

The Use of Politeness Strategies in Iraqi Social Media Advertisements

Abstract

Wasan Mohsin Hazim Alrawas

College of Education for Humanities, English department, University of Al-Hamdaniya, Nineveh, Iraq

wasanmohsinalrawas@uohamdaniya.edu.iq

Rashad Yaqoob Shamoon Al Shaaya

College of Education for Humanities, English department, University of Al-Hamdaniya, Nineveh, Iraq

rashadshaya71@uohamdaniya.edu.iq

Ari Dakheel Abdal Dasi

College of Law, department of Law, University of Al-Hamdaniya, Nineveh, Iraq

aridasi@uohamdaniya.edu.iq

Abstract

A study of politeness strategies in advertising texts on social media in the Iraqi context uses a discourse-analytic perspective. Based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, this study analyses the language employed in advertisements from that perspective. Data set: a giant corpus of spoken ads crawled from high-traffic sites, including Facebook and Instagram, in the years 2025-2026. We used a mixed-methods design that included both qualitative discourse analysis and quantitative frequency analysis. The analysis found that bald-on-record, positive politeness, and negative politeness strategies were deployed, whereas the off-record strategy was not. The results show that bald-on-record (60%) is the most common tactic, indicating clear, unambiguous communication in Iraqi advertising. Positive politeness strategies (30%) are typically used to create a sense of attachment to the interlocutor or to foster social bonding. Negative politeness strategies (6%) are less common and mostly co-occur in collocations related to prestigious or serious contexts. There is no positive-negative (4%) politeness or off-record combination. Social connectedness attenuates directness, and finding that happy medium is challenging for Iraqi advertisers. The urgency of a given strategy can also play a role in its selection, alongside product abstraction and producers' final conclusions about consumers' presumed learning. By showing how culture borrowed persuasive language from the virtual world, the study opened a new practical perspective on digital Arabic advertising and the digital marketing community.

Keywords: Politeness strategies, social media advertising, and Iraqi discourse.

استخدام استراتيجيات التآدب في إعلانات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي العراقية

وسن محسن حازم
جامعة الحمدانية كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية قسم اللغة الانكليزية
رشاد يعقوب شمعون
جامعة الحمدانية كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية قسم اللغة الانكليزية
اري دخيل عيبدال داسي
جامعة الحمدانية كلية القانون قسم القانون

الملخص

تتبنى هذه الدراسة منظورًا تحليليًا للخطاب في بحث استراتيجيات التأدب في النصوص الإعلانية المنشورة على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ضمن السياق العراقي. واستنادًا إلى نظرية التأدب التي قدمها براون وليفنسون (1987)، تحلل الدراسة اللغة المستخدمة في الإعلانات من هذا المنظور. وقد تألفت بيانات الدراسة من مدونة لغوية واسعة من الإعلانات المنطوقة التي جمعت من منصات ذات معدلات استخدام مرتفعة، بما في ذلك فيسبوك وإنستغرام، خلال المدة 2025-2026. اعتمدت الدراسة منهجًا مختلطًا يجمع بين التحليل النوعي للخطاب والتحليل الكمي للتكرارات. وأظهرت النتائج استخدام استراتيجيات التأدب المباشر (Bald-on-record)، والتأدب الإيجابي، والتأدب السلبي، في حين لم تُستخدم استراتيجيات التأدب غير المباشر (Off-record). كما بينت النتائج أن استراتيجيات التأدب المباشر كانت الأكثر شيوعًا بنسبة (60%)، مما يعكس تفضيلًا للتواصل الواضح والصريح في الإعلانات العراقية. أما استراتيجيات التأدب الإيجابي فقد شكلت (30%)، واستُخدمت غالبًا لخلق شعور بالألفة مع المتلقي أو لتعزيز الروابط الاجتماعية. في المقابل، جاءت استراتيجيات التأدب السلبي بنسبة (6%) فقط، وظهرت غالبًا في سياقات ترتبط بالمكانة الاجتماعية أو بالمواقف الرسمية والجادة. ولم تُسجل أي حالات للجمع بين التأدب الإيجابي والسلبي (4%) أو لاستخدام استراتيجيات التأدب غير المباشر. وتشير النتائج إلى أن الترابط الاجتماعي يسهم في التخفيف من حدة المباشرة، وأن تحقيق التوازن المناسب بين الصراحة والود يمثل تحديًا للمعلنين العراقيين. كما أن درجة الإلحاح في الرسالة الإعلانية تؤثر في اختيار الاستراتيجية، إلى جانب طبيعة المنتج وتصور المنتجين لمستوى وعي المستهلكين. ومن خلال توضيح كيفية توظيف الثقافة المحلية للغة الإقناع المستمدة من الفضاء الرقمي، تقدم الدراسة منظورًا عمليًا جديدًا لفهم الإعلان العربي الرقمي ومجال التسويق الرقمي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيات التأدب، الإعلان عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، الخطاب العراقي.

1. Introduction

Advertising language is used not only to sell products and services but also, at times, simply to encourage consumer engagement & repeat contact between advertisers and consumers. Advertising has shifted from a one-way sales pitch to an interactive, culturally relevant conversation in digital spaces (primarily social media) (Mkhitarayan, 2024). SMM is a type of advertising, yes, it is, but do not confuse SMM with conventional advertising (or at least in the traditional sense, because even if you are going to approach strictly like that, SMM allows us to communicate directly with the recipients (through comments or messages or reposts), therefore language becomes from pragmatic to much more visual). Here, language is no longer a mechanical tool but a social behaviour in which the community's common norms and values are endangered (Dąbrowska, 2019). Social networking has replaced all kinds of advertising techniques and created a

paradigm shift in several industries like: Trade, Arts, Medicine, Education and Small Businesses in Iraq. This dislocation is why Iraqi advertisers have sought social networks like Facebook and Instagram to reach larger portions of their audiences. More realistically, you have a language that needs to match what you do as a business while remaining polite, respectful, and culturally aware. Iraqi online advertisers appear in the present study to calibrate their language for effectiveness within components of normative social interaction (Hamood & Challob, 2023).

