been verified manually to ensure interpretive accuracy.

### 3.4 Identification of Pragmatic Markers

In order to explain the analytical steps followed on the corpus data, Figure 3 illustrates the procedural stages of pragmatic marker identification and coding.





**Figure 3: Pragmatic marker coding and procedural stages**

**3.4.1 Operational Definitions**

Pragmatic markers can be defined as lexical or semi-fixed expressions that primarily serve interactional, discourse-organizing, or interpersonal functions rather than propositional meaning (Kádár & House, 2021; Landert et al., 2023). These include discourse-organizing markers (e.g., *well, but, so*), interpersonal markers (e.g., *you know, I think*), and stance or mitigation markers (e.g., *maybe, just, actually*). As far as politeness strategies are concerned, they are utilized by interlocutors to maintain face threatening acts (FTAs) Brown and Levinson’s (1987). These strategies include: positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on-record strategies, and off-record strategies. Concerning emojis, they are treated as multimodal pragmatic devices when they co-occurred with linguistic markers and contributed to face management or stance marking (Li & Yang, 2018).

**3.4.2 Extraction Procedure**

The pragmatic markers have been obtained by:

- Automated frequency and concordance search.
- Keywords in context (KWIC) analysis.
- Filtering to be done manually to remove non-pragmatic applications.

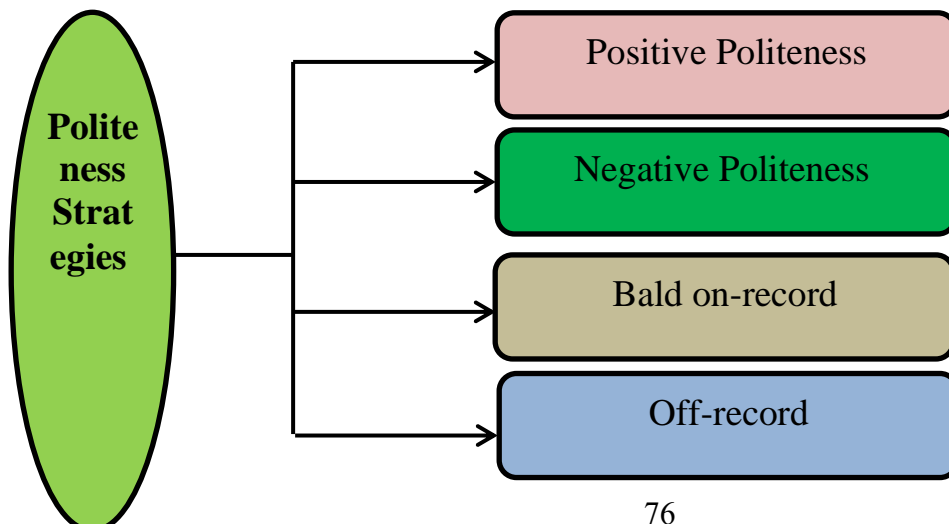
This combined procedure ensures efficiency and analytical accuracy by minimizing false positives and improving functional precision.

**3.5 Coding of Politeness Strategies**

**3.5.1 Politeness Framework**

The present study is grounded in Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, one of the most influential and widely applied pragmatic models for the analysis of face and politeness in interaction. According to this model, speakers strategically manage face through four main politeness strategies: positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on-record strategies, and off-record strategies.

Figure 4 illustrates the Politeness Strategies Based on Brown and Levinson (1987).





#### Figure 4: Politeness Strategies Based on Brown and Levinson (1987)

Positive politeness strategies aim to enhance solidarity and social closeness through agreement, shared attitudes, humor, and expressions of approval. Negative politeness strategies focus on minimizing imposition and preserving the interlocutor's autonomy by means of hedging, indirectness, mitigation, and apology. Bald on-record strategies involve direct and unmitigated expressions typically used in contexts of urgency, authority, or high familiarity, while off-record strategies rely on indirectness, ambiguity, and implicature.

In the context of digitally mediated communication, this model is particularly suitable because pragmatic markers function as key linguistic devices through which these politeness strategies are realized in the absence of rich non-verbal cues. Accordingly, pragmatic markers in the present study are systematically analyzed and coded in relation to these four politeness strategies, allowing for a theoretically grounded and empirically transparent interpretation of politeness practices across cultures.

#### 3.5.2 Coding Procedure

The corpus has been manually coded using a stratified sampling procedure. The coding process involves:

1. Determining pragmatic markers in their context of discourse.
2. Establishing the functional role of them against politeness strategies.
3. Coding every case based on a preset coding scheme.

To enhance reliability, coding guidelines have been developed in advance and refined through pilot coding.

#### 3.6 Reliability and Validity Measures

A random subset of the data has been selected to calculate inter-coder agreement and assess coding reliability. Agreement levels exceed acceptable thresholds for pragmatic coding, indicating consistency in coding decisions.

