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*Linguistic Politeness in English and  
Arabic  
And its Implications for Translation*

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in  
Translation**

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*Dedication*

*To my beloved parents  
For their unconditional love and support*

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*Fatima Zohra,*

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## *Abstract*

This study investigates the area of linguistic politeness and the translatability of politeness formulas in English and Arabic. Expressions of linguistic politeness in Arabic are attempted for translation into English and the concept of politeness as a reflection of both normative and linguistic behavior is defined and discussed.

Both qualitative, i.e. analytical, and quantitative, i.e. statistical, methods are used in this research. The data consists of questionnaires that were given to Arabic native speakers and English native speakers. All the results are tabulated and the differences in both normative and linguistic polite (or impolite) behavior are tackled in a way that reflects the variance in social values and socio-cultural structures of the two groups under study.

The findings reveal that Arabic native speakers have difficulties trying to translate Arabic culture-specific i.e. 'lingua-pragmatic' polite formulas into English. English native speakers could not provide any translation for Arabic polite formulas because of their little knowledge of Arabic. However, the study shows that the social values incarnating politeness in both societies under study were getting closer despite the noticeable differences. The study also showed that Arabs use fixed expressions more than Britons and Americans do. The Britons and Americans resort more to syntactic structures to avoid imposition and conflict that can lead to possible confrontation.

**Keywords:** Arabic, English, linguistic politeness, translatability, lingua-pragmatics, social values, language-specific, culture-specific.

# تنوع التعبير المهذب في اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية واختلافاته

## ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة موضوع التهذيب اللغوي ومناقشة مفهومه وتأثيره في الترجمة في اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية. حيث حاولت الباحثة ترجمة بعض من التعبيرات العربية المهذبة التي تستخدم في مختلف المواقف في حياتنا اليومية إلى اللغة الإنجليزية، كما قامت بمناقشة وتعريف مفهوم التهذيب في السلوك عامة واللغة خاصة.

اعتمدت الدراسة على نوعين من منهجية البحث وهما: المنهج النوعي والمنهج الكمي. كما تمت الاستعانة باستبيانات وزعت على مجموعتين: الأولى تكونت من متحدثين لغتهم الأم هي العربية والثانية من متحدثين لغتهم الأم هي الإنجليزية. تم تحليل البيانات ودرستها لإظهار الاختلافات الاجتماعية والثقافية واللغوية لكلتا المجموعتين.

بينت الدراسة أن المتحدثين العرب واجهوا صعوبات أثناء محاولتهم ترجمة التعبيرات المهذبة من العربية إلى الإنجليزية، وأن المتحدثين بالإنجليزية واجهوا الصعوبات نفسها لقلّة معرفتهم باللغة العربية. كما أظهرت الدراسة أن هنالك تغير كبير يطرأ على القيم الاجتماعية في المجتمع العربي. كما يظهر تقارب مع المجتمع الغربي في بعض النقاط رغم الاختلافات الكبيرة بينهما. كذلك أظهرت الدراسة أنه لتفادي المواجهة والتهذيب فإن الناطقين بالعربية غالباً ما يستخدمون تعابير لغوية مهذبة ثابتة بينما يركز المتحدثون باللغة الإنجليزية على التراكم النحوية.

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## *List of Abbreviations*

CP	Cooperative Principle
CCSARP	Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project
D	Social Distance
DCT	Discourse Completion Test
FTAs	Face Threatening Acts
H	Hearer
IFID	Illocutionary Force Indicating Device
MP	Model Person
P	Power Relations between Parties
PP	Politeness Principle
S	Speaker
R	The Absolute Raking of the Threat of FTAs

# *Chapter One: Theoretical Background*

## *1.1 Introduction*

The interest in politeness as social norms goes back to the times of ancient rhetoric. Each era had its norms of politeness. And each norm had its specific features in different communities.

It is only in the 1970's that various accounts of the so-called linguistic "politeness phenomenon" have been presented. Early studies tended to claim, implicitly or explicitly, the universality of the principles underlying politeness phenomenon (Lakoff: 1973a & 1973b, 1975, Grice: 1975, Brown and Levinson: 1978, 1987, Leech: 1983, Fraser: 1990). In the following years, however, scholars from various cultural backgrounds challenged this universal view with what they claim to be evidence from their own languages.

Since then, a plethora of work has been done in the domain of what is called linguistic politeness. This led to a lot of confusion in the literature about this topic among researchers and theorists who have each a different view and conception about it. Like the different classifications of politeness and the issues in giving one concise definition of the term 'concept'.

Politeness is a culturally embedded notion. The extensive literature on this line of argument supports this well. To examine the actual manifestations of politeness in various languages and cultures is just to look at social behaviors of the speakers of those languages; what these speakers do when they communicate with one another, and what their values are.

Politeness is best expressed as the practical application of good manners or etiquette. It is a culturally-defined phenomenon, and, therefore, what is considered polite in one culture can sometimes be quite rude or simply eccentric in another cultural context.

While the goal of politeness is to make all of the parties relaxed and comfortable with one another, these culturally-defined

standards at times may be manipulated to inflict shame on a designated party.

Many languages have specific means to show politeness, deference, respect, or recognition of the social status of the speaker and the hearer. There are two ways to show politeness in language: (i) in its lexicon (for example, employing certain words in formal occasions, and colloquial forms in informal contexts), and (ii) in its morphology (for example, using special verb forms for polite discourse).

### *1.2 Aim of Research*

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the phenomenon of politeness in general and linguistic politeness in particular, and to shed light on its implications for translation from English to Arabic and vice versa, taking into consideration the differences between these two languages and their respective cultures.

This study will contribute to an understanding of the concept of politeness in English and Arabic and to show the points where these two extremely different cultures meet.

It will also discuss the issue of politeness as a universal phenomenon (see Brown and Levinson 1978). It does not follow the same tracks of these scholars but tries to advocate the view of politeness as being “culture-specific in orientation, purposes, and linguistic devices” (Shammas, 1995: 145).

Another purpose of this study is to help translation students to develop a communicative competence in the target language.

### *1.3 Organization of the Dissertation*

This thesis consists of five chapters. Following this introduction, in which some definitions will be given.

Chapter one investigates the most important theories and theoreticians in the field of linguistic politeness and sheds light on

the major lines each scholar follows from the early works of Grice to the universality claimed by Brown and Levinson. A theoretical framework to politeness will also be discussed

Chapter two deals with linguistic politeness across cultures with special focus on the English and Arabic cultures. In this chapter, the researcher will define culture and see its importance in linguistic politeness, and also discuss the claim of universality in politeness; the chapter also deals with politeness in both English and Arabic with reference to some of the key empirical research in politeness in both languages.

Chapter three depicts three different politeness speech acts which are: requests, compliments and apologies in both Arabic and English, and also introduces the notion of ‘lingua-pragmatics’, politeness fixed formulas and their translation.

Chapter four is data analysis and discussion; it describes the respondents, the data collected and the questionnaires used. Key findings from the analysis of the data are also presented in this chapter. This includes results based on the use of both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The chapter shows the limitations of this study.

Chapter five summarizes the study findings and gives some recommendations for further research.

#### *1.4 Definitions*

It is important before starting the study, to come up with one concise definition of the term politeness, but this seems really difficult because there are many definitions given by different scholars. It seems to be difficult to have a single definition of politeness or “impoliteness”. Many scholars have attempted to define it according to their understandings. Before adopting a definition of the term politeness in this study, review of some definition will be given in the following section.

Robin Lakoff (1975: 64) says that "politeness is developed by societies in order to reduce friction in personal interaction".

Brown and Levinson (1978) see politeness as a complex system for softening face threats. They do not give a definition to the term politeness but tend to measure it according to a two-pole scale: negative politeness and positive politeness. For them some cultures use only positive politeness and others negative politeness, but this cannot be true in all contexts. Cultures cannot be classified as positive or negative, they use both strategies but to different degrees.

Leech (1980: 19) sees politeness as a "strategic conflict avoidance which can be measured in terms of the degree of effort put into the avoidance of a conflict situation".

Hill et al. (1986: 349) point out that politeness is "one of the constraints on human interaction, whose purpose is to consider others' feelings, establish levels of mutual comfort and promote rapport".

Ide (1989: 22) thinks that politeness is "language associated with smooth communication". Sifianou (1992a: 86, italics in the original) sees that politeness is "*the set of social values which instructs interactants to consider each other by satisfying shared expectations*".

According to Kasper (1990: 194), "communication is seen as fundamentally dangerous and antagonistic endeavour". Politeness is therefore a term that refers to the strategies available to interactants to defuse the danger and minimize antagonism.

Yule (1997: 60) considers politeness as a social interaction and defines it as "the means employed to show awareness to another person's face. In this sense politeness can be accomplished in situations of social distance and closeness." For him, showing awareness for another person is described as respect or deference when this other is socially distant and it is described as friendliness, camaraderie or solidarity when this other person is socially close.

For Watts (2003: 9), it is essential to come up with a precise definition of the term 'politeness' before attempting to study the

social phenomenon it represents, he argues that "the very fact that (im)politeness is a term that is struggled over in the present, has been struggled over in the past and will, in all probability continue to be struggled over in the future should be the central focus of a theory of politeness...investigating first order politeness is the only valid means of developing a social theory of politeness".

Shammas (2005: 5) states that "whatever is assumed about politeness is provided within the boundaries of a well-defined context of both linguistic and normative behavior, only as understood within the framework of a given culture." He also argues that "politeness in general is subject to the cultural beliefs prevailing in each society and composing its set of social values".

According to the researcher, politeness entails treating people with respect which will help us get along with each other, avoid and resolve conflicts and create a positive social climate. It means treating others with civility and courtesy, and avoiding embarrassing, ridiculing or hurting the others. It is obvious that these goals cannot always be attained in daily life communications, but at least one must try to preserve harmony by showing good intentions and considerations for the feelings of other persons.

In this context, the researcher adopts Lakoff's (1990: 34) definition of politeness as "a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interaction."

### *1.5 Theoretical Issues*

In this section, some of the most important and well-known theories on linguistic politeness will be briefly discussed. Each scholar has his/her point of view concerning the domain of linguistic politeness, its model and the strategies used to express it in conversation. In an attempt to elaborate and define the notion of politeness beyond the idea of 'appropriateness', some researchers

have distinguished between this more traditional notion of politeness and a more theoretical, linguistic notion (see Watts *et al.*: 2005).

### *1.5.1 Classification of Politeness*

First of all, the researcher will discuss some of the classifications scholars used when studying politeness. By adopting this idea, linguists (such as Fraser: 1990 and Watts: 1992) differentiate between two types of politeness: first order (politeness1) and second order (politeness 2) respectively. This distinction is crucial in the literature of linguistic politeness. It is considered as one of the most basic and far reaching in the field.

On the other hand, Fraser (1990) proposes a four-fold classification of politeness: the social-norm view, the conversational-maxim view, the face-saving view and the conversational-contract view. This same four-fold classification can be collapsed into two categories based on the first-order and second-order politeness which will be discussed below

#### *i. First-order Politeness*

First-order politeness is referred to as *social politeness*, which means according to Kasper (1994: 3206) (cited in Barron 2002) “the proper social conduct and tactful consideration of others”. Fraser (1990) views first-order politeness as etiquette and social appropriateness (in his terminology *the social norm view and the conversational-contract view*).

Watts (1992) proposes the term *polite behavior* for the first-order politeness. He distinguishes two marked forms of behavior: *non-polite behavior* leading to communication breakdown and *polite behavior* which “enhances the individual’s own image in the eyes of the others”.

ii. *Second-order Politeness*

Second-order politeness is seen by Kasper (1994: 3206) (cited in Barron 2002) as the pragmatic concept of “ways in which rational function in linguistic action is expressed”. As for Fraser (1990), second-order politeness is seen through a linguistic perspective (*the conversational-maxim view and the face saving view*).

According to Watts (1992: 50), the term *politic behavior* refers to second-order politeness. He defines politic behavior as “socio-culturally determined behavior directed towards the goal of establishing and/or maintaining in a state of equilibrium the personal relationship between the individuals of the social group” In others words, Watts’s politic behavior is the broader concept of social appropriateness from which one may derive a narrow concept of politeness.

Leech (1980: 19) defines second-order politeness as “strategic conflict avoidance”, which “can be measured in terms of the degree of effort put into the avoidance of a conflict situation” and “the establishment and maintenance of comity”. Because it is strategic, the avoidance of the conflict is seen as a conscious effort on the part of the person being polite.

The importance of this categorization depends on the duality of the two levels of politeness and the conceptual need to separate them although they are in constant interrelation. If this distinction was not addressed, the confusion between the politeness as a commonsense term and politeness as a technical term will continue to pose problems and lead to more contradiction in research.

### *iii. Fraser's Classification of Politeness*

The following is a brief account of the key points and issues in the four approaches proposed by Fraser (1990).

#### *a. Politeness As a Social-norm View*

The social-norm view of politeness reflects the social and behavioral norms and rules taking place in a given society, which one must observe if he/she wants to be 'polite' in the sense of showing good manners, it is highly connected with the speech styles and formality. It is often called deference. Politeness as a social-norm view is found in the system of languages with T/V subsystems, like the French (Tu/Vous). The T/V distinction is a contrast, within one language, between second person pronouns that are specialized for varying levels of politeness, social distance, courtesy, familiarity or insult toward the addressee.

Fraser claims that politeness as a social-norm view has few adherents among researchers. However, Watts *et al.* (1992) (cited in House 1998) say that there is a substantial non-western research (Japanese) which adhere to this view of politeness. They also claim that looking to politeness as a set of behavior patterns preprogrammed as social norms leads to consider a wider social function of politeness, which makes this view of politeness important for the translation theory and practice. (Cited in House, 1998:55)

#### *b. The Conversational-Contract View*

This is another approach proposed by Fraser and Nolan (1981). This view is considered the most general view of politeness, because it places this linguistic phenomenon in the realm of conditions of a conversational contract existing between participants. Politeness is seen here virtually the same as using language appropriately. In this view, Fraser sees politeness in a way similar to Watt's notion of political behavior, in which one must maintain the equilibrium in the relationship.

The crucial point in this approach can be seen in its universal applicability, but in the same time, it is not enough elaborated to address the complexity of the phenomenon of politeness. Another strength point of this approach is that the notion of communicative contract is not seen as a static entity, but as a dynamic concept which may change according to the interaction.

*c. The Conversational-Maxim View*

Lakoff (1973) and Leech (1983) are the main proponents of this view; they base their theoretical work on Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975). Lakoff has extended Grice's work and argues for the necessity of both a Politeness Principle and a Cooperative Principle. With the Politeness Principle used to address the relational goals and to reduce the friction in personal interaction (Lakoff, 1989).

The conversational-maxim view has been criticized in some points; the main one is that the Cooperative Principle is too vague to be operative and that it does not deal with the question of what politeness actually is (Watts 1992). The model of this view was criticized because it does not give any clues on how Lakoff's three levels of politeness (do not impose, give options, make the hearer feel good) (Lakoff, 1973a) can be understood and how interlocutors choose a particular strategy.

Leech (1983) gives a more comprehensive framework, but once again, he never defines politeness explicitly; he puts it in the domain of Interpersonal Rhetoric, which means that all the focus is on the speaker's social goals rather than his/her illocutionary goals.

Leech (1983: 81) gives the Politeness Principle as a general way to "minimize the expression of impolite beliefs"; he then divides it into six interpersonal maxims, which will be dealt with later in this section.

#### *d. The Face-saving View*

The most influential approach to politeness is the one proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), and is termed by Fraser as the face-saving view (Fraser, 1990).

Brown and Levinson theory is based on three basic notions: the view of communication as a rational activity, Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle and maxims of conversation, and Goffman's (1967) notion of 'face'. Face is linked to a person's self-esteem or self-image which can be damaged, maintained or enhanced during the interactions with other people. According to House (1998:57), the derivations from the Gricean maxims are motivated by employing strategies to counteract so called 'face-threatening acts' (FTAs). While using the politeness strategies, the speaker communicates both the primary message and also the message that he/she intends to be polite which the status a Gricean conversational implicature is. House (ibid, 58) thinks that Brown and Levinson's view of politeness "as biologically anchored and linked to the social-psychological concept of face is not easily or usefully applied to translation because the interaction between the human being involved here (author, reader, translator) is indirect such that psychosocial processes are extremely difficult if not impossible to assess".

#### *1.5.2 The Pragmatics of Politeness*

House (1998) states that there are two major pragmatic views of politeness: politeness in terms of principles and maxims as developed and discussed by: Lakoff (1973a & b) and Leech (1983). Both authors were influenced in their work by the Cooperative Principle of Grice. The second major view is: politeness as management of face as generated and discussed by Brown and Levinson in their book on the theory of politeness (1987). In the following, the researcher will discuss these different views in details, but before that, an introduction of the Cooperative Principle of Grice

(1975) on which Lakoff, Leech and Brown and Levinson based their work should be given.