1.1 Background of the Study

Pragmatics is influenced by politeness, which speakers use to support social interactions and maintain social relations. Brown and Levinson (1987) offer a model that provides background for this analysis of how speakers protect face. The extant literature has scrutinised online Arabic advertising mainly in traditional contexts and face-to-face, but has given little consideration to social media in an Iraqi context; thus, this study fills this gap. In Iraq, social values such as respect, solidarity, hierarchy, and religious ties shape how language is used. These values affect the way we talk with each other and how we argue in public. As social media becomes increasingly important for business, advertisers will always have to strike the right balance between persuading their audiences and remaining culturally polite. I present this research, focused on politeness in the context of advertisements on Iraqi social media, as a means of exploring how language can touch the world through culture and digital communication.

1.2 Advertising on social media

It is worth noting that in the past decade, the use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram has grown significantly due to Social Media Advertising in Iraq. These sites have risen to a leading position in advertising for our small businesses, online retailers, designers, healthcare providers, and educational institutions (Okechukwu et al., 2025). It is one where the language tends to be informal and conversational, disguised within semi-formal discourse patterns, including Iraqi Arabic (sometimes dialectical), Modern Standard Arabic, or other language idioms based on religion or culture. Urging reader participation, Iraqi social media advertising often employs second-person pronouns and honorifics, as well as colloquial language. This increases the possibility of face-threatening acts; after all, requests or suggestions are performed. Politeness strategies thus arise to sidestep imposition, create solidarity, and establish trust in discourse. The methodological investigation illustrates how global marketing has been localised by Iraqi advertisers.

1.3 Politeness and Pragmatics in Digital Discourse

Pragmatics is the module that describes how meaning varies with different owners and in different situations of use. This area studies how recipient differences (differences among the people involved), urgency (the importance or immediacy of something), and limited cues (the few signals online, e.g., tone or facial expression) influence online conversations. Politeness strategies utilize

methods to address the absence of physical presence and promote courteous interaction in digital communication. Such strategies nurture identity and intimacy. Strategies of Negative politeness (for example, indirectness (hinting instead of stating something up front to lessen the pressure on the receiver) serve to protect a person's capacity for self-determination. Off-record strategies imply without saying; bald-on-record strategies communicate explicitly and directly. Investigating these strategies in Iraqi advertisements contributes to a better understanding of how politeness functions in online advertising communication (Yus, 2018). Introduction: Although social media advertisements are increasingly ubiquitous within the Iraqi space, very few studies examine their language and pragmatic use; much of the research published to date has focused on politeness. Social media advertising is growing in Iraq, but linguistic and pragmatic analyses of social media content remain relatively limited. Arabic ad studies usually discuss traditional media more than digital or social media (Kamil & Chiad, 2025).

1.4 Research Problem and Gap

This type of research fills a significant gap in the connection between politeness strategies found in Iraqi Social Media Advertisements and not-yet-discovered cultural and social conventions. Offering a framework for politeness according to pragmatic theories, particularly the work of Brown and Levinson (1987), it systematically explores Iraqi digital advertising discourse.

1.5 Research Objectives

The current study provides a pragmatic analysis of politeness strategies in advertisements within Iraqi social media. Its goals are to:

1. Identify these techniques.
2. Analyse their frequency and context.
3. Assess the role culture and society play in technique selection.
4. Evaluate their role in persuasion.

1.6 Research Question: To meet these goals, this study asks:

1. Politeness strategies in Iraqi society's advertisements on social media
2. What language looks like.
3. How are those strategies affected by Iraqi cultural and social norms?
4. How hell will it be calmness in Iraqi online ads?

1.7 Significance of the Study

Contribution of Theoretical and Practical Significance: Theoretically, it contributes to pragmatics by highlighting a less-researched aspect of politeness in Iraqi social media, while qualitatively identifying the distinct forms of Arabic that emerge in creative Internet genres. In practice, these insights will help advertisers and content creators build more persuasive and culturally aware communications, for example, by using language, dialects, or engagement styles that better relate to Iraqis' values. It shows that politeness can help, but also hurt,



online success, and it prompts stakeholders to consider how they can strengthen their campaigns and prepare for further research.

2. Literature Review

Reviews the theoretical and empirical viewpoints about politeness strategies in advertisements and online communications, mainly in this section. Generally, the article starts with politeness theory and the Brown and Levinson model in Section 1, then presents research on advertising and social media politeness studies, along with motivations for using politeness strategies in the Arabic context (Section 2.2) & Iraq context (Section 3). However, Arabic and Iraqi advertising studies have yet to assess not only the usage of politeness strategies but also their perception on social media. Therefore, this study aims to explore these processes and interpretations directly bridging this gap in the literature.

2.1 Politeness Theory: An Overview

Politeness theory, a central area of pragmatics, examines how speakers and writers manage relationships and maintain social order. Initial conceptions originated in sociolinguistics, which focuses on politeness as norms that restrict appropriate language, where "politeness" refers to respect or deference, and in pragmatics, which focuses on how context matters to meaning. Nowadays, politeness refers to the strategic use of language to achieve certain goals without creating tension. Politeness is related to Goffman's notion of 'face', which refers to self-image in the eyes of others. For instance, speakers want to save their face and also others' while communicating with them (Kádár, 2017). Have you ever wondered why requests seem more acceptable in one type of business environment than in another? It is important here that linguistic politeness, which attenuates the face threats inherent in requests, commands, or persuasion, comes into play. Since politeness is context-specific and culture-bound, its forms change with social distance, power, and imposition. This means that knowing what the locals do when they communicate is key. Politeness theory also helps us understand these new ways people present themselves and interact in digital spaces (Abdullazoda, 2025). So much for general scoping.