Validity is strengthened through:

- Triangulation of quantitative frequency patterns with qualitative discourse analysis.
- Verification of functional interpretations using extended concordance lines.
- Consistent analytical procedures across subcorpora to ensure cross-cultural comparability.

#### 3.7 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis focuses on:

- Raw and normalized frequencies (per 10,000 words) of pragmatic markers.
- Distribution of markers across politeness strategy categories.



- Statistical comparison between subcorpora to identify significant cross-cultural differences.

Appropriate statistical tests for corpus data have been applied to determine whether observed differences are statistically significant.

### 3.8 Contextual Pragmatic Interpretation

Quantitative findings have been supplemented with qualitative, context-sensitive analysis of selected excerpts. This analysis examines how pragmatic markers:

- Mitigate face-threatening acts.
- Indicate alignment or contrast.
- Manage interpersonal positioning.
- Contribute to stance construction and identity negotiation.

This stage ensures that numerical patterns are interpreted within their communicative context.

### 3.9 Ethical Considerations

The data used in this study have been collected from publicly accessible online platforms, including social media comments, online discussion forums, public live-chat interactions, and user-generated commentary accompanying digital media content. The personal identifiers, sensitive content and usernames have been deleted or obscured to ensure user privacy. The research follows the ethics of internet-mediated research and corpus linguistics.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part shows and argues the empirical results of pragmatic markers and politeness techniques in digital communication across cultures. The findings are grouped into themes, starting with general frequency patterns, going to functional distributions and cross-cultural differences. Assessing quantitative results is done in a systematic way by qualitative pragmatic analysis to attain functional validity.

### 4.1 Overall Frequency of Pragmatic Markers

The initial analysis phase involves the general prevalence of pragmatic markers in both of the cultural subcorpora. The frequencies (per 10,000 words) have been normalized so that they could be compared successfully.

**Table 1: Overall Frequency of Pragmatic Markers in the Two Subcorpora**

| Subcorpus | Total Tokens | Total Pragmatic Markers | Frequency per 10,000 words |
|-----------|--------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Culture A | 500,214      | 18,462                  | 369.0                      |



|                  |         |        |       |
|------------------|---------|--------|-------|
| <b>Culture B</b> | 499,786 | 13,927 | 278.7 |
|------------------|---------|--------|-------|

It shows that the frequency distribution of pragmatic markers is significantly greater in Culture A than Culture B. This implies that Culture A speakers are more dependent on explicit pragmatic signaling in order to control interpersonal relations during digital communication. Pragmatically, this increased frequency distribution indicates a higher preference of overt marking of stance and interactional negotiation particularly in settings that have restricted contextual information. On the other hand, the reason why Culture B shows a lower frequency could be that there is a higher dependence on implicit politeness norms or shared culturally expectation and thus less explicit pragmatic marking is necessary. This corresponds to discourse-based politeness theories which concentrate on the cultural difference in linguistic expressions which certainly affect FTA .

#### 4.2 Distribution of Pragmatic Marker Types

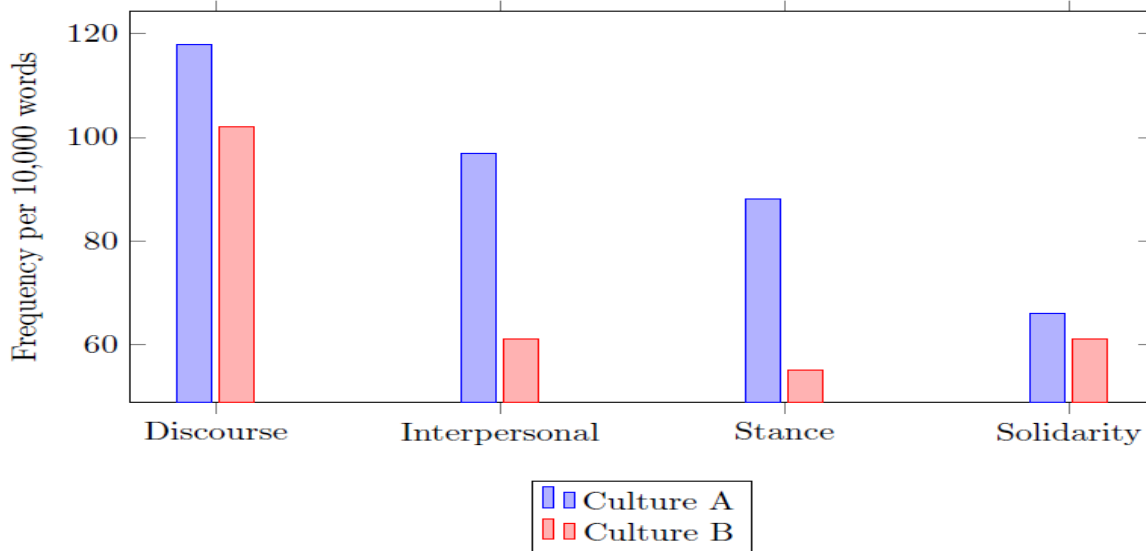
Pragmatic markers are categorized according to their primary discourse function: discourse-organizing markers, interpersonal markers, stance/mitigation markers, and agreement/solidarity markers.