*i. Grice and His Cooperation Principle*

Grice (1975: 45) considers that in conversations, interlocutors adopt cooperative verbal comportments. These comportments are found in the Cooperation Principle: *“make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.”*

There are four maxims in the Cooperative Principle:

1- **Quantity maxim:** the information must be adequate:

- Make your contribution as informative as is required.
- Do not make your contribution more informative than required.

2- **Quality maxim:** the contribution must be true and reliable.

- Do not say what you believe to be false.
- So not say what for which you lack adequate evidence.

3- **Relation Maxim:** (Relevance Maxim)

- Be relevant

4- **Manner Maxim:**

- Avoid obscurity of expression.
- Avoid ambiguity.
- Be brief.
- Be orderly.

According to Grice, language users follow these points in order to have a maximum efficiency from the information exchange.

### ii. *The Politeness Principle of Lakoff*

Lakoff (1973) gives two rules of linguistic politeness: “*be clear*” (this maxim embraces the Gricean CP) and “*be polite*” which is usually in conflict with the other. She also believes that “*it is more important in a conversation to avoid offense than to achieve clarity*” (Lakoff 1973a: 297). This means that Lakoff sees that politeness manifests itself in non-clarity i.e. implicitness vis-à-vis clarity. Lakoff distinguishes three sub-maxims under the “*be polite*” maxim which are:

- Formality/distance: do not impose or remain aloof.
- Deference: give options.
- Camaraderie: show sympathy by making the addressee feel comfortable.

### iii. *Leech's Model of Politeness*

Leech (1983), in his book “Principles of Pragmatics” decomposes the Politeness Principle (PP) into six Maxims which are:

- *Tact Maxim*: minimize the cost and maximize the benefit to the other.
- *Generosity Maxim*: minimize benefit to self and maximize cost to self.
- *Approbation Maxim*: minimize dispraise of other and maximize the praise.
- *Modesty Maxim*: minimize dispraise to self and maximize the praise.
- *Agreement Maxim*: minimize disagreement between *self* and *other*, maximize agreement between them.
- *Sympathy Maxim*: minimize antipathy between *self* and *other*, maximize sympathy between them.

Leech's theory of the Politeness Principle has been criticized for not being exhaustive: because isolating the PP would give rise to infinite proliferation of principles for different phenomena.

*iv. Brown and Levinson's Model of Linguistic Politeness*

The politeness theory was first published in 1987 by Levinson and Brown. Although many have criticized their work, their theory is still used as basis for much literature about this topic.

Brown and Levinson divided their work into two parts: the first part is about the theory of politeness itself, its fundamental concept, definition, usage and interaction in the language usage.

The second part is about using the politeness strategies with examples in three languages which are socially and culturally unrelated: English, Tamil and Tzeltal. Tzeltal is a Mayan language spoken in the community of Tanejapa in Chiapas, Mexico. Tamil is a south Indian language spoken in a village from Coimbatore District of Tamilnadu. There are also examples from other languages, like Malagasy and Japanese.

In the theoretical part, Levinson and Brown start with introducing their model, a Model Person (MP) which consists in "*a willful fluent speaker of natural language, further endowed with two special properties: rationality and face*". (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 58)

*1. Rationality*

Rationality is the availability of a precise and definable mode of reasoning to the Model Person which starts from the ends to the means these ends will eventually achieve. All MPs are rational agents; they all choose means that will satisfy their ends. Rationality is the application of a system of practical reasoning, which allows one to pass from ends to means and at the same time preserving those means. A rational behavior could be the ability to assess

different means to one end and choose the one that is the most satisfactory to the goals.

## 2. *Face*

Face is the self image that every member wants to project; the want to be unimpeded and the want to be approved in certain situations. All MPs have **positive face** and **negative face**.

### a. *Positive Face*

*“Is the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others.”* (Brown and Levinson: 1987: 62).

Positive face is the positive consistent self-image claimed by interactants. It is the desire of a person to be understood, accepted, admired or approved; it is the want to see one’s goals, achievements and possessions to be thought desirable by some particular people.

### b. *Negative Face*

*“Is the wants of every “competent adult member” that his actions be unimpeded by others.”*

Negative face is the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction. It is the freedom of action and freedom from imposition, (Brown and Levinson: 1987: 62).

## 3. *Face Threatening Acts (FTAs)*

According to the concept of ‘face’, all MPs are expected to maintain each other’s face. But sometimes, some acts will threaten this face; they are called the “face threatening acts”. The FTAs are by their nature contrary to the face wants of MP. The term act here means what is done by verbal and non-verbal communication.

### 3.1 *Distinction of Face Threatening Acts*

The distinction is made between kinds of face threatened: positive or negative and between acts that threaten the Hearer versus acts that threaten the Speaker. (see Brown and Levinson 1987)

#### 3.1.1 *The FTAs That Threaten Positive Face and Acts That Threaten Negative Face*

##### i. The FTAs that Threaten the positive face of the addressee

These acts indicate that the speaker does not care about the hearer's feelings i.e.: S does not want H's wants, these acts include:

- Acts that show negative evaluation of the H's positive face: Disapproval, criticism, contempt, complaints and reprimands, insults, accusations etc. Disagreements and contradictions, challenging.
- Acts that show that S is indifferent to H's positive face: Expressing violent emotions that embarrass H's positive face, mentioning taboo topics, irreverence. Telling bad news about H or good news about S in order to distress H. Raising emotional or divisive topics like religion, politics, race, etc. Interrupting H's talk or showing non-attention to H's wants. Addressing terms and status-marked identifications.

##### ii. The FTAs that threaten the negative face of the addressee include

The acts that predicate some future act from H and put a pressure on him:

- Orders and requests (S wants H to do or stop him from doing some act A)
- Suggestions and advice (S shows that he thinks H should do some act A)
- Reminding (S reminds H of doing some act A)
- Threats, warnings, dares (S shows that sanctions will be taken against H unless he does A)

iii. Acts that imply some positive future act from S towards H

These acts put pressure on H to accept or reject them, these acts include: Offers and promises.

iv. Acts that indicate that S has a desire towards H or his goods

This makes H think to take action and protect this object or give it to S: Compliments, expressions of envy or admiration, expressing strong negative emotions towards H like hatred, lust or anger. Some of these acts can threaten both negative and positive face like: threats, complaints, interruption, etc

v. The FTAs that threaten Hearer's face and FTAs that threaten Speaker's face

In the previous section (FTAs to positive and negative face) was mainly about FTAs that threaten H's face, so here, only FTAs which threaten S will be discussed. Note that all these FTAs are most of the time overlapping.

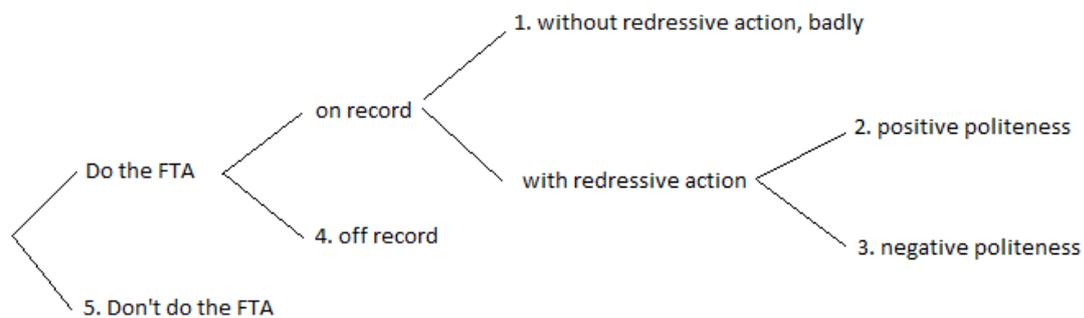
a. The FTAs which potentially threaten Speaker's face include:

- Acts that offend S's negative face: expressing thanks, acceptance of H's thanks or H's apology, excuses, acceptance of offers, responses to H's *faux pas* (if S's pretends not to notice H's *faux pas*, he is threatening himself) and Unwilling promises and offers.
  
- The FTAs which can damage the S's positive face are: apologies, acceptance of compliments, physical breakdown, falling down, etc. Self-humiliation, acting stupid, self-contradicting and emotional non-control like sudden laughs or tears.

### *1.5.3 Linguistic Realization of Politeness Strategies*

Politeness can be realized in a very broad communicative spectrum including paralinguistic and kinesics details. Brown and Levinson (1987) refer here to the linguistic realization of politeness because it is much better to develop the strategies around it.

The previous classifications of FTAs where S's face or H's face is threatened give rise to strategies to avoid these acts or at least to minimize them. Brown and Levinson summarize these strategies in four super-strategies shown in the figure below:



Possible strategies for doing FTAs  
Brown and Levinson (1987:69)

**Fig.1 Possible Strategies for Doing FTAs**

Brown and Levinson develop four politeness super-strategies (bold on record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record) which are seen as a classification to the way the FTAs are realized. The super-strategies are subdivided into what they call: “higher strategies”. The final choice of linguistic means to express these strategies is referred to as “out-put strategies”. They organize these strategies into three charts (see figures 2, 3 and 4 below). There is a chart for every super-strategy: positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record. The strategies are formed in hierarchies: from super-strategies to the “higher strategies” that emanate from them and finally the “out-put” strategies which are the final choice of linguistic means.

## 1. *Bald On Record Strategies*

This strategy is mainly based on the Grecian Maxims. These kinds of strategies are used when the speaker wants to do the FTAs with the most efficiency and does not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer's face. Direct imperatives are a good example of this strategy. E.g. "come home right now!"

This strategy is usually used when S wants to do the FTAs with maximum efficiency more than to satisfy the H's. There are two classes of FTAs in bald on record: the class where the face threat is not minimized and the one in which S tries to minimize the threat on the H's face by using implications. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 96-101)

### 1.1- *Examples of non-minimization of the face threat*

- Urgent imperatives like: help! Watch out! Give me just one more week (to pay the rent).
- Another example is found in the case of channel noise, where communication difficulties put pressure on the S to make him speak with maximum efficiency e.g. S is calling from a long distance: come home right now!
- Orientation and instructions like in: add three cups of flour.
- In the case of socially acceptable rudeness e.g. joking or teasing where S wants to be rude and does not care about H's face.
- Another example is when the FTA is done primarily in H's interest e.g. careful! He's a dangerous man.
- Comforting advice: do not be sad
- The use of imperatives in actions which are directly in H's interest like the cliché farewell formulae: take care, have fun, enjoy your trip.

### *1.2- Examples of FTAs oriented bald-on-record usage*

Brown and Levinson pointed out that there are three areas where one would expect bald on record strategies to occur in all languages and these are:

- Welcoming (or post greetings), where S insists that H may impose on his negative face;
- Farewells, where S insists that H may transgress on his positive face by taking his leave;
- Offers where S insists that H may impose on S's negative face."

Here are some examples to make it clear, let's cite some examples of greetings, farewells and offers from Brown and Levinson (1987:100-102)

- Sit down
- Come in
- Please come in (sir)
- You must have some more cake.
- Do not bother, I'll clean it up.
- Leave it to me.
- I'm staying, you go

These three functional categories are all potential FTAs; because of the risk that H may not wish to receive such invitations.

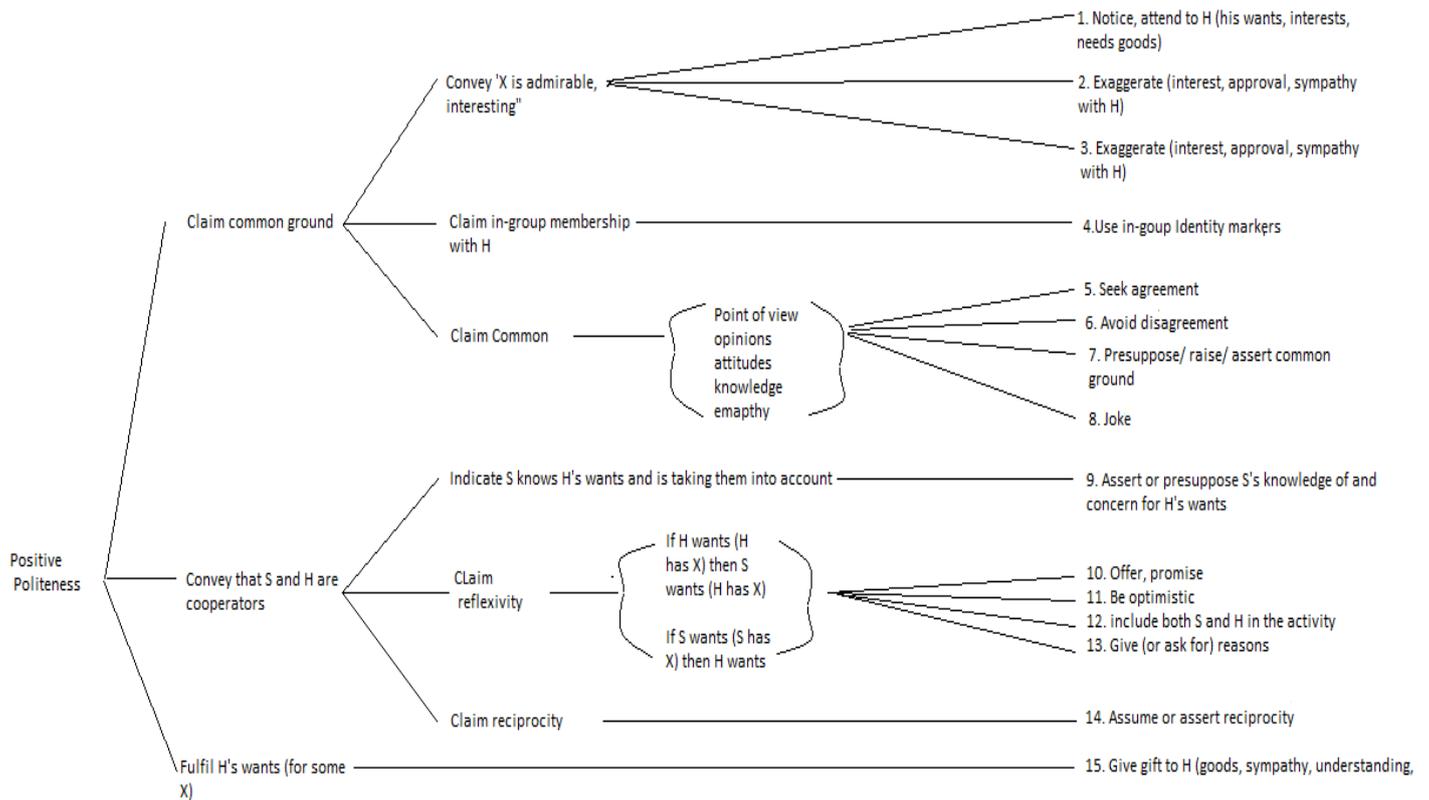
### *2. Positive Politeness Strategies*

This strategy attempts to minimize the threat to the hearer's positive face. It is oriented toward the positive face of H, the positive self-image that he claims for himself.

Positive politeness utterances are used as a kind of metaphorical extension of intimacy, to imply common ground or sharing of wants to a limited extent even between strangers who perceive themselves, for the purpose of the interaction, as somehow similar. For the same reason, positive politeness techniques are

usable not only for FTA redress, but in general as a kind of social accelerator, where S, in using them, indicates that he wants to come closer to H. (Brown and Levinson, 1987:103).

The chart below summarizes the strategies used in positive politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 102)



**Fig. 2 Chart of Positive Politeness Strategies**

Brown and Levinson state that the strategies of positive politeness include three broad mechanisms:

*a. Claim common ground*

The first one involves S claiming ‘common ground’ with H, which means that both S and H have in common and share specific wants, goals and values. There are three ways to make this claim: (1) Convey that H’s want or goal is admirable and interesting to S. or (2) claim that both S and H belong to a group of persons who share the same wants. Finally (3) claim that both S and H are cooperative without necessarily belonging to a membership or

group. There are 8 “out-put” strategies for these three higher strategies and they are cited here briefly and with some examples. (see Brown and Levinson: 1987)

#### Strategy 1: **Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs goods)**

This out-put strategy involves S taking notice of some of H’s aspects (anything that H would want S to notice and approve) examples from English:

- E.g. what a beautiful dress you have here, (where did you get it?)
- You must be hungry. Let’s have some lunch.

Another aspect of notice output is when S notices and shows that he is not embarrassed by the FTA H makes against himself (S notices H’s *faux pas* or breakdown of body control. While in negative politeness S shouldn’t show his notice but always ignore H’s *faux pas*.