2.2 Brown and Levinson's Model of Politeness

Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, which was based on Goffman's (1967) concept of face, is well known in pragmatics. The first concerns the positive face, or the desire to be liked, and the negative face, which is the desire for autonomy. Most communicative acts are face-threatening as they infringe upon the addressee's face. Politeness aims to minimise FTAs (Face Threatening Acts) during communication. Brown and Levinson include four types: bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. Bald-on-record uses blunt language in urgent situations or when efficiency takes precedence over politeness (Yusny, 2013). Have you ever been curious about how people navigate the challenges of politeness when conversing or interacting online? Positive politeness displays solidarity or gratitude, and negative politeness avoids offence through indirectness. And again, they use implication to avoid imposing the mentioned behaviour when comparing off-record strategies. Based on this, Brown and Levinson propose that politeness strategies

depend on three factors: social distance, power, and the amount of imposition, which define how serious an FTA (Face Threatening Act) is for the participants in a conversation. The model is still used for a variety of purposes, from advertising to digital. There has been critical debate in the literature about whether a single universal scale could be created (especially cross-culturally). Consequently, its architecture allows exploration within the field of persuasive messaging on social media (Gervasio et al., 2019).

2.3 Politeness Strategies in Advertising Discourse

Advertising is inherently persuasive discourse; it aims to change consumer beliefs and behaviours. Advertising intentions are typically requests or calls to action that can affect consumers' autonomous processing. To overcome this, advertisers often employ politeness strategies to reduce resistance and promote acceptance. Research shows that polite language is critical in advertising communication. Issa (2016) shows that advertising discourse uses positive politeness to create comfort and trust. This can take the form of referencing common ground, flattery, and inclusive pronouns. Finally, to honor consumers' ability to choose, indirect requests or softened commands are often employed, especially in advertisements for sensitive or high-value products.

These techniques can be applied across a variety of ad formats. Desperate measures are by no means exclusively bald on record. They obviously play a role in advertising, especially in promotions where urgency is key, such as limited-time offers. On the other hand, off-record humor enables advertisers to indirectly imply benefits, using a technique known as implicature, in which rhetorical questions suggest that something is true but very hard, if not impossible, to prove. Research suggests that judicious use of linguistic politeness provides advertisers with an opportunity to better capture attention and compliance for their messages by strategically using language that may persuade audiences while still adhering to social norms. However, most of this research has been limited to traditional media or Western environments (Issa, 2016). leaving little known about advertising on digital and non-Western platforms.

2.4 Politeness in Social Media Communication

Have you observed how writing seems different from talking? While social media creates closeness, engagement, and reach, politeness can be difficult to convey because there are no physical cues. Online salience relies on speakers' utilisation of linguistic politeness. Researchers use positive politeness, informal language, and emojis to establish rapport. Negative politeness is employed by professionals. Modal verbs (could, you could / might, you might / would) are used to show uncertainty or indirectness. Social media posts are often published in a conversational style that imitates the speech we use each day and serves a primal drive for trust and connection. Brands highlight the importance of politeness in advertising here. As per this, another contribution of social media towards politeness is that the public can react to ads publicly. Fundamentally, if ads are disrespectful, the audience may not like them (Daulay et al., 2025). It has been

increasingly studied, but more research is needed to better understand how culture shapes politeness in social media advertising.

2.5 Studies on Arabic and Iraqi Advertising Discourse

Investigations into Iraqi Arabic advertisements reveal an interplay between language and local culture, society, and religion. As with Iraqi advertisements, they are full of religious terminology, blessing vocabulary, and colloquial speech that serve to personalise and build trust. Based on that, Arabic Speaking Politeness: Irony in Focus employs the politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson to study criticism among native Arabic speakers from Iraq (which will be of interest to chapter five), and introduces models for advertising discourse relevant to Iraq. However, academic interest in Iraqi advertising is hardly evident among scholars (Tahir, 2025). Based on this, it is evident that research on Arabic advertising rarely addresses Iraq, instead focusing on Gulf countries or pan-Arab media. Accordingly, Iraqi advertising, notably its pragmatic and commercial facets, is still under-investigated (Nordin et al., 2024). Iraqi discourse is largely limited to political topics and conversation, with very few analyses of Iraqi ads. They indicate that positive politeness (e.g., familial or friendly tones) fosters intimacy and religious framing taps into common values. However, very few corpus-based studies have investigated politeness in Iraqi social media advertising through pragmatic theories, an important issue that warrants further inquiry. In response, the current study uses Brown and Levinson's model to analyse politeness strategies in Iraqi social media advertisements to understand how politeness functions in Iraqi Arabic and which cultural and technological contexts shape these practices.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is all about pragmatics. At the core of the study is the face theory and politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson (1987). Face is an individual's self-image in a social interaction. Politeness strategies are those we use to reduce face-threatening acts. This theory guides the examination of language in Iraqi promotion through social media. I focus on how advertisers use persuasive appeals to encourage hypothetical a isagogic persuasion as one such process of encouraging identification with the advertisement by inviting the audience to reach for understanding, connection, and belonging in some sense. This model facilitates a methodical examination of an advertisement's discourse in a digital context and with reference to a specific culture. In the end, the research investigates the interplay between pragmatics, face theory, and politeness strategies.