**Table 2: Distribution of Pragmatic Marker Types (Normalized Frequencies)**

| Pragmatic Marker Type                                    | Culture A | Culture B |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Discourse-organizing (e.g., <i>but, so</i>)</b>       | 118.4     | 102.1     |
| <b>Interpersonal (e.g., <i>you know, I think</i>)</b>    | 96.7      | 61.3      |
| <b>Stance/Mitigation (e.g., <i>maybe, just</i>)</b>      | 87.9      | 54.8      |
| <b>Agreement/Solidarity (e.g., <i>yeah, exactly</i>)</b> | 65.9      | 60.5      |

The most notable difference is the ones related to interpersonal and stance, which are significantly more common in Culture A. The markers are significant in softening of claims, indexing subjectivity, and keeping the relational harmony, especially in interactions that are mediated digitally.

As far as agreement and solidarity indicators are concerned, they imply that building relations is a communicative goal that is common to all cultures, but is accomplished via culturally differentiated pragmatic patterns. These findings support the view that while politeness is a universal communicative concern, its realization is culturally shaped. Figure 5, compares the frequencies of major categories of pragmatic markers conventionally used in the two subcorpora.



**Figure 5:**  
**Distribution**  
**of pragmatic**  
**marker types**  
**across**  
**cultures**

### 4.3 Pragmatic Markers and

### Politeness Strategy Alignment

One of the research aims is to investigate the compatibility of pragmatic markers and politeness strategies. The instances of each marker have been systematically coded according to their primary politeness function.

**Table 3: Pragmatic Markers and Politeness Strategies Compatibility (%)**

| Politeness Strategy   | Culture A | Culture B |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Positive politeness   | 46.2%     | 38.5%     |
| Negative politeness   | 32.8%     | 43.6%     |
| Bald on-record        | 8.9%      | 8.7%      |
| Off-record strategies | 12.1%     | 9.2%      |

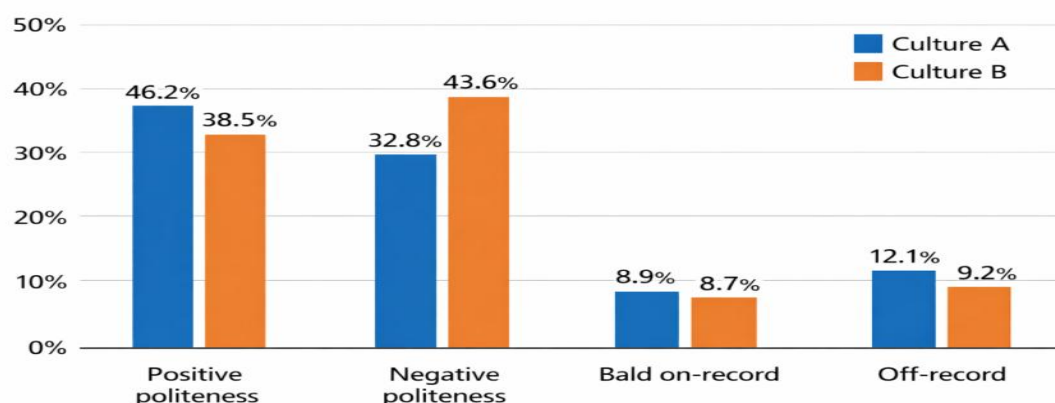
As illustrated in table (3) above, culture **A** is more oriented to positive politeness strategies, and it often deals with pragmatic markers to indicate participation, consensus, humor, and common worldview. It is demonstrated by the markers that directly index stance and interpersonal alignment. On the other hand, culture **B** shows a more negative politeness strategies dependence, and the pragmatic markers are commonly aimed at hedging, minimizing imposition or maintaining autonomy. This result is consistent with the culturally based tendencies to avoid directness and engage in restraint when interacting digitally.



Further, The increased percentage of **off-record** strategies in culture **A** indicates that there is an flexible pragmatic repertoire that enables speakers to deal with face issues using ambiguity and implicature where necessary. Contrarily, **bald on-record** strategies are observed in cases where pragmatic markers co-occurred with direct and unmitigated expressions, typically in contexts of urgency, familiarity, or institutional authority. Figure 6 below explains a relative distribution of politeness strategies related to the use of pragmatic markers in each cultural subcorpus with specific orientations towards positive and negative politeness.