- E.g. *we* ate too many beans tonight, didn’t *we!*

#### Strategy 2: **Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy to H)**

This is usually done by using exaggerated intonation, stress and other aspects of prosodic features like in: ‘what a fantastic garden you have!’

#### Strategy 3: **Intensify interest to H**

To show that he shares some of H’s wants, S intensifies the interest of his own contributions to the conversation, he can do that by using the ‘vivid’ present. By doing this, S puts H in the middle of the events discussed which show the interest S have for H, metaphorically at any rate, thereby increasing their intrinsic interest to him. For example: ‘I come down the stairs, and what do you think I see? - a huge mess all over the place, the phone’s off the hook and clothes are scattered all over ...’

Another feature of this strategy is the use of directly quoted speech rather than indirect reported speech. As is the use of tag questions or expressions that draw H as a participant into the

conversation, such as: ‘you know?’, ‘see what I mean?’, ‘isn’t it?’.  
(ibid: 107)

#### Strategy 4: **Use in group identity markers**

This strategy can be done by using any of the ways which convey in-group membership. These ways include: use of address forms, in-group language, slang or jargon and of ellipsis.

Address form are in many languages, the second plural pronoun of address doubles as an honorific form to singular respected or distant alters, such usages are called T/V systems, after the French *tu and vous*. (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 107)

Generic name and terms of address are also used to convey membership like: Honey, pal, sweetheart, sister, dear, baby, buddy...etc.

#### Strategy 5: **Seek agreement**

To claim common ground with H, S tries to seek ways in which he will probably agree with H, that’s way he looks for ‘safe topics’ which allow him to confirm his agreement with H and to satisfy his desire to be right. An example is the weather, which is according to Brown and Levinson a safe topic in virtually all languages. The agreement between S and H can be realized through repetition to stress on emotional agreement with the utterance. This strategy is achieved by demonstrating that one has heard correctly what was said. Repletion is one way to stress emotional agreement with the utterance, like in the following example:

A: I had a flat tyre on my way home.

B: Oh God, a flat tyre! (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 113)

#### Strategy 6: **Avoid disagreement**

Because of his desire to agree with H, S can pretend to agree by using ‘token’ agreement to hide his disagreement, for example instead of saying ‘No’, S says: ‘yes, but’. To avoid disagreement with H, S may use what’s called a ‘*white lie*’ to avoid damaging H’s

positive face. Another way to avoid disagreement with H is S choosing to be vague about his own opinions, this is called *hedging opinions*. Hedging opinions are used to avoid a precise communication of S's attitude.

Example of hedging opinion: -you really should *sort of* try harder to fix this problem.

S uses "sort of" to soften the fact that he is trying to criticize H's attitude.

### Strategy 7: **Presuppose / raise / assert common ground**

This strategy is realized by the use of *small talks* to show the interest to H's positive face. The small talks can be a softening way to introduce requests or to ask for favors. *Point of view operations* also perform basic politeness functions especially the switch to H's point of view or the avoidance of adjustments in H's point of view. *Presupposing manipulations* where S presupposes something when actually he presumes that it is mutually taken for granted like presupposing knowledge of H's wants, or to presuppose that H's values are the same as S's values, presupposing familiarity in S-H relationship.

### Strategy 8: **Joke**

Jokes are a basic positive politeness technique to make H feel comfortable because it is known that jokes are based on mutual and shared background knowledge and values.

### **The second broad mechanism in positive politeness is:**

#### *6. Conveying That S and H are Cooperative*

Because if they are cooperatively involved in an activity this means that they share same goals and wants in a given domain and consequently this serves H's positive face. The seven out-put strategies which follow indicate the means S uses to convey his cooperation with H.

### **Strategy 9: Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants**

Implying that S has knowledge of H's wants and showing that he wants to fill his own wants with those of H like in the following utterances where negative questions are used:

- I know you don't like parties, but this one will be really good, please come! (request)
- I know you love roses but the florist didn't have any, so I brought you geraniums instead (offer + apology)

### **Strategy 10: Offer & Promise**

The way to redress some FTAs is that S claims that he wants whatever H wants and will help him in getting these wants, offers and promises are the natural out-put to choose in this particular situation.

### **Strategy 11: Be Optimistic**

S assumes that H wants S's wants and will help him get them. S claims that H will cooperate with him because of a tacit commitment between them. E.g. look, I'm sure you won't mind if I remind you to do the dishes tonight. Or: I will help myself with a cookie then! Such expressions tend to minimize the size of FTAs.

### **Strategy 12: Include both S and H in the activity**

By using the inclusive form 'we', while S really means: 'you' or 'me'. Like in the following examples where 'let's' is an inclusive we form: - let's have a break (I want a break, let's stop) or let's get on with dinner (i.e. you).

### **Strategy 13: Give (or ask for) reasons**

Asking or given reasons for H about his wants is a way to include him In S's activity. See these examples:

- Why not you go with me to this party?

- Why don't we take your car?
- Why don't I help you to fix your computer?

**Strategy 14: Assume or assert reciprocity**

To give evidence of reciprocal rights or obligations between S and H is a way to claim cooperation between them like for example: "I will help you with your homework if you finish cleaning my office". This example shows that there is a habit or reciprocal right between S and H in doing FTAs to each other.

**The third and last broad mechanism in doing positive politeness strategies is:**

*c. To Fulfill H's Want for Some X Reason*

According to Brown and Levinson, there is one out-put strategy to realize this mechanism; it is the 15<sup>th</sup> strategy in positive politeness:

**Strategy 15: Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding cooperation)**

To satisfy H's positive face, S finds himself satisfying some of H's wants. It is a classic positive politeness action called gift-giving, it is not only about tangible gifts but also human-relations wants such as the wants to be approved of, admired, liked, understood, etc.

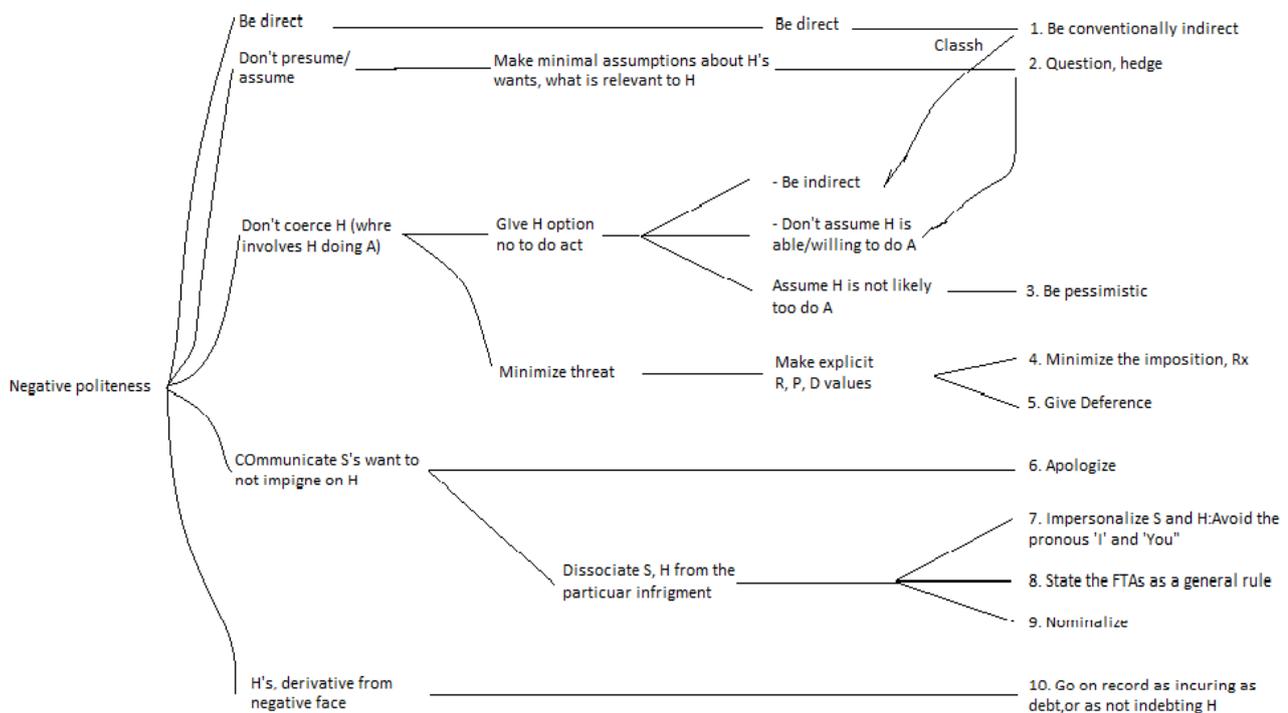
*3. Negative Politeness Strategies*

According to Brown and Levinson (1987:129) "[n]egative politeness is redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded."

Negative politeness on the other hand, is oriented mainly toward partially satisfy H's negative face, his basic want to main claims of territory and self determination.

Brown and Levinson believe that in the western culture negative politeness is the most elaborate and conventionalized set of strategies for FTAs redress. It is negative politeness that fills the books of etiquette and good behavior.

The chart below summarizes the super strategies used in negative politeness



**Fig.3 Chart of Negative Politeness Strategies**

They classify negative politeness strategies into 5 super-strategies, from which derive ten linguistic out-put strategies; the following is a brief description of them.

**The first higher-strategy in negative politeness is:**

*3-1 Be Direct*

In negative politeness, the speaker joins together bald-on record strategy and the redress of the FTA. It is obvious that the best

way to convey a message is to say it directly but here there is a clash because S wants to redress H's negative face. That's why negative face redress is reached via hybrid strategies of conversational indirectness which lead us to the first linguistic out-put strategy:

### Strategy 1: **Be conventionally indirect**

In this strategy, the speaker faces two opposite tensions: on one hand, he wants to give H an 'out' by being indirect and on the other hand, he wants to go on record. S can solve this problem by having recourse to the compromise of conventional indirectness; this means that S will use sentences and phrases that have an ambiguous meaning different from the literal one. By doing this, the utterances go on record and the speaker shows his desire to go off-record.

While the desire to be direct derives from one aspect of negative politeness which is on record delivery of the FTA, all other negative politeness strategies derive from the desire to redress H's negative face.

Examples of conventional indirectness:

- Can you please pass the salt? (this is an indirect request)
- You couldn't possibly tell me the time, please (asserted request)
- I'd like to borrow your car if you wouldn't mind.
- May I borrow your car please?

### 3.2- *Don't presume/assume*

This is the second higher-strategy in negative politeness; it is a way to redress the H's negative face by avoiding any presuming or assuming about H or his wants, desire or goal. Strategy 2 shows how S uses questions or hedges to do such assumptions. This same strategy can be found later in the higher-strategy: **don't coerce** but with various motivations.

## Strategy 2: **Question, Hedge**

This out-put derives from the want not to presume or coerce H by using what we call hedges. Hedge is a particle, word, or phrase which modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun in a sentence (Brown and Levinson 1987: 145). The performative hedges in particular that are the most important linguistic means to satisfy the speaker's want of 'don't presume/assume'. An example of the hedged expressions in English is the use of 'if' clauses:

- Close the window, If you can
- Would you close the window, if I may ask you?
- If you all are ready, we may start the meeting

### 3.3- *Don't Coerce H*

This third higher-strategy is used when the FTA involves for instance, asking for help, offering H something, by doing this FTA, S predicates that H will accept and do the act. To redress the negative face in this kind of FTAs, S must avoid coercing H's response and to do so, S can explicitly give H the option 'not to do' the act, this strategy is "*be indirect*" that we saw previously. "*Don't assume/ presume*" is another out-put strategy in not coercing H, the third out-put strategy here is "*be pessimistic*".

## Strategy 3: **Be Pessimistic**

This strategy gives redress to H's negative face by expressing the conditions for the appropriateness of S's speech act obtain. Some ways to do this strategy are: doing indirect requests which have a negated probability operator inserted (you couldn't possibly/ by any chance lend me your car) or the use of the subjunctive: could you? Might you do X? Can you do X? May you do X? (ibid: 175)

## Strategy 4: **Minimize the imposition, ( $R_x$ = rating of exposition)**

This strategy involves defusing the FTA by indicating that  $R_x$ , the intrinsic seriousness of the imposition, is not great, only D

and P are left as weighty factors (D is the social distance between S and H and P is the relative power of H over S).

Examples:

- “Just a *moment*“
- “Could I have a *tiny bit* of ...“?
- “I just want to ask if I can borrow a *single sheet* of paper”.

### Strategy 5: **Give deference**

It is conveyed in this strategy that H has a higher social status than S and that S is not in position to coerce H's in any way. There are two possible ways to do this strategy: S humbles and abases himself. Or S raises H (by satisfying his want to be treated as a superior person)

Examples:

- “We look forward very much to see you again”.
- “Did you move my luggage?”.
- “Yes, *sir*, I thought perhaps you wouldn't mind and...”

### 3.4- *Communicate S's Want to Not Impinge on H*

This higher-strategy shows one method to satisfy H's negative face demands which is to indicate that S is aware of them and will take them into consideration when he does the FTA and there won't be any infringement of H's territory. There are various ways to realise this higher-strategy

### Strategy 6: **Apologize**

By apologizing for doing an FTA, the speaker can indicate his reluctance to impinge on H's negative face and partially redress the impingement. There are many ways to show this reluctance:

Admitting the impingement: like in: “*I am sure you are very busy, but...*” Or “*I hope this isn't going to bother you too much...*”

Indicate the reluctance: by using hedges or expressions such as: “*I normally wouldn’t ask you this, but...*” or “*I hate to impose, but...*”

Giving overwhelming reasons: to claim that S has compelling reasons to do the FTA like in: “*I am absolutely lost...*” or “*can you possibly help me with this, because I can’t manage it.*”

Beg for forgiveness: “*I m sorry to bother you...*”. “*Please forgive if...*” “*I beg your indulgence...*”

### Strategy 7: **Impersonalize S and H**

By phrasing the FTA as if the agent is not S and the addressee is not H. this can be done by avoiding the use of the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘you’. There are different ways to impersonalize S and H:

- The use of performatives: “*it is so*”, “*do this for me*”
- The use of impersonal verbs: “*it is obligatory to...*”, “*It looks to me like...*”
- The use of passives and circumstantial voices: “*it would be appreciated if*”, “*if it is possible*”
- The replacement of the pronouns ‘you’ and ‘I’ by indefinites: “*one just goes along as best one can*”

### Strategy 8: **State the FTA as a general rule**

To dissociate S and H from the particular imposition in the FTA (S doesn’t want to impinge H, but is merely forced to by circumstances), it can be generalized as a social rule/regulation/obligation like in the following examples:

- “Passengers will please refrain from smoking in this room“
- “The committee requests the President...“
- “We don’t sit on tables, we sit on chairs“

### Strategy 9: **Nominalize**

The more S nominalizes an FTA, the more he is disassociated to it:

- “You performed well on the examinations and that impressed us favourably”
- “Your performing well on the examinations was impressive to us”
- “Your good performance on the examinations impressed us favourably”

### 3.5- *Redress Other Wants of H's*

This is the last higher-strategy in negative politeness; it consists in partially compensating H for the face threat in the FTA by redressing some of his other wants. Like H's want to be more powerful than S. The out-put strategy to realize this redress is:

**Strategy 10: Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting H**

S can redress an FTA by explicitly claiming his indebtedness to H, or by disclaiming any indebtedness of H like in the following expressions: “I'll never be able to repay you if...” for request and “I could easily do this for you- no problem!” for offers.