3.1 Pragmatics and Face Theory

Pragmatics examines the socially or culturally contextual meaning behind words and how they relate to one another, what is said, and how it was meant. The relationship between language, users, and context is examined. On the other hand, semantics refer to meaning alone. This distinction matters because advertisements usually depend on inference, persuasion, and context

(Eragamreddy, 2024). Face, which refers to a person going forward, their public persona, is the desire that people have to be looked at less than lightly by others' social interaction. Goffman defines face as. We seek to defend our own face in conversation, while hoping not to lose others. This is important in persuading with words, that is, getting someone to act while neither coercive nor rude. Face control is a key factor in successful advertising; therefore, advertisers must choose between profit and respect for customers' social identities and expectations. Face management is even more critical on social media because communication is public and interactive. The techniques of pragmatics and face theory facilitate the analysis of how Iraqi advertisers construct messages that satisfy consumers with cultural rules (Ghaffari et al., 2019).

3. 2 Face-Threatening Acts in Advertising.

Face-threatening acts FTAs (Face Threatening Acts), can threaten either the speaker or listener down face being vague to be and where "face" means A person's self-esteem, in face refers. Requests, commands, suggestions, and advice are forms of address that specifically impinge on the listener's face, on their self-image or independence (Brown and Levinson 1). The same applies to advertising; requests are plenty: people should buy stuff, use services, or behave differently (Yepdia, 2025). On social media, these FTAs are generally much more colourful because direct address, imperatives, and sales slogans often add to their punch. These can specifically attack the negative face of listeners (the want to avoid being limited in their choices and actions) or the positive face (the want for respect and approval, that you think them ignorant). As a result, advertisers have to walk a fine line with FTAs so they do not face backlash from their target audiences. The level of threat an FTA poses hinges on the balance of power among member nations, the distances separating their spheres of political influence, and the fundamental acts requested. This is especially critical in the context of Iraq, where respect, hierarchy, and community are prized attributes. FTAs that are poorly managed can threaten trust and validity. Advertisers choose to adapt, coupling entreaties with civility, bonding, and cultural alignment. Therefore, FTAs in ads are a significant focus in current politeness research on Iraqi social media (Chaqmaqchee & Jasim, 2022).

3.3 Politeness Strategies Classification

Although Brown and Levinson indicate politeness strategies that clarify how speakers minimise danger to face level by referring to what mitigates the sociolinguistic acts they perform, it is this imposed threshold categorisation that increases the directedness of any act. Originally comprising four core politeness strategies, this framework is particularly helpful for our purposes because it allows us to identify how advertisers use these strategies to persuade users while maintaining social proximity.

3.3.1 Bald on-Record

Bald-on-record strategies are simple and direct to the point. They speak plainly, sparing none of the decorum with which one might soften a comment. In this

strategy, minimising the threat to face is not precisely what the speaker is after. They instead deal with what it means to be precise and efficient. As shown above, bald-on-record strategies have often been employed in high-urgency, low-relational-distance contexts, or when the speaker is dominant over the hearer (Dianitami, 2024). Bald-on-record strategies are often preferred by advertisers in time-sensitive campaigns needing urgency. That limited-time offer or emergency services story might be what puts you over the top. Bald-on-record strategies include evident imperatives and overt appeals to action. These tactics seem far too gross in a day-to-day conversation. But sometimes there is a way to use them in advertising by providing contextual cues that make the directness plausible. In the case of Iraqi social media advertising, for example, bald-on-record tactics are sometimes enhanced by culturally appropriate phrases (greetings or polite acknowledgements) which embolden the message without weakening it. Such strategies are permeated with cultural or contextual investments that reduce their threatening potential (Alhusein, 2024).

3.3.2 Positive Politeness

Strategies such as conflict avoidance, kindness, and commonality fall under positive politeness. For instance, they may say "Wow, I love how you executed that project" to show friendliness or say something like "Oh wow, you and I share the passion for coffee! to highlight common interests. These are meant to give the hearer the impression that you regard them more highly by demonstrating that you like them or have something in common. Such strategies prioritize closeness and alleviate distance, making both the speaker and the hearer feel heard. Politeness is often expressed through the use of inclusive pronouns (e.g., "we did a great job"), compliments (e.g., "you have done good work"), or general expressions of concern about others, such as questions about their well-being, like "How are you today?" and connecting on common ground ("I celebrate that holiday too," or "Our families follow similar traditions") (Borris & Zecho, 2018). Some Iraqi social media campaigns use positive politeness to reach audiences, as implemented by advertisers. They refer to customers in ways that are culturally relevant and foster a sense of belonging. If you want advertising to be more persuasive, make it more relatable by presenting it as friendly advice rather than merely a commercial transaction, and by reducing your social distance. What is positive politeness & why it matters. Positive politeness – this is the most important for creating Ads that relate to keywords and convey a perspective of solidarity as well as Umami love, including respect for culture/relatives.

3.3.3 Negative Politeness

Negative politeness strategies respect the addressee's want not to be imposed upon. This communicative burden is lightened by the use of indirectness, hedging, and formality. Negative politeness would be used during high-imposingness/high-social-distance encounters. Negative politeness strategies were observed in high-value items, as well as in professional services or sensitive-subject ads (Khair et al., 2024). In these ads, advertisers can resort to indirect

requests, modal verbs, or politeness imperatives. They reflect respect for consumer freedom of choice. Mutual Address in Softening Prescriptions. We observe negative politeness.

3.3.4 Off-Record

Such indirectly off-the-record moves do work, as vaguer language makes it easier for the speaker to disentangle themselves from the threat to face. Implicatures, hints, or even a rhetorical question from a speaker prompt the listener to use inference processes to understand what they mean. In short, well, it acts as a huge, thick barrier for your own face to plead innocence if anyone comes up asking you about it. In marketing, off-the-record is an advantage and a benefit: it augments the benefit. This may reinforce more insidious forms of influence and decrease people's likelihood of resisting. One example: in ads on Iraqi social media, sub rosa tactics may take the form of rhetorical questions or vague appeals to social values. The off-record strategy is less common than positive and negative politeness devices, but it still enriches advertising discourse (Yanti, 2017).