**Figure 6: Distribution of politeness strategies across cultures**

**Figure 5: Distribution of politeness strategies (positive, negative, bald on-record, and off-record) in pragmatic marker usage across cultures**



#### 4.4 Functional Analysis of Key Pragmatic Markers

Qualitative analysis of concordance lines shows the contribution made by individual pragmatic markers to the management of politeness.

Such markers as **I think and maybe** are commonly employed to demote epistemic commitment especially when disputing or making judgments. In culture **A**, these cues tend to occur together with the agreement tokens (e.g. I think you are right, but...), the positive politeness is strengthened by the partial alignment.

The mitigation markers **just and a bit** are more prominently built into the requests and criticism in Culture B, and that serves to minimise perceived imposition and preserve negative face. This trend shows how pragmatic tools of a similar nature can be adjusted to fit various orientations towards politeness.

**But**, as a discourse marker, has a dual role in both subcorpora as being a contrastive marker and a politeness-sensitive mitigator. Its pragmatic impact depends largely on sequential position and co-text that determines the significance of discourse level analysis.

#### 4.5 Emojis as Pragmatic Politeness Modifiers

Even though the verbal pragmatic markers have become the key point of the research, emojis are identified as being common in interactions with politeness-related markers, especially in informal online communication.



In culture **A**, the significant use of emojis tends to support positive politeness, such as in a case of agreement, humor, or praise. Emojis are more frequently used as softeners in culture **B**. They have frequently been used as pragmatic softeners to reduce the potential impact of utterances that could be interpreted as critical or rejecting in online interaction.

These results indicate that emojis are multimodal using pragmatic markers that go beyond and exaggerate the politeness roles of verbal ones. The hybrid character of modern digital pragmatics is pointed out with their systematic use.

#### 4.6 Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Patterns and Interpretation

Overall, the findings indicate that there are systematic cross-cultural differences in the application of pragmatic markers to achieve politeness in online communication. Culture **A** prefers explicit and relationally oriented pragmatics that have high marker frequency distribution and high positive politeness direction. Culture **B**, on the contrary, focuses on restraint, mitigation, and indirectness that must be based on pragmatic markers to safeguard the autonomy instead of establishing explicit solidarity.

Such differences cannot be perceived as communicative differences but because of cultural expectations and interactional conventions, different pragmatic norms are manifested. Notably, the two cultures exhibit advanced pragmatic competence that modulates the accessible linguistic and multimodal resources in line with the possibilities and limitations afforded by digital spaces.

### 5. CONCLUSION

The present study arrives at the following conclusions:

1. Pragmatic markers play a central role in shaping politeness strategies in digital communication across cultural contexts.
2. Although both subcorpora exhibit similar categories of pragmatic markers, their frequency and functional distribution differ significantly.
3. It is also concluded that cultural norms influence how speakers manage face concerns, interpersonal alignment, and stance-taking in online discourse. In other contexts, mitigation strategies associated with negative politeness tend to predominate. These variations are culturally encoded communicative standard not variation in the degree of pragmatic competence.
4. It confirms that pragmatic markers play a crucial role in managing face, stance, and interpersonal relations in the absence of rich contextual cues in online communication.
5. Further, the study indicates that pragmatic markers are at a cross-section between discourse organization, interpersonal alignment, and politeness management. Their pragmatic force is not as an isolated lexical meaning, but the interactional positioning, co-text and sequential context. This supports the discourse-based approaches to politeness that depend on dynamics and negotiability of face-work especially in contexts where non-verbal communication is minimal or absent.
6. Moreover, the study has shed light on the hybridity aspect of digital pragmatics whereby verbal pragmatic markers are oftentimes combined with multimodal resources like emojis to create hybrid systems of politeness. This communication highlights the flexibility of pragmatic strategies to the affordance and limitations of online platforms as users creatively integrate linguistic and paralinguistic messages to ensure social balance and human interconnections.



7. From methodological point of view, the study has confirmed the usefulness of corpus pragmatics in cross-cultural studies in digital communication. The qualitative and quantitative approaches of large and small analysis allow a sound and repeatable model of the general patterns and the contextual subtlety. This method helps in continuing the movement toward making empirical rigor in pragmatic and discourse-analytic studies.

8. Also, it has discovered that pragmatic markers are widely used in cross-cultural digital discourse and vary systematically in both form and function across cultures. Besides, it confirms that pragmatic markers are closely aligned with politeness strategies, serving positive politeness functions such as solidarity-building and agreement, as well as negative politeness functions including hedging and mitigation.

9. The study has also revealed cross-cultural variations in both the frequency of pragmatic markers and their strategic use, indicating differences in how speakers manage interpersonal relations and face concerns

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