### 4. *The Indirect Strategy (Off-record)*

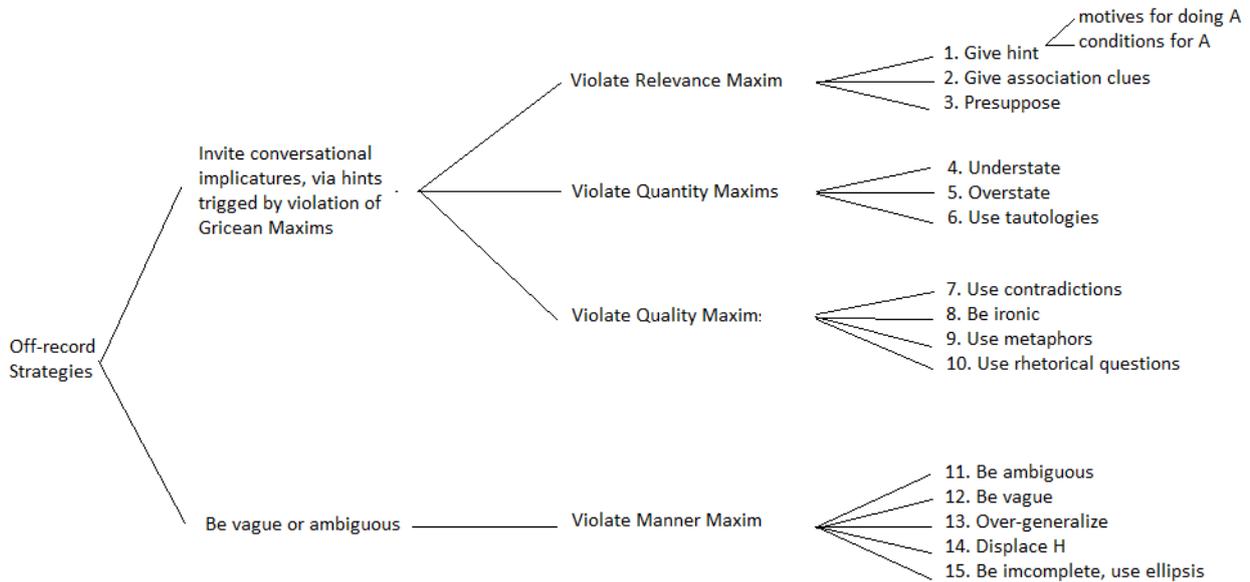
This is the fourth and last super-strategy given by Brown and Levinson on politeness. It uses indirect language and removes the speaker from the potential to being imposing.

“A communicative act is done off record when it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act. Such off record utterances are essentially indirect uses of language, to construct an off -record utterance one says something different from what he really wants to mean or to say something more general. S here expects H to make some inference to recover what was really intended by the utterance (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 211).

Again, Brown and Levinson classified the off-record speech strategies in two higher-strategies which are: *invite conversational implicatures, via hints triggered by violation of the Maxims of Grice*

and *be vague and ambiguous*. 15 out-put strategies can be derived from the off-record strategy.

The chart below summarizes the higher-strategies and out-put strategies of the off-record strategy.



**Fig.4 Chart of Off-record Strategies**

#### 4.1- Invite Conversational Implicatures

To do the FTA indirectly, S must give some hints to H and hope that he will guess them and thereby interprets what S really means. This can be done basically by conversational implicatures which violate Grice Maxims. The following are the strategies to realize these implicatures:

##### Strategy 1: Give hints

The main mechanism in this strategy is to violate the Maxim of Relevance. S does not explicitly say what he wants, but he makes H search for an interpretation relevant to the context by giving him some hints. Examples:

*“It is hot here”* means *“open the window”*

*“What a hot day”* means *“how about a drink”*

### Strategy 2: **Give association clues**

S mentions something associated with the act H is required to do. These kinds of hints leave it up to H to offer and to take the responsibility for the FTA. Examples:

*“Are you going to market tomorrow?” “there’s a market tomorrow I suppose”. (c.i. give me a ride there).*

### Strategy 3: **Presuppose**

Here, there is a violation of the Relevance Maxim which carries a criticism. Examples:

*“I washed the car again today”*

*“John’s on the bathtub yet again”*

### Strategy 4: **Understate**

In this strategy, the maxim violated is the Quantity Maxim. Where S avoids the lower points of the scale in the case of criticism and avoids the higher points in the case of compliments. Examples:

*“She’s kind of idiot” (criticisms, she is an idiot)*

*“The car looks as it might go!” (Compliment about a flashy sports car)*

### Strategy 5: **Overstate**

When S is saying more than necessary, he is also violating the Quantity Maxim and conveying implicatures in the same time. This can be done by inverting the understate principles. Examples of criticism: *“Why are you always smoking?” “You never do the washing up.”*

### Strategy 6: **Use tautologies**

Another way in violating the Quantity Maxim is to use a tautology to make H look for information in a non-informative utterance, like in: *“War is war”* or *“Boys will be boys”*.

### Strategy 7: Use contradictions

By saying two things that contradict each other, S violate the Quality Maxim and shows that he *cannot* say the truth, he thus makes H search for an interpretation that reconciles the contradiction. Example of contradictions is showing criticism or complaint.

*A: are you upset about that?*

*B: well, yes and no.*

### Strategy 8: Be ironic

Here again S is violating the Quality Maxim, he is being ironic by saying the opposite of what he really means, and H has to understand the interpretation. Examples:

*“Lovely neighborhood, eh?” (Said in slum)*

*“He is a real genius” (about someone who has done a lot of stupid things)*

### Strategy 9: Use metaphors

Metaphors are usually used on-record but sometimes S intends off-record exactly one of the connotations of the metaphor, like in the following example:

*“John is a real fish”. He drinks/ swims/ is slimy like a fish.*

### Strategy 10: Use rhetorical questions

Questions that are left without answers may be used to do FTAs, for example, in the case of excuses:

*“How was I to know...?”*

*“How many times do I have to tell you...?”*

*“What can I say...?”*

### 4.2- Be Vague or Ambiguous

In this higher-strategy, S chooses to go off-record by being vague or ambiguous (he is then violating the Manner maxim) rather

than giving a particular implicature. There are five methods to convey FTAs off record by violating the Manner Maxim.

#### Strategy 11: **Be ambiguous**

Ambiguity is realized through metaphor; because it is not always clear which part of the connotations is intended to be evoked.

Example:

*“John is a sharp/ smooth cookie”* can be a compliment or an insult depending on the connotations of sharp and smooth.

#### Strategy 12: **Be vague**

S goes off-record by being vague about the object of the FTA or what the offence is, like in criticism:

*“Perhaps someone did something naughty.”*

#### Strategy 13: **Over-generalize**

It means that S has recourse to over-generalization to give H the choice to decide whether the general rule applies to him. Proverbs also can be used to over-generalize. Examples:

*“A penny saved is a penny earned”*

*People who live in glass house shouldn't throw stones.*

#### Strategy 14: **Displace H**

By displacing H, S may pretend that the FTA is redressed to someone who wouldn't be threatened and hope that the real target will see that the FTA is for him. By doing so, S gives H's the choice to do the act as 'a free gift'

#### Strategy 15: **Be incomplete – use ellipsis**

Here, both Quantity and Manner Maxims are violated, elliptical utterances are found in FTAs when these latter are left half undone. S leaves the 'hanging in the air implicature'. Example:

*“Well I didn't see you...”*

### *1.5.4 Choice of Strategy*

Brown and Levinson say that all model persons are rational beings interested in the efficient conveying of messages. Model persons will choose a politeness strategy to try to mitigate face. FTAs have the ability to threaten face; therefore rational agents seek to avoid FTAs or will try to use certain strategies to minimize the threat.

When communicating, Speaker (S) will weight:

- the want to communicate the content of the FTA in question
- the want to be efficient or urgent
- the want to maintain H's face to any degree
- In most cooperative circumstances where 3. Is greater than 2, S will want to minimize the FTA.

The greater potential for loss of face requires greater redressive action. If the potential for loss of face is too great, the speaker may make the decision to abandon the FTA completely and say nothing.

### *1.5.5 Sociological Factors in the Choice of Strategy*

Speaker must take into consideration three sociological factors when choosing the appropriate politeness strategy in the real life situations:

1. Social distance. (D)
2. Power relations between parties. (P)
3. The absolute raking of the threat of FTAs (R)

#### *a- Social Distance (D)*

Social distance refers to the relationship between the interlocutors. If two people are very close, they would have a low degree of social distance. Two strangers would typically have a high degree of social distance. In most varieties of English, higher degrees of social distance result in the use of more formal language.

*b- Power Relations Between Parties (P)*

Power refers to the power relationship between two interlocutors. S will typically find himself in three types of power relationships. In the first, he would have equal power with the person he is talking to (e.g., a friend or colleague). In the other two, S would either have more power (e.g., as a boss, instructor) or less power (e.g., employee, student) than the person he was talking to. In English, more formal and indirect language is typically used in situations where the other person has more power than the speaker does.

*c- The Absolute Ranking of the Threat of FTAs (R)*

Rank of imposition refers to the importance or degree of difficulty in the situation. For example, in requests, a large rank of imposition would occur if the speaker was asking for a big favor, whereas a small rank of imposition would exist when the request is small. In English, high ranks of imposition tend to require more formal and complex language structures.

Each one of these factors interacts and relates differently to the politeness of a communicative act. They even carry different weights in different languages and cultures. When learning to be pragmatically appropriate, it is important to learn which social factors are most applicable and important to the context in which you are interacting.

*1.5.5 Criticism of Brown and Levinson's Model of Politeness*

The work of Brown and Levinson (1987) has been summarized and criticized in many other works, namely Matsumoto (1988), Kasper (1990), Blum-Kulka and Kasper (1990), Watts et al. (1992) and Escandell-Vidal (1996), to cite only a few.

Some of the points criticized about the theory are: The claim by Brown and Levinson of the universality of politeness, this critic was first generated by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Wierzbicka (1985) and later followed by many others: Kasper (1990), Blum-Kulka and Kasper (1990), Wierzbicka (1991), Watts et al. (1992), Janney and Arndt (1993), , Liao and Bresnhan (1996), Chen (2001), Shamma (2005), to name only a few.

According to Kopytko (1993), a second criticism point is the ambiguity and vagueness that surround some of the key concepts of the politeness system of Brown and Levinson, such as face, territory, context and reductionism.

Chen (2001) proposes a model of self-politeness theory which is an addition to Brown and Levinson's theory. In other words, it fills a void left by their approach so that the theory of politeness becomes complete. Thus, the theory of politeness is a kind of dichotomy: other-politeness and self-politeness. To postulate this, however, Chen offers a defense of Brown and Levinson's framework, arguing that their theory is fundamentally correct and is still the best tool in the investigation of politeness – as an analytical tool rather than as a dogmatic picture of reality.

One must also mention that several critics argue that Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is constructed on the basis of European Anglo-Saxon culture and does not have any room for variability among individual cultures.

Although many have criticized Brown and Levinson's theory, it is so far, one of the most detailed and fully articulated works on linguistic politeness. This is why the researcher will be following their model in my study; however, this theory will not be followed in all its aspects. It will be discussed and assessed in the light of other work and theories relying to the social and cultural values which motivate the polite linguistic behavior.

In the foregoing, a few of the many criticism levied at the Brown and Levinson model of politeness have been provided.

These criticisms raise but a few of the important questions to be asked in pursuit of an understanding of what linguistic politeness is, how it is used, what factors influence a speaker's choice to be heard as polite and what sort of a model is maximally useful. It is clear that considerable work on the Brown and Levinson model is necessary if it is not to be relegated to the rag bin of rejected theories.

Optimists take the position that if we continue to work on the problem, we can expect to arrive at a serious theory of politeness, necessarily somewhat different than the existing model, where concepts of face and the principles for interpretation are carefully articulated and well understood. Pessimists, on the other hand, take the position that while we all know polite behavior when we see it, we will never be able to speak definitively about it.

## *Chapter two: Politeness across Cultures*

### *II.1 Politeness and Culture*

Every language and culture develops a linguistic system in order to enable speakers of that language to communicate effectively. Therefore, understanding people's cultural and linguistic behavior can facilitate communication and increase understanding across-cultures.

Before discussing the politeness phenomenon across cultures, it is important to discuss a definition about what culture means in our current research, although it is arduous to define it. The term *culture* is a very complex concept which made scholars view it in various ways.

#### *II.1.1 What is Culture*

Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) two American anthropologists collected a list of 164 different definitions of 'culture'. In this study, the researcher will be concerned only with some of the definitions which will help to clarify the context of politeness as based on the social beliefs and values in a particular cultural community.

Oatey (2008: 16) proposes in her book that "culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioral conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behavior and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other's people behavior".

She adopts this definition because it draws attention to a set of key issues:

- 1) Culture is associated with social groups, which means that all people are members of different groups or categories like gender groups, ethnic groups, professional groups, etc.
- 2) Culture is manifested through co-occurring regularities within the social group. And these regularities can be found in basic

assumptions, fundamental values, procedure and behavioral conventions.

3) These cultural regularities are not manifested in all members of a given cultural group or to the same degree of strength.

4) Cultural regularities can influence people's behavior and the meaning they attribute to other people's behavior. (Oatey, 2008: 16-19)

Shammas (2005: 4) argues that whatever *is assumed about politeness is provided within the boundaries of a well-defined context of both linguistic and normative behavior, only as understood within the framework of a given culture.* In his research, Shammas (ibid.) defines culture as: “*a socio-cognitive composite of values and beliefs, the breach of which is considered impolite in the eyes of the speech community members belonging to the same culture.*” This definition is more related to the anthropological view about culture.

When discussing politeness at work, Holmes and Stubbe. (2003: 2) speak of *cultures* rather than one culture of one speech community. Thus, to them, in a common work-place culture, people “often share extensive background knowledge and experiences and may have similar values and attitudes towards work and the objectives of their orientation”.

In the same context, Holliday (1999: 237) refers to what he calls *small* and *large* cultures: “*a small culture* paradigm attaches ‘culture’ to small cohesive social groupings or activities wherever there is behavior, and thus avoids culturist ethnic, national or international stereotyping”. He adds that each of these ‘cultures’ has its own values and identity.

According to Robinson (1988), there are four different approaches to the study of culture: 1) the *Behaviorist* that defines culture in terms of observable events; 2) the *Functionalist* that believes in rules governing observable events; 3) the *Cognitive* that organizes and explains inputs; 4) and the *Symbolic* that reflects the relationship between external events and internal processes.

Mead (1994) believes that culture includes systems of values that are characteristic of a group of people normally influenced by these values in terms of behavior and attitude. Moreover, to him, culture is learnable, but not innate in humans.

Adler (1997) sees that culture is normally shared by the members of a well-defined group of people and that it shapes our behavior and is passed down to younger generations.

Aust (2004) believes that *values* are indicators of organizational *identity*. In fact, according to Gioia (1998: 17), “Identity is arguably more fundamental to the conception of humanity than any other notion” (cited in Aust, 2004: 515 – 6).

“According to Rokeach (1973) (cited in Aust, 2004: 521), values are the most central concept existing across all social sciences. Rokeach developed Value Theory based on an exploration of the relationship between beliefs (i.e., what one believes), values (i.e., central beliefs that make up one’s beliefs system), and attitudes (i.e., value clusters that guide one’s behavior)”.

According to Aust, This value theory “is based on five assumptions: (a) people have relatively few values (i.e., especially fewer than beliefs); (b) humans possess the same number of values, but to different degrees; (c) values form value systems; (d) values are rooted in culture, society, and institutions (or organizations); and (e) values are manifest in messages and therefore are able to be examined” (Aust, *ibid*).

Culture is a powerful human tool for survival, but it is a fragile phenomenon. It is constantly changing and easily lost because it exists only in our minds. Our written languages, governments, buildings, and other man-made things are merely the products of culture. They are not culture in themselves. Most obviously it is the body of cultural traditions that distinguish a specific society. When people speak of Italian, Arabic or Japanese culture, they are referring to the shared language, traditions, and beliefs that set each of these peoples apart from others. In most cases, those who share the same culture do so because they acquired

it as they were raised in the same community and have the same social and cultural backgrounds.

Thus, different cultures around the world can have different notions of politeness, and how they expect polite people to behave. For instance, offering food to an Arab more than once is considered polite and generous in the Arab culture, while in the Western cultures this could be considered as impolite and rude.

### *II.1.2 Politeness and Culture*

Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that politeness strategies function in one culture might be addressed more to support positive face than to avoidance of threatening negative face in another culture, and to assume that there is a cultural spectrum of politeness types ranging from negative politeness cultures to positive politeness cultures. Thus, there is no such thing as positive or negative cultures.

In the works conducted by Lakoff (1973, 1977), politeness appears to be a phenomenon by means of which cultures can be categorized, or vice versa, a phenomenon which can be categorized according to culture.

In the politeness literature, the term 'culture' ranges from national groupings through languages, gender-specific differences, social classes, subcultures determined by interests groups, ages groups, in groups, etc; and back to broad, sweeping notions such as 'Western European and North American culture', 'Asian culture'. The number of ways in which the term 'culture' is used in literature mostly leads to the conclusion that it is a various notion which appears to help the discussion of politeness" (Watts, 2003:101).

Mills and Kadar (2011) argue that "the relationship between culture and politeness can in fact be studied but should be approached with some caution. We believe that it is possible to critically study politeness in [...cultural] settings, provided that one refrains from generalizing statements based on the languages practices of certain dominant groups or stereotypes of those groups.