4. Methodology

Cite this paper. Methods. This section presents the methods used to investigate strategies of politeness in Iraqi Social Media Advertising. It lays out everything from research design, data sources, and sampling techniques to the analytical framework and ethical considerations that should always be addressed when conducting a study, thereby making the study transparent, valid, and applicable in an academic context.

4.1 Research Design

Using a mixed-methods design, the current study employs qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis in this setting. At high speed, it enables the examination of linguistic devices, allowing users to extract patterns of politeness strategies and their frequencies in a corpus. While quantitative analysis measures rates indicating how and where each strategy is used, qualitative analysis examines the behaviour of those strategies in particular socio-cultural contexts. Methodology: This is a more pragmatic study rooted in politeness theories by Brown and Levinson. In addition, this theory will greatly assist the research itself by succinctly categorising and clarifying FTA strategies relevant to advertising discourse. This approach, which integrates contextual analysis and measurement, yields more robust design interpretations through a mixed-methods approach.

4.2 Data Sources and Corpus Description

This dataset consists of ads published in Iraq on the popular social media platforms Facebook and Instagram. They were selected because of the popularity of these platforms in Iraq and their effectiveness as advertising tools for various businesses. Lowest-cost Ads, which can include pizza restaurant ads, health care ads, education industry ads, beauty service ads, or online purchasing ads. The corpus includes text and multimodal ads, but this work focuses only on text (i.e., captions, slogans, calls to action). The ads are in both Iraqi Arabic and Modern

Standard Arabic. Modern Standard is the official language of the federal government, though in practice, this has been the language used for advertising purposes here anyway. This repo aggregates real-world data to show how digital ad language maps onto real-life words on the ground.

4.3 Sampling Procedures

This used purposive sampling, whereby advertisements were selected for relevance to the research aims.

The selection criteria were:

1. Contain ads on behalf of Iraqi companies or facilities.
2. Recently, Arabic ads have attempted to persuade Iraqis.
3. advertisements with clear, persuasive copy.

All paid ads, business page posts, and promotional campaigns were counted, but not information only. These advertisements come from diverse business sectors and regions across Iraq to ensure diverse coverage and representativeness. The sample was used to explore perceived differences in politeness across products and services. This corpus was sufficient to provide qualitative and quantitative analyses, generating reliable and rigorous statistics.

4.4 Data Collection Tools

For the present study, 30 spoken ads broadcast on various Iraqi social media platforms during the period 2025 – 2026 were analysed. We had advertisements from all sorts of lifestyle domains: fashion, cosmetics, automobiles, and health products, to provide relatively representative data on spoken discourse in Iraqi marketing. All ads were listened to and transcribed verbatim, including only utterances that address the audience. Only spoken content was included.

4.5 Data analysis

Data were analysed qualitatively using Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness as a framework. With regard to each utterance performed in the framework of a politeness strategy, it was then classified as positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on record, and off record. The frequency of the employed politeness strategies was counted and expressed as a percentage, reflecting the most frequently used strategies in Iraqi advertisements after the qualitative classification.

4.6 Findings

Results of the study reveal that the bald-on-record politeness strategy is predominant in Iraqi spoken advertisements (approximately 60%). This implies that Iraqi advertisers would use direct, straightforward language to sell products and services in an advert. After that, the second most common strategy was positive politeness, with 30% reporting that advertisers tended to foster amicable, socially close relationships with the audience. On the other hand, the negative politeness strategy only accounted for 6%. This was mainly to respect consumers' freedom of choice. And only 4% had equal numbers of positive and negative strategies. The analysed data did not reveal any off-record tactics. (Figure 1).

Overall, these findings indicate that negative and combined politeness strategies were rare, while off-record strategies were absent in the dataset.

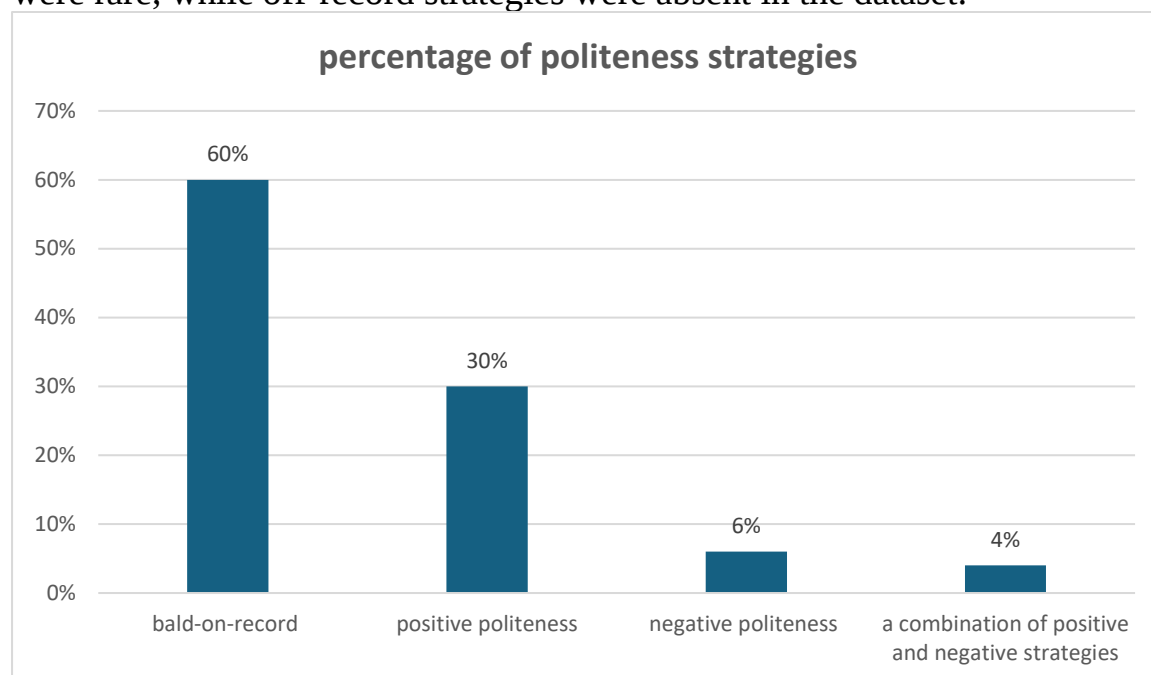


Figure (1): percentage of politeness strategies in Iraqi advertisements

As shown in Figure 1, bald-on-record strategies, which counted (18) frequencies with a percentage of 60%, ranked first among the others. In addition, positive. Politeness strategies ranked second among the others, with 9 frequencies (30%), as shown in Figure 1 above. The third rank was negative politeness strategies, which had 2 frequencies, accounting for 6%. Finally, the combination of positive and negative strategies ranked fourth, with 6 frequencies and a 4% frequency, while off-record strategy was not found in the analysed data.

Table 1: frequencies and examples of politeness strategies

No	Strategies	Examples Translation into English	Frequency
1	Bald on record	1. لازم تزورون → <i>Visitors are encouraged to attend.</i> 2. سار عوا بالحجز → <i>Prompt reservation is advised.</i> 3. هذا العرض ما يتفوت → <i>This offer should not be missed.</i> 4. تعالوا نشوفكم → <i>We look forward to welcoming you.</i> 5. جبنالكم عرض لمدة → <i>A limited-time offer has been provided.</i>	18
2	Positive politeness	1. زبوننا العزيز → <i>Dear customer</i> 2. زورونا وتنورونا → <i>Visit us and grace us with your presence</i> 3. تعالوا وتدللون → <i>Come and treat yourselves</i>	9

		4. عيني زبانا وحابيب كلبنا → <i>Our valued customers and dear friends</i>	
		5. نستقبلكم بكل حب → <i>We welcome you with all our love</i>	
3	Negative politeness	1. اذا حبيتوا → <i>If you like</i>	2
		2. في حال حبيتوا → <i>In case you like</i>	
		3. تكدرون تطلبوها → <i>You can order it</i>	
		4. اذا عندج سفرة قريبة → <i>If you have a trip coming up</i>	
4	Combination (positive+ negative)	1. اذا حبيتوا... تنورونا → <i>If you like come and visit us</i>	1
		2. انتظركم اليوم تنورونا → <i>We look forward to seeing you today</i>	
5	Off-record		0

As illustrated in Table 1, Iraqi spoken ads mostly employed the bald-on-record politeness strategy, as directed by advertisers (directly affecting consumers). None of these Iraqi advertisers has received any training, but they are aware of how to use different politeness strategies in spoken advertisements, which generally reflect a preference for direct, explicit language over indirect, polite questioning when advertising products and services. Only positive politeness was used to foster trust and closeness with the audience, which is needed for marketing. Negative politeness was less common, often to mitigate imposition and allow consumer autonomy. Only a small number of ads included both; no behind-the-scenes tactic was made evident. Spoken-language Iraqi ads convey clarity and a sense of social proximity. The current study advances research in this area and shows the power of language on consumers.

4.7 Reliability and Validity

To increase reliability, we relied on a coding manual. Intra-coder reliability was tested on some data by recoding the remaining data and later comparing classification measures, ensuring consistency. We examined for and rectified any coding discrepancies. We also reconsidered analytic categories. Trustworthiness was established through methodological triangulation (between qualitative discourse analysis and quantitative frequency analyses). As this is a theoretical framework, construct validity is well supported. Naturalistic social media adverts improved upon ecological validity. The data represent real-world advertising usage. Consequently, this step guarantees that the results reflect politeness strategies as they appear in Iraqi social media advertisements.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethics statement: The authors confirm that this research was conducted in accordance with ethical standards. The data used in the study were taken from public advertising campaigns. The researchers did not name anyone or reveal

confidential information. Where required to protect anonymity, company names and personal identifiers were anonymised. Transparency in the study data collection and analysis. An original ad image was neither changed nor amended; everything was preserved. The research is credible because it conforms to ethical standards and academic integrity.

4.8.1 Politeness Strategies

The detailed analysis of the data contained herein shows specific areas where clearly identifiable patterns in the use of politeness strategies occur in Iraqi spoken advertisements, as predicted by Brown and Levinson (1987). The results show that advertisers strategically choose among linguistic forms based on urgency, cultural norms, and product type.

1. Bald-on-Record Strategy

Among the competing strategies, this study reveals that bald-on-record is the most dominant (60% of the data). The high frequency suggests that Iraqi advertisers prefer direct, clear, persuasive communication when addressing their audience.

Usually, bald-on-record utterances are expressed as imperatives or explicit calls to action for immediate buy-in or engagement. This makes sense in the realm of advertising, especially when the advertisement involves a time-dependent sale in which limited-time urgency is important. According to (Astia, 2020). these strategies tend to be deployed when social distance is low, or urgency is high – two descriptors that fit pretty nicely within the realm of commercial advertising. However, despite their frankness, Iraqi advertisements usually employ other cultural approbation components, such as greetings and polite expressions, that also lessen the impact of face-threatening acts. The cultural adjustment avoids perceived rudeness while still allowing advertisers to sound clear. The preference for bald-on-record strategies thus represents a pragmatic trade-off between efficiency and cultural sensitivity, rendering them the most functional approaches in their Iraqi setting.

2. Positive Politeness Strategy

The next most common tactic in the data is positive politeness. This comprises 30% of the data. This indicates that establishing a mutual relationship, empathy, and emotional attachment with the audience are also highly valued by Iraqi advertisers.