In other words, the dominant politeness norms of these areas can be faithfully represented as long as it is not claimed that they are absolute norms, and as long as other “norms” are discussed in relation to them.” (Cited in Chiappini & Kadar 2011)

In this same context Mills (2009; 1054) argues that it is important to be cautious when dealing with politeness norms within and across cultures, because when statements about linguistic cultural norms are made, they appear to be conservative, ideological and stereotypical. She cites (Hamza, 2007) to give an example of the critical judgment of Arabs speaking English in relation to impoliteness, which condemns Arabs to be too rude or too direct. She adds that this judgment is because of the difference in pragmatic emphasis between Arabic and English. She sees that these judgments are purely ideological and that they may have more to do with the current political climate. I agree with her when she says that negative feelings about certain nations are shown by negative judgment about their politeness and impoliteness norms. Therefore, these judgments are seen as an evaluation of the people and their cultural values rather than an evaluation of their language.

Mills (2009: 1048) discusses some of the theorizing which is made about ‘positive politeness’ and ‘negative politeness’ cultures, which is, the assertion that certain cultures tend towards being globally more likely to use camaraderie (positive politeness) rather than distancing strategies (negative politeness) . She argues that “it is very difficult to make these assertions about whole cultures tending towards either positive or negative politeness, particularly if we bear in mind that positive and negative politeness does not have the same function or meaning in different cultures.”

Thus, Brown and Levinson’s (1987: 245) assumption of negative-politeness cultures and positive-politeness cultures can no longer hold, because each group makes use of the two types of politeness but to a different extent. Therefore, culture is a decisive factor in determining what is polite and how politeness is pursued by

the members of one speech community in actual verbal communication. (Shammas, 2005:6)

Uk-ky (2001: 1) says that the fundamental principle of politeness is to “preserve harmony by showing good intentions and consideration for the feelings of others.” He then says that the interpretation of "real" politeness operating across cultures is extremely difficult. This is because the cultural presuppositions held by each interlocutor may be radically different. What is seen as "good/bad", "honest/dishonest", “polite/impolite” and many other moral axes may vary greatly from one culture to another. For instance, cultural signals of politeness by a man from one culture to a woman of another culture may be miss-decoded as intrusive, rude, hypocritical ... and so on.

Eelen (2001: 164) considers that the notion of politeness differs from culture to culture and that cultural norms reflected in speech acts differ not only from one language to another, but also from one regional and social variety to another. Probably this is why he chooses to base his critique on a sociological theory. He claims that his approach takes full account of the hearer’s position and the evaluative moment; deals with both politeness and impoliteness; and provides a more dynamic, bi-directional view of the social-individual relationship. He also believes that the driving force behind the system of politeness is the socio-culturally shared norms.

Eelen (ibid, 169) claims that politeness and impoliteness are captured by the same concept: the empowerment of the hearer and of individual in general in spite of the belief that only polite behavior can ever be culturally appropriate, while impoliteness is somehow non-cultural in nature. ‘The most important characteristics of the notion of 'culture' as employed in theories of politeness are its vagueness and its transformation from an observational into an explanatory notion”.

The form of politeness might differ from one culture or subculture to the next and the ways they are understood are different and consequently, the conceptualization of linguistic politeness is

rather vague especially when the technical term of politeness is used in the pragmatic and sociolinguistic study of socio-communicative verbal interaction. In all human cultures we will meet forms of social behavior that we can classify as culturally specific forms of consideration for other cooperative social interaction and displaying consideration for others are universal characteristics of every socio-cultural group, so we might say that the theoretical second-order terms "politic social behavior " or simply polite behavior, and "politeness" can serve to refer universally to such social behavior. (Watts, 2003:30).

Blum-Kulka (1992: 270) point out that cultural notion interferes in the features of politeness across societies."... Cultural notions interfere in determining the distinctive features of each of the four parameters and as a result significantly affect the social understanding of politeness across societies in the world.

She assumes that the social understanding of politeness is affected by four parameters: 1- social motivations, 2- expressive modes, 3- social differentials and 4- social meanings. Social motivation for politeness is the need to maintain face; the expressive modes refer to the wide range of linguistic expressions available in any language to realize politeness. Social differentials is a term referring to such factors as social distance , power and degree to which speech acts constitute an imposition on the addressee.

According to Blum Kulka, it appears that culture is a self-evident entity. But is it an objective entity that can be used to explain politeness, or anything else for that matter? The problem with the term is that it can be expanded and contracted at will.

As has been mentioned earlier, politeness is a culture specific convention; what is considered politeness in a culture may not be considered so in other cultures. Based on studies on linguistic politeness conveying a wide range of cultures, we could see that more detailed studies are needed in order to establish a theory of politeness which may have a stronger universal claim.

To conclude, we can say that in a sense, as suggested by Mills (2009: 1058) “cultural norms are mythical; the nation, whatever we take that to mean, cannot speak with one voice, according to one view of what is appropriate or inappropriate. At any one time, there will be a range of different norms or notions of appropriateness circulating within the Communities of Practice and within the culture as a whole.”

In the process of social interaction, people communicating inter-culturally produce polite, impolite and neutral utterances. But when people of different cultures communicate with each other, they employ different codes of politeness which leads to cultural differences.

## *II.2 Politeness and Universality*

One of the main claims in the work of Brown and Levinson (1987) is that politeness is a universal feature in language usage. In other words, linguistic politeness could be explained as universal in human social interactions across cultures and all the languages in the world have their own way to express politeness.

Thus, since Brown and Levinson first claimed "universality" in politeness phenomena, scholars have both developed and challenged this idea. Some research studies (Wierzbicka: 1985; Matsumoto: 1988; Ide: 1989; Mao: 1994) have demonstrated that the principles underlying Brown and Levinson's model, which explain interactional styles on the basis of face wants, are not applicable to the analysis of Eastern languages, whose politeness values are not based on individualism, but on group identity.

Blum-Kulka (1987), for instance has doubts on the validity of the universality claim. She points out that the most indirect requestive strategy, i.e., hints, is not universally acceptable as the most polite. She also adds that second language speakers who have excellent command of the grammar and vocabulary of the target

language might fail to communicate effectively. For her, this failure is due to cross-linguistic differences in speech acts realization rules.

Blum- Kulka and Olshtain (1984) report that diversity in the realization of speech act in context may emerge from at least three different variables: a) intra-cultural, situational variability b) cross-cultural variability, and c) individual variability. Thus there might be systematic differences in the realization patterns of speech acts, depending on social constraints embedded in the situation. For instance, requests directed to superiors, in a given culture, might be phrased in less direct terms than requests addressed to social juniors, or vice-versa. On another dimension, within the same set of social obligations, members of one culture might express a request more or less directly than their counterparts in another culture. Finally, members in the same society might differ in their speech act realization patterns, depending on personal variables such as sex, age, or even level of education and status.

On the other hand, some scholars have done several empirical studies to show that the strategies for performing illocutionary acts are essentially the same across languages. For instance, Gordon and Lakoff (1975) say that when checking with a score of speakers of widely divergent languages, they found that the conventional utterances they use are almost universal.

Lakoff presents three politeness rules that she claims to be universal in all cultures, although different cultures will consider these rules differently according to the priority and conditions in which they are used. These rules are categorized in the following:

- 1- Formality: keep aloof
- 2- Deference: give options
- 3- Camaraderie: show sympathy

Leech (1983) has also dealt with the notion of universality in terms of his Politeness Maxims. He claims that the six maxims operate along with the four maxims of Grice in almost all cultures

but with different values associated to them in different cultures. For example, in the Japanese society the 'modesty' maxim is used more than the 'agreement' maxim when responding to a compliment, while the English-speaking societies try to be more polite using the 'agreement' maxim.

A multinational project called the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) was created in an effort to collect and analyze cross-cultural speech act data. The members of this project such as Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper had studied requests and apologies across several languages such as English, Canadian French, Danish, German, Spanish and Hebrew. They focused on the role of these speech acts as devices for maintaining social order and as indicators of distance and dominance in relationships. This cross-cultural investigation helped testing the formulated hypothesis about the universality of politeness.

Many of the CCSARP studies were ultimately interested in the communicative competence of non-native speakers of English and in the degree of pragmatic transfer between a native and a target language. They compared native and non-native responses, collected and examined across a variety of situations, for social and contextual factors like distance, power, and severity (ranking) of violation. The cross-cultural data were analyzed mostly from a global perspective of strategy occurrence, with less attention paid to strategy order or the significance of content (Suszczynska, 1999).

These were only a few examples about the concept of universality in linguistic politeness. In essence, studies conducted cross-culturally on speech acts indicate that all languages appear to have a repertoire of strategies for particular speech acts, but the strategies do not necessarily have the same social meaning. Furthermore, the cross-cultural variability of strategy choice and assigning different politeness values to speech acts "reveal culture specific features of discourse and hence can be construed as further

evidence for the claim that speech communities tend to develop culturally distinct interactional styles" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 7).

The present study suggests that universality of politeness exists in the similarities between languages. It lies in the human social interaction across cultures, but the same intended function of politeness does not always match the semantic formula used to express the speech act among languages. On the other hand, cultural differences lead to pragmatic transfer since different forms are associated with different values in different cultures. And this transfer can cause pragma-linguistic failure during communication.

The problem of the 'universality' of politeness as an interactive procedure of talk or of making oneself more accessible to human society is that it lacks consensus in both its linguistic representation and the criteria of social assessment: "there is little agreement among researchers in the field about what, exactly, constitutes politeness and the domain of related research. . . . The distinction between linguistic and non-linguistic politeness is not drawn . . . a viable theory of politeness cannot rest upon a set of rules based on social, normative behavior" (Fraser, 1990: 234).

It is quite obvious now that it is difficult to generalize universal rules about the use of politeness strategies across cultures since each language has its culture-specific pragmatic features. What is universal about politeness is the concept itself. The strategies differ from one culture to another.

### *II.3 English and Arabic Linguistic Politeness*

The following section will focus on linguistic politeness in the two languages of the study. It will deal with the conceptualization of the notion of ‘face’ in both Arabic and English cultures. It will also discuss briefly some of the empirical studies which have been conducted in the domain of English-Arabic speech act in general and linguistic politeness in particular.

#### *II.3.1 English Linguistic Politeness*

Politeness in English refers to showing consideration for others, and demonstrating a polished self-presentation. In The Oxford English Dictionary, the terms politeness (or polite) are defined as ‘having or showing behavior that is respectful and considerate of other people’.

The origin of these terms dates from the fifteenth century and was derived from the Late Medieval Latin word “*politus*” which means ‘to smooth, to polish’. They came into particular prominence in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century in England (Klein, 1994: 3).

Close analysis of the term polite (ness) as it is defined in The Oxford English Dictionary reveals at least two different but overlapping senses in which it has been used (Simpson and Weiner, 1989, Vol. 12: 31).

Definition of the term: Polite (adjective)

1. of persons (a) in respect of some art or scholarship, (b) in respect of general culture: Polished, refined, civilized, cultivated, cultured, well-bred, and modish. “One of the politest wits in the Kingdome for the Law (1629); whatever the polite and learned may think (1840).”

2. Of refined manners; esp. showing courteous consideration for others; courteous, mannerly, urbane. [He] perceives the wise are polite all over the world, but that fools are polite only at home (1762); He sent me the following polite acknowledgment of his having received the work (1831).

Taking a close look at the first sense of polite (ness), one can see that it refers to politeness as a means of showing one's social class; that is, one is of a 'higher class' than others. In other words, showing what one thinks of oneself. Although people focus mainly on other-oriented (politeness) behavior when thinking about politeness, examination of the roots of the notion of politeness indicate that the lay concept does in fact refer to both self- and other-oriented (politeness) behavior.

The second sense of polite (ness) refers to showing 'good manners' or 'courtesy', which is related to showing what one thinks of others. The term courtesy (or courteous) is borrowed from French "courtoisie", which has its origins in court life in medieval Europe, where 'to set an example of good behavior was incumbent on the courteous man, be he king or lowly squire' (Wildeblood and Brinson, 1965: 44. cited in Haugh, M 2004).

There are a lot of examples of politeness in the context of good manners, such as the following.

- Using the terms 'thank you', 'please' and 'you are welcome' indicates good manners in Western culture.
- In Arab culture, respecting elders, listening to them, helping them when they are in need is definitely a proof of good manners.
- In the Arab World It is common for a person not to accept an offering (food, beverages etc.) the first or possibly second time, instead taking up the offer the third time. This traditionally implies dignity, self-respect and respect for the host. In addition, if there is only one item of food left, the host must offer, to everyone, regardless of whether or not he or she wants it. Finally, it is considered rude if a person gets food for himself or herself without bringing some for the guests.

However, the word politeness later spread into a wider society, as the medieval doctrine of one's 'place' being fixed in an hierarchical society gradually gave way from the Renaissance era onwards to a 'polite world', which was open to those in the middle class who were able to rise above others through wealth or success (ibid: 46-67). It appears, then, that both the first and second senses of politeness have their origins in the upper echelons of society using certain behaviors, which they termed polite (ness), to distinguish themselves from those lower in the social hierarchy.

According to Haugh (2004), in the last century, the term politeness lost to some extent the meaning of marking upper classes; it has been used in a more egalitarian manner. For example, the terms 'polished' and 'refined' in modern English are used for displaying modesty rather than showing one is of higher class than others.

With this transformation in the meaning and the use of politeness, various definitions have emerged, especially in the field of pragmatics. According to Haugh (2004) these definitions fall into essentially four groups:

- 1- Politeness as 'behavior avoiding conflict and promoting smooth communication',
  - 2- Politeness as 'socially appropriate behavior',
  - 3- Politeness as 'consideration for the feelings of others',
- Politeness as an 'evaluation of the speaker's behavior by the addressee as polite'."

From these various definitions of politeness, we can say that politeness in English involves being both well-mannered in one's own demeanor (that is, polished or appropriate behavior), and showing consideration to the feelings or position of others, thereby ensuring better relationships between people. It can only arise in interactions, since it always involves evaluations, which are partially based on norms or conventions, of the speaker's behavior by the addressee or other on-lookers.

Previous research about English speakers has shown different conceptualizations of politeness. For example, (Sifianou, 1992: 88) has presented a written survey of 27 British speakers of English and found that politeness was regarded as '...the consideration of other people's feelings by conforming to social norms and expectations...'

Obana and Tomoda (1994) interviewed Australian speakers of English and came with the conclusion that politeness was associated with terms such as kind, friendly, considerate, humble, respect and so on, these similar results were found by (Ide, Hill, Carnes, Ogino and Kawasaki, 1992; Ide and Yoshida, 1999) when they made a survey of American speakers of English. (Cited in Haugh, 2004)

Politeness in English is thus essentially a matter of being perceived as showing consideration and respect towards the feelings of others, and to be well-mannered in one's behavior.

### 2.3.1 *Arabic Linguistic Politeness*

For a long time, the focus of language studies in teaching and learning Arabic was on grammatical competence of the language learners on the levels of: syntax, morphology and phonology. However, this focus has shifted from looking at the grammatical competence of the learners to their pragmatic competence and their use of the communication strategies. Pragmatic competence differs from linguistic competence because it is considered as an aspect of communicative competence and the ability to communicate in an appropriate way in a particular context of use, while linguistic competence consists in the mastery of the general use of languages rules. This change in focus is seen in the growth of the literature on communication strategies and a considerable number of empirical studies in the field of speech acts behavior (Atawneh, 1991; Al-Hamzi, 1999; Al-Khatani, 2005).

Arabic is a language, in which the term *face* is frequently used when matters of politeness are concerned (see Shamma, 2005).

Expressions denoting *face* translated semantically from Arabic, (i.e. literally) are very common. Such expressions are commonly used by parents and elderly people; thus,

”حفظ ماء وجهنا“, “\**They preserved the water of our face*” indicates face-saving; “\**She whitened our face*” indicates face needs or connection (see Meyer, 2002).

”سود وجهنا“, “\**He blackened our face*” implies face threats,

”رجل بوجهين“, “*a man with two faces*” indicates that that this person is hypocrite or ‘two-faced’.

”أراق ماء وجهه“, “*shed the water of his face*” is used in Arabic to indicate that this person humiliated himself.

”احمر وجهه“, “*He blushed*”, to say that someone is either angry or shy.

For example, according to Farhat (2009: 98) in the Arab culture, *wajih*, meaning “face”, is used to describe the front part of the head from the forehead to the lower jaw. However, it is also used metaphorically to stand for expressions such as ‘respect’, ‘shame’, ‘honor’ and ‘dignity’. Face in the Arab culture functions as a deterrent, making people abide by the institutionalized and sanctioned code of politeness. At the same time, the significance of face in this society prevents people from violating social rules and engaging in actions that might be considered as antithetical to the interests of the group.

The actions carried out by one person will be under scrutiny and the more face he or she claims the more pressure will be put on them in term of the social visibility of his or her actions, and hence the constraints imposed on their actions will be greater. The need to protect self’s face and the other’s face affects the line of the encounter. Therefore, to avoid losing face is an overriding concern in many cultures. Such reciprocity concerns dominate in Arab culture. The proverb: *3mel annaas kamaa tuhib an tu3amaal*, meaning “Do as you would be done by” (Baalbaki & Baalbaki, 2003: 32), encapsulates such a concept. This sense of reciprocity prevails among members of the community irrespective of the social

status of the person or his or her relative power. People in power cannot overlook others' face needs to be treated politely in public. Hence, showing respect to other people means paying respect to the self in the Arab culture.

Several researches have been conducted in the area of speech act in general and linguistic politeness in particular in the Arab World. One of the earliest studies in the Arab World was conducted by Scarcella and Brunk (1981) (cited in Atawneh: 1991); they looked at how English directives produced by Arab learners of English do not match the English norms of various degrees of politeness. Subjects were of two levels, beginners and advanced. Data were collected by devising role playing situations where one wants to invite one's superior, one's equal, one's subordinate to the party. This experimental study was designed to test the rules of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) about positive politeness and negative politeness.

The findings of the study show that bilingual Arabs used different politeness expressions from those used by Americans for the same positive politeness strategies in a situation of inviting a friend to a party. For example, Arabs used words like 'Hello, Welcome' in response to 'Hello' which is equivalent to the Arabic typical response '*marhaba, ahala wasahla*'. Also, the findings of the study show that Americans used negative politeness strategies more than Arabs whereas Arabs were more direct than Americans with superiors, and Arabs used 'please' more than Americans. The findings of the study seem to indicate the influence of Arabic on the English performance of the bilingual Arabs.

Atawneh conducted a (1991) study which deals in some detail with politeness strategies of Arabic in the performance of the request speech act contrasting them with those in English. The study also aims at testing the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1978) with Arabic – English bilinguals and Arabic monolinguals. Moreover, the research explores the cultural determination of pragmatic norms in language. The analysis of results shows a strong

support for the politeness theory in relation to requests. Further, descriptive analysis suggests that Arabic has fewer modals than English. Therefore, different politeness strategies are used to make up for the politeness function of modals in English. The applied part of the study shows that the culture in which a second or foreign language is learned shapes the pragmatic norms of the language.

El-Shazly (1993) studied the request strategies in American English, Egyptian Arabic and English as spoken by Egyptian second language learners. The results of her study have indicated that there are differences in the requesting strategies used by these groups. The Arab speakers of English demonstrate a high tendency towards using conventional indirectness which depends on the use of interrogatives. Modifiers are also examined among the groups. No differences are found with respect to use of “up-graders”. “Down-graders”, however, are found to be more frequently used by native Arabic native speakers. They display a noticeable tendency to use more than one down-grader in a single utterance. This group is also found to be unique in using religious expressions as down-graders.

Al-Hamzi's thesis (1999) is mainly concerned with pragmatic transfer and pragmatic development in the inter-language of Yemeni learners of English at both higher and lower proficiency levels are found to rely heavily L1 pragmatics features. The result of the study further implies that explicit instruction on English pragmatics can help to develop pragmatic awareness in English foreign language learners According to Al-Hamzi “the findings of this research do not yield any support to the notion of universality of politeness as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978). Politeness is a culture specific convention. What is perceived as polite in Arabic may not be considered so in English and vice versa. The learners in the entire situation did not mean to be rude by resorting to their native style of being polite and thus resembling to their Arabic counterparts in being more direct in their request than their native English counterparts. They were not violating their socio-cultural rules. However, when evaluated by someone standing outside their

differences in the socio-cultural parameters from one culture to another.

Another study in the area of speech act is conducted by Al-Zumor (2003) which is concerned with investigating how Arabs using English perform in these four types of speech acts: requests, invitations, apologies and corrections. Another major focus of this study deals with relating the various realization patterns of these speech acts to the politeness strategies as proposed by Brown and Levinson. The last main linguistic phenomenon desired to be explored is pragmatic transfer. The findings of the study include: (1) learners of a second language should be made aware of the appropriate strategies while correcting factual errors made by different types of addressees. (2) Learners of English need to know how to use hedges properly in English. It has been observed that they overuse the softener "I think" indiscriminately in a formulaic manner, whereas, the English native speakers seem creative in using them. (3) Variation in the use of appropriate hedges makes the style very effective and even helps in enhancing politeness with the interlocutor. Arab learners of English do not possess the appropriate pragmatic competence that enables them to use the interrogative form of correction. The study suggests that syllabus designers and material prepares and teachers have to put more emphasis on how languages differ in terms of directness. Learners should be acquainted with the fact that indirectness is highly valued with Anglo- Saxon societies, hence being direct in most of interpersonal communication with the native speakers of English may cause communication breakdowns and misunderstanding. Mechanical training without making second language learners aware of cultural dimensions of language use may not be helpful in second language learning.

Al-Ammar (2000) has studied the linguistic strategies and realizations of request behavior in spoken English and Arabic among a number of Saudi female English majors at Riyadh College of Arts. The subjects used in this study are forty-five Saudi female students

enrolled in the English department at the Faculty of Arts. The instrument used for data collection is the "Discourse- Completion-Test". The result reveals that the subjects vary their requestive behavior according to the social situations. Directness increases with decreases in social distance and power.

Umar (2004) conducted a socio-linguistic study to investigate the request strategies used by advanced Arab learners of English as compared to those strategies used by native speakers of English. The sample involves 20 Arab students enrolled in graduate English courses in four Arabic universities and 20 British students pursuing graduate programs in three British universities. A Discourse-Completion-Test is used to generate data related to the request strategies used by each group. The result of the study reveals that the two groups adopt similar strategies when addressing their request to equals or people in higher positions. In such cases, the subjects rely heavily on conventionally indirect strategies. However, when requests are addressed to people in lower positions the Arabic sample shows a marked tendency towards using more direct request strategies in performing their request than the British sample. A further test of the data reveals some significant differences between the two groups in the way they modify their request strategies. It is found that the native speakers of English use more semantic and syntactic modifiers than their Arabic counterparts and hence their requests sound more polite and tactful.

The investigator attributes this to the linguistic superiority of the native speakers group. The study ends up with some theoretical and pedagogical implications. It is demonstrated that Arab students of English, even at advanced levels, may fall back on their cultural background when formulating their requests strategies.

On the pedagogical level, it is suggested that Arab learners of English should always be aware of the pragmatic differences between Arabic and English and that an appropriate Arabic request scheme in a given situation might not be appropriate in English.

Al-Kahtani (2005) conducted a study to investigate refusal realizations in three different cultures. The researcher divided the subjects of the study into three groups Americans, Arabs, Japanese to compare the ways they perform refusals with respect to three dimensions of semantic formulas: order, frequency and content of semantic formulas. The subjects are given different status in which the refuser is equal, higher, or lower to the refused. The findings of the study show that three groups employ different ways and different semantic strategies in realizing the speech act of refusals with respect to the three dimensions of semantic formulas. However, they are not different cross all situations. There were circumstances in which they tended to react to the same way (e.g. the request situation).

AL-Khatib (2006) conducted a study about the pragmatics of invitation making and acceptance in Jordanian society. This study aims to explore the nature of invitation making and acceptance in Jordanian society from a pragmatic point of view. It attempts to systemize the various strategies used for the purpose of inviting in Jordanian society; and to highlight the socio-pragmatic constraints governing their use. The study based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. The findings of the study support Brown and Levinson's politeness theory.

He (ibid: 268) claims that "the degree of social distance or solidarity between the interactants in relation to other social factors such as relative age, sex, social roles, whether people work together, or are of the same family were found to be of great effect on the type of strategy being used by the individual speaker upon inviting, accepting an invitation or declining it." All informants of the study, men and women, demonstrate preference for performing the (FTA) (refusing an invitation) on-record with a lot of redressive action (bald-on-record). This happens, as seen above, by using several apologetic expressions that may be prefaced to the face-threatening

act to tone down the illocutionary force of the utterance of refusal on the inviter.

Nureddeen (2008) conducted a cross cultural study titled: 'apology strategies in Sudanese Arabic'. The study is based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. Her study is an attempt to investigate the use of apology strategies in Sudanese Arabic and sheds light on the socio-cultural attitudes and values of community. She uses the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) to collect data for her study. The results of the study support the universality of apology strategies and the selection of apology strategies in this study reinforces the culture specific aspect of language use.

Although the studies conducted in the area of speech act in Arabic language are somehow limited, there is a growing interest in the field of pragmatics in general and linguistic politeness in particular among Arab researchers.

## Chapter Three: *Lingua-Pragmatics and Translation*

### III.1 Introduction

Politeness is a social phenomenon, a means to achieve good interpersonal relationship, and a norm imposed by social conventions. Most speakers are aware that they need to be polite and be careful when presenting their speech in order to smoothen and strengthen their relationship with one another and to give good impressions of themselves.

There are different ways to realize politeness with different standards in different cultures too.

One way to be polite is the use of certain polite formulas which help having good and healthy relationships with the members of the community. For instance, greeting people when you see them and inquiring about their family and work, complimenting a friend about his promotion, congratulating new married couple, thanking someone for his help, are all polite acts.

To express all these social events, the speaker uses what we call “ready-made” polite forms which are at the speaker’s disposal if needed. These *fixed polite formulas* are studied under what is called *lingua-pragmatics*, which is defined as the: “*study of the fixed forms of language that have fixed socio-pragmatic values in actual verbal communication.*” Such forms are different from all other forms of language in their translatability, politeness and other features.

Lingua-pragmatics is a term coined by Shammas (1995). The forms studied under lingua-pragmatics are used for maintaining *social ties*, recognizing *social distance* and keeping to the scale of *culture-specific politeness* in interpersonal interaction. These forms reflect the attitude of S towards H as well as the norms prevailing in S’s speech community and by using these forms, the speaker could always *politely contradict, interrupt or even blame* any of the communicators in his community; not using one of these forms might lead to a pragmatic failure.

The forms studied under lingua-pragmatics are different in nature and function from what has been studied as formulaic, phatic or frozen expressions. The lingua-pragmatic forms are more inclusive and varied than what is traditionally called phatic communion or formulaic expressions.

All expressions used in situations, such as *greetings, compliments, thanks and congratulations* as well as polite formulas such as those used in *apologies, complaints and condolences*, are included in the scope of the lingua-pragmatics.

The ability of using these forms adds to the naturalness of a speaker's speech. Speakers of the same language and who share the same cultural background can easily interpret lingua-pragmatic forms, while non-native speakers may face some difficulties in the understanding of the message carried by these forms and this is due to the fact that lingua-pragmatic forms are totally language-specific and culture-specific. Because of the culture and language specificity of these forms, they can hardly be understood by members of a remote culture whether in context or in isolation, unless we find similar utterances in the community language of that culture.

### *III.2 Politeness Fixed Formulas and Translation*

Lingua-pragmatic fixed forms constitute a difficulty in translation from one language to another especially when the two languages in question are as different as Arabic and English.

The table below contains some of the lingua-pragmatic polite formulas in Arabic with a literal translation into English and a pragmatic translation equivalent in English when available. And because these forms are culture-specific in their communicative value and language-specific in their use, we will notice that the translation equivalents in most cases is only a rough approximation, and does not yield the effect intended by the communicator.

“Each text the translator deals with speaks out of a different tradition, with different names for different things that make up the

world, things which connect differently in thought, which point to different constellations of character, motivation, intention, to whom the meanings are necessarily different, too” (Morris, 1992: 201).

Translation of politeness formulas is not always attainable in another language that resort to syntactic order to express politeness, such as the case is between English and Arabic. In other words, the translation of such expressions is fully pragmatic and contextual rather than linguistic and semantic.

Arabic has quite elaborated sets of polite lingua-pragmatic forms, while English has a limited number of polite formulas. The intimate relationship between family members, relatives and neighbors might be the reason why Arabic is rich in polite expressions of greetings, hospitality, warm-heartedness and intimacy, etc...

Arabic and English present cultural and social differences and this result in a considerable difference on the level of lingua-pragmatic expressions and their translation. For instance, Arabs resort to fixed linguistic expressions for conveying polite attitude, on the other hand, English native speakers prefer the use of modals, e.g. ‘will, would, could, etc’ and question forms to minimize imposition and maximize the factor of optionality in favor of the addressee. This is why the translator needs to pay more attention while translating these expressions and their intended meaning from English to Arabic and vice versa.

It might be beneficial to examine some of these expressions and their translation from Arabic to English to see the differences between both languages and try to find the equivalent of each form and its realization.

But before tackling this matter, it is important to mention that the lingua-pragmatic expressions which will be studied later in this chapter all occur in actual normal situation, they must be used in context, otherwise, they lose their meaning. By context, or even re-contextualization, Hickey (1998: 222) refers to “a radical approach to the translation of a particular text, which consists of totally or

partially abandoning the literal, propositional or locutionary level, while maintaining the illocutionary act as far as possible and focusing strongly on the prelocutionary effect, directly or accurately reproducing it.”

### Arabic politeness formulas and their translation

Arabic expressions	Literal Translation	Pragmatic equivalent
<b><u>A-Greetings</u></b>		
مرحبا! (1)		
أهلا! (2)	- Hello!	- Hello! / Hi
أهلا وسهلا! (3)	- Parents! - Parents and plain (we are parents and family to you and you are in a wide place)	- Welcome! - Welcome!
السلام عليكم (4)	- Peace be upon you	- Good morning/ hello
الله يعطيك العافية (5)	- May God give you activity	- Keep well. Have a nice day! - Put your shoulder into it!
على العوافي! (6)	- Activities!	-.....
صباح الخير (7)	- Good morning!	- Good morning!
مساء الخير (8)	- Good evening!	- Good evening
سلام! (9)	- Peace!	- Hi (informal)
كيفك؟ (10)	- How are you?	- How are you doing

<b><u>B- Condolences</u></b>		
عظم الله أجركم (1)	- May God increase your reward!	- .....
خاتمة الأحران انشائه (2)	- The end of sorrows!	- Sorry to hear about your loss
شكر الله سعيكم (3)	- May God reward your effort!	- .....
البقية في حياتكم (4)	- The rest into your life!	- .....
الله يرحمو (5)	- May God have mercy on him	- God have mercy on him!
يجعل مثواه الجنة (6)	- May God send him to paradise	- God rest his soul
كلنا على هذه الطريق (7)	- We are all on this way!	- It will get us all in the end (death)
الله يصبركم (8)	- May God give you patience	- .....
<b><u>C- Disappointment/loss</u></b>		
بسيطة! (1)	- Simple!	- Not the end of the world
تفرج انشاءالله (2)	-It will for sure clear away	- It will all work out at the end
مش مهم! (3)	-It's not important	- Don't worry about
عوضك على الله! (4)	-God will make it for you	- Don't worry
لا تزعل حالك! (5)	-Don't be sad about it	- .....

كل شيء رايح! (6)	- Everything will be gone!	
لا تكبر الأمور (7)	- Don't make things bigger!	- Don't make a mountain out of a mole hill
الله بعينك! (8)	- God will help you	- .....
احمد الله (9)	- Thank God!	- Count your blessing!
<b>D. <u>Congratulations</u></b>		
ألف مبروك! (1)	- Thousand blessed!	- Congratulations/ best wishes
بالرفاه والبنين (2)	- Welfare and children	- .....
عقبالك إنشاء الله (3)	- May God make you next!	- Your turn next
حمام الهنا (4)	- May it be a bath of joy!	- .....
نعيمًا (5)	- Heavenly	- .....
شو هالحلو! (6)	- What a sweet thing	- .....
القالب غالب! (7)	- You are the one making the outfit look beautiful	- How nice/ what a lovely..
يربى بدلالكم إنشاء الله! (8)	- May god make him live and enjoy your care!	- That really suits you
الله يخليكم إياه! (9)	- May God keep him/her safe for you	- Congratulations
<b>E. <u>Travel</u></b>		
تروح وترجع بالسلامه (1)	- May you go and return safely!	- .....
مع السلامه (2)	- With peace!	- .....
الله معك! (3)	- May God be with you	- Have a nice trip
دير بالك على حالك (4)	- Pay attention to yourself!	- Take care!
طريق الخير (5)	- Safe road!	- .....
طمنا عنك (6)	- Let us hear from you	- .....
مثل ما ودعت تلاقى (7)	- May God let you see him safe as he left.	- .....
خلينا نسمع أخبارك (8)	- Let us hear from you	- Stay in touch
ترجع سالم غانم انشاء الله (9)	- May God return you safe and rich!	- Good luck!