Some of the ways positive politeness is realised are the following strategies:

- Use of inclusive pronouns (i.e., “we”)
- Expressions of friendliness and familiarity
- Allusions/calls to shared cultural values and experiences

In both cases, the strategies make the hearer seem appreciated and socially connected (Borris & Zecho, 2018). This is especially clear in Iraq and other advertisements, where advertisers present their messages as friendly advice rather than direct sales pitches.

In Iraqi culture, collectivist ideas hold great significance. The emphasis on relationships, trust, and belonging shapes this approach, and positive politeness minimises social distance. This makes advertisements more convincing and draws more attention from the audience.

3. Negative Politeness Strategy

Conversely, negative politeness strategies only appear in 6% of the data, which is also much less frequent. This implies that, in the advertising landscape, Iraqi advertisers have relied less on indirectness or formality.

Negative politeness is often used in cases:

- This also shows respect for the consumer's freedom of choice.
- Project: Select methods of hedging and indirectness
- Employ formal or polite expressions.

According to (Nordin et al., 2024). Those strategies are more prevalent in regard to (high-frequency, high-value) physical products and professional services sensitive topics. This might explain their relative underrepresentation in the dataset compared to other mainstream ad types, such as consumer goods, since many of the advertisements studied are targeted to that audience.

A low percentage suggests that, while the audience is treated with respect, advertisers would rather be clear and persuasive than formal, a reasonable approach in real-time social media channels.

4. Off-Record Strategy

We found 4% of strategies in the analysed data that mix positive and negative scores. Indirectness, vagueness, and implicature are strategies for avoiding responsibility or accountability for what has been stated (Yanti, 2017). Off-Record Strategies Iraqi Spoken advertisements, on the other hand, remained direct and not suggestive due to an absence of off-record strategies. For example, in advertising, especially on social media, messages need to be concise and capture attention. This can also weaken the power of persuasion and blur things, since indirect clues or vaguer elaborations are weaker.

Thus, the implication that there is no off-record use signals an explicit preference for unambiguous direct and upfront messages, a norm most often followed: bald-on-record strategies.

Overall Interpretation

Overall, the findings demonstrate a clear hierarchy in the use of politeness strategies:

1. **Bald-on-record (60%) → dominant**
2. **Positive politeness (30%) → supportive**
3. **Negative politeness (6%) → limited**
4. **A combination of positive and negative strategies (4%) → rare**

5. Discussion

The current study focuses on the pragmatic analysis of politeness strategies in Iraqi spoken social media advertisements. Findings indicate 60% of the ads operated bald-on-record, demonstrating a preference for clarity and urgency. These behaviours are employed when uncertainty is less problematic than noncompliance, when self-interest supersedes civility in advertising.

Because social media moves quickly, advertisers are encouraged to speak directly to them with imperatives and direct calls to action. That's hardly the kind of response you'd give to a friend over coffee, but advertising is about context, and brands can adapt an image-based format for their audiences later.

30% of the data pertain to positive politeness strategies; this is to be expected because Iraq lies on the collectivist end of Hofstede's dimension, where consensus demands that common goals take precedence over polarising self-identities. Since research indicates that social harmony is of utmost importance, this helps advertisers reduce that distance and build ties with their audience.

The other sentences of this condition were a 4% bald-on-record and positive politeness hybrid bargain between attempts at induction through bald-on-record persuasion from non-relational politeness, and warmth directly from relational politeness. In contrast, negative politeness is much less common (6%), suggesting that traditional notions of "formality" or avoidance of imposition do not apply to most Iraqi ads even for high-prestige goods and services.

You are indirect; this typically signals both positive and negative strategies and reduces clarity and persuasiveness (4%). This indicates that the era of vagueness in Iraqi advertising is over, and direct clarity about what is being promised is where the action is.

More generally, these results suggest that politeness in Iraqi advertisements is context-bound rather than strictly constrained by universal norms, and that this agreement reflects greater commitment to effectiveness and normative behavior. Although Brown and Levinson's model is a useful theorization of polite behaviour, advertising would subtitle their theory with context: it has only achieved its intended aims by 'focusing on the specifics of actual media output, consumer patterns, and the cultural milieu surrounding consumption.'

6. Conclusion

Of course, this study concerns politeness strategies in Iraqi spoken advertisements on social media, based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. It identifies the main strategies gleaned from the analysis of 30 advertisements in different domains and describes how these strategies work linguistically, communicatively, and socio-culturally for Iraqis.

The most striking finding is that bald-on-record strategies were the most common representation of Iraqis (60%), implying that Iraqis prefer direct, brief, and

moderate language. This aligns with the primary purpose of advertising: to deliver messages quickly and effectively. The positive politeness strategies, which constitute 33.3% of assertive statements, refer to needs immediately relevant to social belongingness and face-want confidence, in tune with the collectivist nature of the Iraqi community.

Negative politeness strategies (6%) were used very infrequently overall, particularly in contexts that require high formality or respect for the audience's freedom of action (e.g., ads for professional services, high-value products). The joint positive and negative strategy (4%) is the least-used category, suggesting either a lack of an integrated approach among many advertisers or an inability to take every opportunity to achieve communicative aims, since the majority have only one main strategy.

This investigation demonstrates that Iraqi spoken adverts, while integrated with other plausible persuasion methods, are limited by linguistic devices and cultural norms. It also reveals that directness and culture-bound constructions of politeness and respect are balanced, so these adverts do not generally transgress social norms or make inappropriate appeals, while their function remains intact. This study addresses the research gap in politeness theory and Arabic Advertising Discourse in Pragmatics, particularly given the limited literature on Iraq. It also notes the cultural dimensions that emerge in these concepts and the study's limitations: a small sample size and a detailed analysis of advertisements from a single sampled period (2025–2026). Future studies could expand this dataset by incorporating written announcements, politeness strategies from other Arab cultures, or other platforms. The paper also highlights linguistically specific uses in spoken ads in Iraq, where brevity is critical; cultural references that appeal to a narrow target audience for relatability; and user participation in meaning-making, reflecting high levels of pragmatic behaviour, especially within media & communications studies and sociolinguistics.