<p><b>F. Food</b></p> <p>تفضل! (1)</p> <p>بصحتك! (2)</p> <p>سفرة عامرة! (3)</p> <p>صحتين (4)</p> <p>يسلموا إيديك (5)</p> <p>جيرة الله تاكل (6)</p> <p>كل هاي من ايدي (7)</p>	<p>- Have the graciousness!</p> <p>- To your health!</p> <p>- May God make your table full</p> <p>- Two healths!</p> <p>- May God keep your hands safe!</p> <p>- I swear by God you should eat</p> <p>- You should eat this from my hand</p>	<p>- Help yourself</p> <p>- .....</p> <p>- .....</p> <p>- You are welcome!</p> <p>- That was a delicious meal!</p> <p>- .....</p> <p>- .....</p>
<p><b>G. apologies</b></p> <p>أسف! (1)</p> <p>أعتذر! (2)</p> <p>عفو! (3)</p> <p>حقك على راسي (4)</p> <p>لو سمحت (5)</p> <p>من فضلك (6)</p> <p>رح أتقل عليك (7)</p> <p>سامحني (8)</p> <p>رجاء (9)</p>	<p>- Sorry!</p> <p>- I apologize!</p> <p>- Excuse me</p> <p>- Your right is on my head!</p> <p>- If you don't mind!</p> <p>- From your graciousness!</p> <p>- I am going to disturb you!</p> <p>- Forgive me</p> <p>- Please</p>	<p>- Sorry</p> <p>- I apologize</p> <p>- Excuse me/ pardon me</p> <p>- You are right, I am wrong!</p> <p>- If you don't mind</p> <p>- I wonder if you could....?</p> <p>- .....</p> <p>- Forgive me</p> <p>- I wonder if you could possibly...</p>

**Table I: Arabic politeness formulas and their translation**

By observing this table, one can notice that the difficulty of using these forms lies in some cases in the communicator losing face or in appearing alien to the social context. Hence, a near equivalent, as the case is in translating such forms into a different language with different social parameters, can be counterproductive and may itself

lead to pragmatic failure. Instead of translation, when no appropriate and relevant expression is available, an *explanation* of the social act that dictates the selectivity of one of these forms to accompany the form selected for that occasion along with its potentially pragmatic 'equivalent' in the other language.

The equivalents above are subject to cultural and situational variations. In other words, to suggest the nearest possible pragmatic equivalent in English for each Arabic utterance, can be successful only as far as the speech situation and the socio-cultural parameters, represented mainly by the degree and kind of interpersonal relationship, permit this equivalence to be used in English. More clearly, this equivalence is not appropriate or *relevant* in absolute terms; it is rather relatively relevant to the social norms governing verbal behavior in a similar situation in the target language.

Above all, if we take the English utterance as a basis for comparison, other translation problems will appear. In compliments in English, for instance, it would be counterproductive and even funny to translate certain utterances into Arabic with the attempt of preserving the same pragmatic force.

For instance, the English utterance: "*you smell good*" can be taken as a severe criticism of the addressee in Arabic, whereas the Arabic equivalent of 'What a good/lovely smell!' is acceptable only with reference to the kind of perfume used by the addressee. But if no perfume is ostensibly used by the addressee, this utterance will also be interpreted as sarcastic.

However, the English utterance: '*It really looks good*' is replaced by *al-qaleb ghaleb* (*The pattern is dominant!*) with reference to a suit or a jacket in Arabic, the reference of 'pattern' here being made to the body of the wearer.

While the English utterance: '*Nice one!*' has more or less the same equivalent with the same effect in Arabic, the semantic equivalence '*kwayyes*' is different, and its use covers more different situations.

The English expressions for greetings: *'Best wishes!'* and *'Best regards!'* which are usually used in letters have the equivalent of *ma'afdali~tamanyyat* (with the best wishes!) in Arabic.

If someone uses "Your glass!" i.e. *kasak!* instead of 'Cheers!' in English when drinking, the whole pragmatic effect intended by the communicator would be misunderstood, and even counterproductive.

The expression *'God bless you!'* is used in both cultures, but for different effects: in English, it is usually said to somebody sneezing; in Arabic, it is an expression of gratitude said by a senior to a junior in return to a service or kind act.

In condolences, whereas in Arabic there are several expressions that designate the degree of loss (death/failure, etc.), the formality of the situation, and the interpersonal level of relation, in English, such expressions are few and lack the level of formality expressed in Arabic utterances. Thus, all the *condolence* expressions used in Arabic are formally equivalent to only one or two English expressions:

- *'Sorry to hear about x'* or the originally Irish expression *'Sorry for your trouble'* usually said to a widow. Nevertheless, in minor issues of loss such as a student's failure in a subject/year, a girl leaving her boyfriend, etc., similar expressions are used in both cultures. Examples of these are:

- *'Oh, never mind', 'try again!', 'There is always tomorrow!', 'She is not worthy of you!'*

This semantic difference, such as the one represented by the last two utterances in English and Arabic respectively, justifies the linguistic side of the error usually committed by the foreign user of English in communication in general, and in translation, in particular. But the pragmatic effect may be lost completely with the increase of linguistic deviation in one language from another in such expressions.

But, of course, the linguistic representations of such functions in the two languages need to be learned as part of the

lexicon in Arabic and the grammar and the lexicon in English, because of the more complicated grammar of such utterances in the target language, English.

In short, attempting a translation equivalence of such expressions, not only changes the cultural implications, but also the very structures themselves, formally and semantically because they are mostly language-specific in structure, culture-specific in communication, and very difficult to translate appropriately.

Above all, negotiating their meanings leads to pragmatic failure. Therefore, the only way to avoid pragmatic failure in using them in a foreign language is by acquiring/learning the cultural code that matches the use of a possible equivalent in the target language or keeping silent if the situation in that language does not require their use. Explanation of the intended pragmatic force of such linguistic forms is another successful strategy for both the foreign learner and the foreign language teacher; otherwise, misinterpretation and/or mistranslation will occur (see Shamma, 2005).

Finally, it is also important to know that 'the translator should not over-assimilate concepts or realities in the source and target cultures' (Hickey, 1998: 224), because one system may use the name of part of something to refer to a whole and vice versa, or may simply name something closely associated with something else.

### *III.2 Requests*

Requests are one of the many speech acts used quite frequently in every day human interaction. In Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms, requests are face-threatening acts (FTAs) which threaten the hearer's negative face. So those who perform a request need to reduce the level of imposition created by an act being requested in order to save the hearer's face and, at the same time get his/her compliance with a request.

Blum-kulka and Olshtain (1984) classify the speech act of requesting into three types according to the degree of directness:

- a- The most direct and explicit level which is realized by requests syntactically marked as such, such as performatives and 'hedged performatives'.
- b- The conventionally indirect level which includes requests that realizes the act referring to contextual precondition necessary for its performance, as conventionalized in a given language.
- c- Nonconventional indirect level which includes the open-ended group of strategies (hints) that realize the act by either partial reference to an object or element needed for the implementation of the act.

The speech act of request is composed of two parts: the head act and the modifiers. The head act is the main utterance which performs the function of requesting and can be used on its own without any modifiers in order to convey the request. In most cases, however, the head act is preceded and/or followed by modifiers that mitigate or aggravate the impact of the request on the addressee (Reiter, 2000).

In English, request can be linguistically realized with imperatives, interrogatives and declaratives. However, Leech (1983) explains that imperatives are the least polite constructions since they are tactless in that they jeopardize compliance by the addressee. For this reason indirect means are usually sought to realize illocutionary needs.

In performing a request, the speaker should always adhere to the principles of politeness; no matter what the object of his/her request is because requesting occurs in a situation of inequality. The requester always wants to get an object, which is lacking and the requested may provide. In requests, it is always the requester who directly or indirectly benefits from the act at the cost of the requested and threatens his "face". The term 'face' means the positive social value every member of the society has. This value presupposes that

every one urges to be free from imposition (negative face) and that everyone wants to be appreciated and approved of (positive face) (Goffman: 1967).

Since a requester appeals to the requested for assistance, s/he is potentially threatening the "negative face" of the requested. The intensity of this threat varies with the level of imposition of the requested act and the conditions under which the request is made. For instance, when someone asks another about the way to the hospital, the requested "matter" is not likely to threaten the face of the requested that much. Of course, this cannot be the case when a request involves greater imposition or restriction on the freedom of the requested, such as lending money or giving a lift.

### *III.2.1 The speech Act of Request in Arabic*

According to Atawneh (1991: 92), Arabic speech can be classified under two categories: "*al-xabar*" meaning "reporting" and "*al-?inšaa?*", which means "initiating". *al-xabar* can be judged true or false in relation to the reality of the world, whereas, *al-?inšaa* cannot. '*Al-Talab*', meaning "directive", which is a subcategory of *al-?inšaa* can be categorized into: *al-?amr* "positive command" which directs the hearer to do something and *al-nahiy* "negative command" which directs the hearer not to do something.

Atawneh (1991) then argues that *al-talab*, in standard Arabic is used to issue directive by a person of higher status to a person of lower status. However, there are some other cases where the meaning of the directive is contextualized. There are also other determining factors that contribute to identifying the meaning of the utterance, such as the relative power of speaker over hearer and the nature of the topic.

The speech act of request in Arabic can be realized by different linguistic constructions: interrogatives, imperatives and declaratives. However, not all these request strategies have the same

force; we can see preferences to use one construction over another, depending on several sociological and situational variables.

In Arabic, a request also consists of two parts: the main act and modifiers as in the English language. The main act is the main utterance which conveys a complete request and can stand by itself without any modifiers in order to convey a request. The main act is followed or preceded by modifiers that mitigate or aggravate the impact of the request on the addressee.

For example,

لو سمحت يا أخي ممكن تفتح الشباك؟

\* Excuse me brother can open window. (Literal translation)

-Excuse me, brother, can you open the window?

In this example, the main act is ‘*mumkin tiftaḥ el shubak?*’ and it can stand by itself as a complete and clear request. ‘*Law samaḥt ya akhi*’ on the other hand, acts as modifier to mitigate the effect of the request on the addressee.

### *III.3 Compliments*

Compliments are communicative behaviors which people use in order to start a conversation, to smooth an interaction, strengthen an emotional exchange and enhance the mutual understanding of the people in the conversation. But, one may note that “complimenting is a complex sociolinguistic skill” Holmes (1986: 488).

She also adds that compliments have ‘a darker side’, because they may be interpreted as ironic, sarcastic, patronizing and even offensive or as puts downs (Holmes 1995: 119).

Giving a compliment may be considered a face-threatening act because it leads to “the complimenter’s debt” (Holmes 1986: 487), where receivers may feel obliged to return the compliment.

Early studies on compliments and compliment responses were carried out by Wolfson and Manes (1980) in their research on United States English. Their pioneering study identified several

lexical and syntactical features of compliments and compliment responses, as well as the functions they serve.

They found the structure of compliments to be highly 'formulaic', that speakers use a small number of adjectives, and that compliments and compliment responses could be classified into types of structures: **adjective, verb, and adverb/noun**. The three syntactic patterns that account for nearly most of the compliments are:

- 1- NP is/looks (really) ADJ (e.g. 'that dress is really nice')
- 2- I (really) like/love NP (e.g. I love your hair)
- 3- PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP (e.g. this was really a great meal).

Wolfson and Manes also found that the subject of compliments included two main topics: appearance and ability. Furthermore, they noted that the functions served by this speech act included thanking, starting a conversation, giving approval and reinforcing certain behaviors.

Overwhelmingly, compliments served to establish solidarity among same status speakers, while they could also be used as genuine expressions of admiration. In addition, compliments could be used to soften a potentially face-threatening act such as criticism.

Holmes and Brown (1987) further elaborated the compliment responses types identified by Pomerantz (1978) which took into account the role of the listener in the interaction. They developed three broad categories of addressee's responses to compliments; **accept, reject, and deflect or evade**.

In another study conducted by Holmes (1995), gender differences emerged in relation to the functions of compliments. The data suggested that it was more socially acceptable for women to give compliments, while for men it was seen as a face-threatening act. In addition, she found that frequency, structure and topics of Compliments differed among men and women. Overall, women were found to give and receive more compliments than men. While it was less common for subordinates to compliment those of higher

status, women of higher status received more compliments than men in higher positions. Patterns of compliments differed also, with men preferring to reduce the force of the compliments (*nice shirt!*), while women preferred a structure that increased its force (*What a lovely shirt!*) *ibid.* While men compliment more on possessions, women compliment more on appearances.

### *III.3.1 Compliments in English and Arabic*

Languages are different regarding how and what it is complimented (Wolfson 1981), it is not enough to only know and understand the topic differences, who to compliment and when. What must be understood are the underlying cultural values these differences convey. (Holmes and Brown: 1987).

A number of studies have compared the speech act of complimenting across cultures; Emery (2000) has reported that Ferguson (1978, and 1983) was the first to examine the phenomenon in Arabic. At a later stage, a number of other studies have appeared like the work of Nelson *et al.* (1993) on Egyptian and American compliments.

A study by Nelson, Al-Batal and Echols (1996) investigates the compliment and compliment responses behavior of United States English teachers and Arabic native speakers in Syria. Similarities include the tendency by both groups to accept or downplay but rarely reject Compliments. Differences were found in Compliment Response behavior. Whereas United States English speakers used more appreciation tokens (thanks), in the Arabic equivalent '*Shukran*' on its own was not considered sufficient and needed to be extended. Furthermore, Syrians were found to use more formulaic forms of compliment responses, the length of which was tied to the sincerity of the compliment.

Farghal and Al-khatib (2001) provide a preliminary analysis from a pragmatic and sociolinguistic point of view, of compliment responses in Jordanian Arabic as they are used by Jordanian college

students. It focuses upon the relation of the individual's sexual identity to her/his compliment behavior and the attitudes and values attached to it.

Al Falasi (2007) conducted a study which aims at finding out whether Arabic learners of English (Emirati Females in particular) produce target like compliment responses in English and whether pragmatic transfer can occur.

English speakers use a very restricted set of lexical and syntactic structures to formulate their compliments. In contrast, Arabic native speakers use a wide variety of ritualized phrases that are equated with their social situations. (Al-Rifa'i, 2004: 65).

The Arab society is based on the principle that man attains his full being only in living in harmonious social relationships with others. Clearly, it pays a great importance to politeness and kindness in the social system, which is why one can talk about many expressions that have nothing in common in terms of structures and vocabulary but just share the illocutionary goal, while in English, the overwhelming majority of compliments fall within a highly restricted set of adjectives and verbs. The majority employ only five adjectives: “good”, “nice”, “beautiful”, “pretty” and “great” and just the two verbs: “like” and “love” (Wolfson, 1981: 117-8)

#### *Examples of compliments and compliments response in English and Arabic*

In Arabic, in only one social setting, complementing a woman on a piece of clothing she is wearing, we can use a number of various expressions.

- 1) *Shu hal fustan el helu, rah yakul minek shaqfeh!*
  - What a nice dress! It will almost eat part of your body!
- 2) *Talaa zai el amar!*
  - You look like the moon
- 3) *Issala aala~nabi!*
  - Prayers are on the prophet!

- 4) *Mashallah aaneek!*
  - *What a nice person!*
- 5) *Bijanenn ~alek el fustan!*
  - Your dress drives one crazy!

If the above utterances were made to a woman by her mother, sister or friend, it would be considered as a polite way to praise her on her look. But if a stranger says the verbal cliché “*shu hal helo*”, it would be considered as impolite and rude. So the use of compliments as polite lingua-pragmatics forms depends on the socio-cultural variables.

One may also notice that when translated literally to English, these compliments might sound odd to an English speaker and difficult to understand.

Compliments which fall out of the categories known to English native speakers also might be difficult to understand, like mentioning in Arabic that someone looks like a bridegroom after having a bath (*talei arees*) (*you look like a bridegroom!*).

In the Arab Culture, the best bath one can have, after which he is supposed to look perfect, is his wedding bath. However, the same situation does not apply to English. It seems certainly odd to a native English speaker (Al Rifa’i, 2004: 66).

Moreover, when accepting a compliment, English speakers tend to use the token ‘thank you’ to respond to any compliment, as if they were acknowledging a friendly gift, while Arabs tend to return the compliment (which might sound insincere to NSs), or insist on offering the object of the compliment to the speaker (something that might be embarrassing to the NSs who did not expect this behavior) (Hessa, 2007:31). They use lingua-pragmatic formulas such as: *hada min lutfak* (this is out of your kindness!). *maqadam* (it is offered to you). The responses of both groups are based on different values attached to compliments in both cultures.

Even when the two lingua-pragmatic forms show some reassembles, each language has its peculiar way in expressing compliments and their responses.

### *III.4 Apologies*

According to Brown and Levinson, apologies are politeness strategies. An apology is primarily and essentially a social act. It is aimed at maintaining good relation between participants. To apologize is to act politely, both in vernacular sense and in more technical sense of paying attention to the addressee's face needs (Brown and Levinson, 1987). An apology is a fundamental speech act which is a part of human communication occurs in every culture to maintain good relations between interlocutors. Apologies are: "basically a speech act which is intended to provide support for the H, who was actually or potentially affected by a violation X". They continued saying that the speaker S is willing to humiliate himself or herself to some extent and admit the fault and responsibility for X. which make the speech act of apologizing face-threatening to S and face-saving to H.