Declaration of Competing Interests

Conflict of interest: The authors declare that they have no known financial or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

References

- Abdullazoda, M. (2025). POLITENESS AS a SOCIO-CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC PHENOMENON. *Foreign Languages in Uzbekistan*, 46–64. <https://doi.org/10.36078/1751014498>
- Alhusein, A. M. N. (2024). Strategies of reprimand in Saudi Spoken Arabic: a sociopragmatic study. *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2306721>
- Astia, I. (2020). Politeness strategy in Interlanguage Pragmatics of Complaints by International students. *IJELTAL (Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics)*, 4(2), 349. <https://doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v4i2.528>
- Borris, D., & Zecho, C. (2018). The linguistic politeness having seen on the current study issue. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 2(1), 32–44. <https://doi.org/10.37028/lingcure.v2n1.10>
- Chaqmaqchee, O. M., & Jasim, Z. F. (2022). EFL Undergraduate Learners' Politeness Strategies in the Speech Act of Disagreement. *World Journal of English Language*, 12(8), 1. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v12n8p1>
- Dąbrowska, M. (2019). Birthday, culture, and social media. *Armenian Folia Anglistika*, 15(2 (20)), 86–122. <https://doi.org/10.46991/afa/2019.15.2.086>
- Daulay, S. H., Husna, N., & Andini, S. A. (2025). Facebook as a public discourse platform: analysing online users' language politeness. *Conference on English Language Teaching*, 37–48. <https://doi.org/10.24090/celti.2025.1345>
- Dianitami, A. A. (2024). Discovering Politeness Strategy in Vladimir Putin's speech on the Russian-Ukraine War 2022. *Language Horizon*, 12(1), 13–25. <https://doi.org/10.26740/lh.v12n1.p13-25>
- Eragamreddy, N. (2024). Exploring pragmatics: uncovering the layers of language and meaning. *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review*, 07(03). <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijcsrr/v7-i3-50>
- Gervasio, M., Humphrey, K., Ileri, Bilbow, G., Chejnova, P., Danet, B., Herring, S., Izadi, A., & Zilaie, F., Li, M., Luzon, M., J, Park, J., R, Sifianou, M., Humphrey, K., & Ileri. (2019). Politeness Strategies Employed by Chuka University Students in their Social Media Discourse. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*, 7(8). <https://doi.org/10.20431/2347-3134.0708006>
- Ghaffari, M., Hackley, C., & Lee, Z. (2019). Control, Knowledge, and Persuasive Power in Advertising Creativity: An Ethnographic Practice Theory approach. *Journal of Advertising*, 48(2), 242–249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2019.1598310>
- Hamood, B. S., & Challob, A. I. (2023). Gender difference of politeness strategies through online chatting experienced by EFL students in Al-Anbar

- Distinguished Schools. *Al-Adab Journal*, 2(144), 13–30.
<https://doi.org/10.31973/aj.v2i144.4050>
- Issa, S. (2016). A study into politeness strategies and politeness markers in Jordanian print advertisements as persuasive tools. *Journal of Politeness Research*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2015-0010>
- Kádár, D. Z. (2017). Politeness in pragmatics. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Linguistics*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199384655.013.218>
- Kamil, Z. A., & Chiad, M. O. (2025). A forensic Pragmatic analysis of impoliteness strategies in financial blackmail. *مجلة الباحث*, 44(3), 941–954.
<https://doi.org/10.63797/bjh.v44i3.4131>
- Khair, M., Manugeran, M., & Purwarno, P. (2024). NEGATIVE POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN ANDREA HIRATA'S NOVEL LASKAR PELANGI. *JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE*, 6(2), 293–299.
<https://doi.org/10.30743/jol.v6i2.9328>
- Mkhitaryan, S. (2024). Linguistic peculiarities of social media advertisements. *Bulletin of Yerevan Brusov State University of Languages and Social Sciences Pedagogy and Social Sciences*, 187–200.
<https://doi.org/10.51307/18293107/laph/24.68-187>
- Nordin, N. R., Hamza, M. H., & Hussin, Z. (2024). Politeness Strategies in Declining Invitations: A Cross-Cultural Analysis between Iraqi Arabs and Kurds. *3L The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 30(2), 218–230. <https://doi.org/10.17576/3l-2024-3002-14>
- Okechukwu, C. O., Jibril, A. H., & Nuhu, M. (2025). Effect of social media platforms on SMEs performance in Nigeria. *Journal of Health Applied Sciences and Management*, 9(1), 26–37.
<https://doi.org/10.4314/johasam.v9i1.3>
- Tahir, T. M. (2025). The Role of Politeness in Language Teaching: A Study of Face-Saving Strategies. *Journal of Diversity Studies*, 4(2), 52–57.
<https://doi.org/10.51470/jod.2025.4.2.52>
- Yanti, R. (2017). An analysis of off record strategies reflecting politeness implicature in “Oprah Winfrey Show.” *JURNAL ARBITRER*, 4(1), 52–57.
<https://doi.org/10.25077/ar.4.1.52-57.2017>
- Yepdia, L. W. (2025). Face-Threatening Acts and face Management in MTN Cameroon Text Messages: A sociolinguistic and pragmatic approach. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, 13(5), 10–29.
<https://doi.org/10.37745/gjahss.2013/vol13n51029>
- Yus, F. (2018). The interface between pragmatics and internet-mediated communication. In *Pragmatics & beyond. New series*.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/pbns.294.12yus>
- Yusny, R. (2013). APPROPRIATIZING POLITENESS THEORY FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN ELT. *JURNAL ILMIAH DIDAKTIKA Media Ilmiah Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, 14(1).
<https://doi.org/10.22373/jid.v14i1.496>