Leech (1983: 125) defined apologies as transactions involving "a bid to change the balance-sheet of the relation between *s* and *h*"

The imbalance in the relationship between S and H is created by S committing an offence harming H, and S's apology constitutes an attempt at restoring the balance. Accordingly, remedial apologies can be defined as compensatory actions used to restore and maintain social harmony. They allow "the participants to go on their way, if not with satisfaction that matters are closed, then at least with the right to act as if they feel that matters are closed and that ritual equilibrium has been restored" (Goffman, 1971: 140).

Another important distinction is found in Goffman's (1978: 280) definition of apologies. It is the one made between substantial and ritual apologies. While the motivation for the former is genuine

regret for the committed offence, the latter aims at fulfilling social expectations. The social function of apologies is emphasized by Norrick, according to whom they are performed in order “to evince good manners, to assuage the addressee’s wrath, or simply to get off the hook and be on one’s way”.

On a similar note, Zimin (1981: 41) argues that by apologizing we are “doing what is socially acceptable and expected”.

It is mainly this function of apologies that Coulmas refers to as “highly recurrent and routinised” (1981: 69). He defines ritual apologies in terms of conversational routines, which he views as conventional implicatures in Grice’s sense.

The distinction between genuine and ritual apologies is, of course, fuzzy as they can be “motivated from both perspectives” (Fraser 1981: 266). It seems, therefore, that apologies combine normative and strategic elements of politeness: Uttering the appropriate routine formula under the circumstances requiring it can be viewed as an aspect of normative politeness, but engaging in considerations regarding the future relationship with the offended party or one’s reputation and weighing them up against the humiliation involved in admitting responsibility for the offence is clearly strategic. This strategic side of apologies brings S’s as well as H’s face into play and seems to justify Brown and Levinson’s concept of face as ‘wants’. (Cited in Ogermann 2009: 46-48)

In order to restore H’s face damaged by the offence, S performs a speech act which is costly to his or her own face, which makes apologies face-saving for the H and face-threatening for S.

Edmondson (1981: 280) defines apologies as “an instance of socially-sanctioned H-supportive behavior” and Holmes (1995: 155) maintains that apologies are “addressed to B’s face needs and intended to remedy an offence for which A takes responsibility.

While the definitions provided in cross-cultural research focus on the hearer’s face and its restoration, research dealing with apologies as a means of image restoration conducted in the fields of

sociology and social psychology is mainly concerned with the speaker's face needs. The view of apologies as strategies benefiting the speaker also features in some definitions provided in linguistic studies. Edmondson and House (1981: 153), for instance, point out that the purpose of an apology is not only to placate the hearer, but also to restore one's own social status.

Fraser (1981: 259) seems to share their view when arguing that apologies relieve the offender of some moral responsibility and refers to research conducted in the field of psychology when arguing: "Contrary to Brown and Levinson, I posit remedial work as a face-saving device as regards S (not H). Concern for H's face is only a by-product of the attempt to serve the intent of saving S's face" (Fraser 1992b: 31).

By observing the definitions given above, we can notice that scholars have different points of view about apologies. Some of them (such as Brown and Levinson) describe it as an **individually process** between speaker and hearer which comes as a face-saving act for H and a face-threatening act to S. Other scholars (like Leech) describe apologies in general as connected social goal of maintaining harmony in society.

Both views on apologies are acceptable since they give different perspectives on this speech act: "individuality" and "society" for a better understanding of the concept of apology.

#### *III.4.1 Apologies in Arabic*

After a review of the relevant literature, we can say that more studies are conducted to investigate apology strategies in Arabic but most of them are cross-cultural studies comparing English and Arabic or investigating the Arab learners learning English as a foreign language. For instance, Rizk (1997) analyzed the apology strategies used by 110 Egyptian, Saudi, Jordanian, Palestinian, Moroccan, Lebanese, Syrian, Tunisian, Yemeni and Libyan learners of English. His results show similarities between the apology

strategies used by native and non-native speakers of English in all situations but one. Unlike native speakers of English, Arabs do not apologize to children but try to make the child forgive them through sentences such as do not feel sad, baby. Furthermore, Arabs were found to express apology through offering food – a practice which although it may seem rude to native speakers of English, is culturally correct since food in some cultures is an acceptable offer in that has the power to wipe off a lot of hurt. (Cited in Ahmad Al Fattah 2010: 235)

Another study which deals with apology strategies of Jordanian EFL University students is conducted by Fahmi and Fahmi (2006). This study is an investigation of Jordanian EFL University students' apologies, using a 10 item questionnaire. The researchers tabulate and compare the strategies used by male and female respondents for the purpose of uncovering whether or not sex differences exist.

The findings reveal that male and female respondents use the primary strategies of statement of remorse, accounts, compensation, promise not to repeat offense and reparation. They also resorted to the use of non-apology strategies such as blaming victim and brushing off the incident as unimportant to exonerate themselves from blame. The findings further revealed that male and female respondents differed in the order of the primary strategies they used.

#### *III.4.2 Apology Strategies*

People usually apologize by means of semantically different types of expressions and apology strategies are often described according to their semantic formulae.

Different scholars provided different classifications which often overlap. Some of these classifications are extended and detailed while others are rather broad. And the more recent classifications seem to give more comprehensive views than previous models.

Researchers found that linguistic realization pattern of the act of apology can be performed in one of the two forms or combination of both. The first and most direct is done via explicit illocutionary force indicating device (IFIDs) which are performative verb expressing apology: such as: “I am sorry,” “excuse me,” “I apologize,” “forgive me,” and “pardon me.” The other way of performing apology is using four potential strategies (with or without IFID). These strategies are:

1- Expression of responsibility: is used to range from responsibility acceptance and explicit self-humbling to placate the complainer to a complete denial of the fault and evasive responses.

2- Explanation or account of the cause brought about by the offense: occurs when X intends to justify the offence which he/she has no control on, this explanation may be expressed explicitly or implicitly.

3- An offer to repair: is used in situations where the function can be compensated, it is either specified or unspecified.

4- Promise of forbearance: is a way of admitting responsibility but not necessary via an explicit apology.

In some cases, apologies are intensified by using adverbials and repetitions of IFID or by combining the IFID with one or more of the apology strategies.

## Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Discussion

### VI.1 Respondents

The number of respondents is 100. 77 of them are Arabic native speakers and 23 are English native speakers. Their ages range between 20 and 54. They include 64 females (64 %) and 36 males (36 %).

The Arabic native speakers are from different Arab countries: mainly from Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Morocco and Algeria. They come from diverse social, economic, and educational backgrounds. They include 54 females (70.12%) and 23 males (29.87%). 62 of the respondents are between 20 and 30 years old (80.51%) and 15 of them (19.48) are over 30.

70 respondents (90.9%) are somewhat familiar with American or British culture. This familiarity is mainly a result of *studying* and taking courses in English linguistics or from visiting an English-speaking country, or from the *Media* or *history lessons*. All respondents have a BA, MA. All of them knew English. The majority of these respondents are students or just concluding their university studies, while 29 of them have occupations (37.66%). Finally, 33 of the Arab respondents (63.46%) have visited the United States for one purpose or another. The others (36.54%) are confined to their local, cultural and linguistic, codes.

The 23 English native speakers, who come from different English speaking countries, particularly from UK, USA and Canada, are also from diverse social, economic, and educational backgrounds. They include 10 females (43.47%) and 13 males (56.25%). All respondents are over 40 years old.

In addition, 15 of the English native speakers (62.21%) are a little familiar with a local Arab culture. This familiarity is mainly a result of *the media, employment and friends*. All respondents have a BA, MA or a PhD. 8 of the respondent (34.78%) have limited knowledge of Arabic, and all of them have occupations. Finally, 10 of the respondents (43.47%) have visited one or more of the Arab

countries for one purpose or another. The others (56.52%) were confined to their local, cultural and linguistic, codes.

#### *IV.2 Data*

The data was collected by using two questionnaires which were taken from Shammas (2005) with some modifications so they fit into the scope of the research.

The data collected include 523 transcribed pages in the form of answers to varied questions in two questionnaires (see Appendices). Questionnaire I was filled in by 77 Arabic native speakers, who formed Group One (G1). Questionnaire II was answered by 23 English native speakers, who formed Group Two (G2). Excluding page 1 which requested personal information about the respondents, Questionnaire I has four major questions. Questions I (A & B) to III raise questions about social values and beliefs that are thought to form the *socio-cognitive environment* of the respondents (see Sperber and Wilson, 1986a/1995). However, Question III in particular asks the respondents in the two questionnaires to choose between two social values in case of conflict. Question IV consists of a table which tests the ability of the Arabic native speakers to translate into English or find the equivalents of some Arabic lingua-pragmatic politeness formulas. The table includes 17 different formulas used in different situations in Arabic language

Similarly, excluding page 1 which is about personal information of the respondents, Questionnaire II, filled in by English native speakers includes four major questions. Question one (A - E), in particular, focuses on the degree of the exposure of English native speakers to semantically translated *Arabic politeness expressions*. Questions II-IV has the same questions (I - III) answered by G1 respondents and includes information-seeking questions about the respondents' beliefs and social values believed to have direct implications on politeness in relevant contexts.

### *IV.3 Methodology*

This section contains a discussion of the methodological approach and research design best suited to the study.

Both quantitative, i.e. statistical, and qualitative, i.e. analytical methods were used in this research. On the one hand, this should reflect the facts of social values and beliefs of the two groups of respondents in the two communities under study. These facts are represented in tables that show the figures and percentages of the respondents' responses and evaluations. On the other, it serves to connect the results of these evaluations to a theory of politeness as based on *societal values* and *cultural beliefs*.

Anderson and Poole (1994: 29) have pointed out that "it is sometimes desirable to combine qualitative and quantitative research to maximize the theoretical implications of research and findings". An adoption of a qualitative method can allow the researcher to not only describe happenings and behaviors, but also to explore why such phenomena occur (Marshall and Rossman, 1995: 39). The combining of a qualitative approach with a quantitative approach in this study seem to offer the addition of completeness and meaning to the resultant data (ibid.).

The key issue associated with addressing a multi-method strategy is the integration of quantitative and qualitative research. A quantitative approach is generally concerned with attitudes and with describing what people do (Hammersley, 1992: 45). Conversely, the central goal of qualitative approach is to 'document the world from the point of view of the people studied (ibid, 45)

### *IV.4 Findings and Discussion*

A general overview of the data represented in the tables below can reveal a lot of information about similarities and discrepancies between the social values and beliefs of the two communities under study and also the differences in the way they express and understand linguistic politeness.

Tables 1 - 6, for example, provide an assessment of how the respondents in the two communities view privacy and imposition in relation to certain areas that are believed to be a source of possible conflict between the two groups. Tables 7 - 8 reflect the respondents' preferences of a given value over another in case of a possible conflict between the two. Tables 9 - 10, however, reveal the attitudes of respondents to interpersonal relations and their societal structure.

Table 1 shows the Arabic native speakers respondents' attitudes to being asked by an *acquaintance* about their marital status, age, etc. (a – g). Table 2 in the other hand shows the English native speakers attitudes to the same questions. These questions are considered points of conflict between the two cultures. The results reveal, for instance, that the greatest majority of Arab respondents were not at all offended (87%) or a little offended (12.98%) by being asked about their *marital status*. Unexpectedly, though, 65.90% of the English native speakers were not at all offended by the same question, and 20.45% were only a little unhappy about such a question. In other words, such questions raised by acquaintances were, to both the Arabic and English native speakers, only a little *impolite* and did not form a considerable degree of *imposition* on the hearer (see Tables 1 and 2 below).

Q. 1 A1	A	b	C	d	e	F	g
Asked by <u>an acquaintance</u> about	Marital status	Age	Income	Political affiliation	Relation with parents	Spouse's beauty or handsomeness	Whether one has a Boy/girlfriend
Group 1: Male	1: 2; 2: 0; 3: 8; 4: 13	1: 0; 2: 0; 3:1; 4: 22	1: 7; 2: 7; 3: 5; 4: 4	1: 0; 2: 2; 3: 11; 4: 9	1: 5; 2: 4; 3: 4; 4: 10	1: 10; 2: 4; 3: 4; 4: 5	1: 2; 2: 6; 3: 11; 4: 4
Group 2: Female	1: 2; 2: 6; 3: 16; 4: 30	1: 8; 2: 0; 3: 12; 4: 34	1: 16; 2: 6; 3: 16; 4: 14	1: 2; 2: 6; 3: 24; 4: 22	1: 10; 2: 4; 3: 12; 4: 28	1: 16; 2: 6 3: 16; 4: 16	1: 20; 2: 8 3: 8; 4: 16

Table 1: Response to Questions Raised by Acquaintances. (Arabic native speakers)

Q. 2 A1	A	b	C	d	e	F	g
Asked by an acquaintance about	Marital status	Age	Income	Political affiliation	Relation with parents	Spouse's beauty or handsomeness	Whether one has a Boy/girlfriend
Male	1: 0; 2: 2; 3: 4; 4: 7	1: 0; 2: 3; 3: 3; 4: 7	1: 6; 2: 2; 3: 1; 4: 4	1: 0; 2: 1; 3: 3; 4: 9	1: 5; 2: 3; 3: 0; 4: 5	1: 0; 2: 3; 3: 9; 4: 1	1: 0; 2: 2; 3: 8; 4: 3
Female	1: 0; 2: 4; 3: 3; 4: 3	1: 6; 2: 1; 3: 0; 4: 3	1: 3; 2: 4; 3: 0; 4: 3	1: 0; 2: 0; 3: 8; 4: 1	1: 2; 2: 2; 3: 2; 4: 4	1: 2; 2: 1 3: 2; 4: 5	1: 1; 2: 0; 3: 4; 4: 5

**Table 2: responses to Questions Raised by Acquaintances (English native speakers)**

Table 1 shows the responses of the Arabic native speakers to some questions raised by acquaintances. The table is divided into two sections: to show how females and males answered these same questions, so we can have a point of view on gender and politeness in the Arabic speaking cultures. The same is applied to table 2 which shows the responses of English native speakers to the questions raised by acquaintances.

The first two grades of offence 1 and 2 (1. extremely and 2. Very much) represent more or less, the same attitude of the respondents, and so do the last two grades 3 and 4 (3. A little offended and 4. Not at all) and this is why they are combined together into two separate categories in the questions asked by acquaintances.

In this way, we get these results for Question I A1: a) asking about the *marital status* by an acquaintance was only 5.19% offensive to Arab respondents and 30.43% to English native speakers.

The female respondents in the group 1 were less offended by this question (15.71%) than female respondents in the second group (40%), maybe because this could be a violation of their privacy, but for Arabs this a perfectly normal question to ask to acquaintances.

Another reason was that many of the second group female respondents were over 40 and may have marriage-related problems that might entail offence by such a question.

While for Arab women, this question is not considered as an offence because it would lead to a potential marriage proposal since

the majority of the female respondents were unmarried students under 30.

a) Only 10 out of the 77 Arabic native speakers (12.98%) found it offensive to be asked about their *marital status*, while 26.08 % of the English native speakers found this same question offensive. The privacy doesn't seem to be a problem for Arabs, inquiring about being married or not is normal for them, for single women, this could be an occasion to find single men among their acquaintances.

b) Asking about *age* was offensive to only 10.38% of Arabic native speakers and to 43.47% of English native speakers. However, we have to take into consideration the fact that the female respondents in the second group (English native Speakers) found it 70% offensive to ask about *age*, because the majority of the women were over 40 and this is an impolite question to ask to women at this age. 80.15 % of the Arab respondents were between 20 and 30 years old; many of them were also students. Such an age group does not normally care about being asked about their ages. But it is important to mention that although no men in the Arabic native speakers group had seen this question as an offence, 14.81% of the women did (especially those who are over 35 years old)

c) Asking about *income* was 46.44% offensive to Arabs and 65.21% to English native speakers. This result shows that the more sophisticated a society is, the less polite to ask about income. In developing countries such as those of the Arab world, the income is generally slight, so people do not mind to be asked about it. For instance, it is known to all how much a teacher or an accountant is paid and there is no need to be offended by such question even if asked by an acquaintance.

d) Asking about one's *political affiliation* was 12.97% offensive to Arabs but only 7.67% to English native speakers. This is an interesting result in the sense that it reflects the socio-political situation in each country; the more freedom and democracy prevail in a given society, the less people mind being asked about their political affiliations. On a cost-benefit scale of politeness (see Leech,

1983), people in a free society do not lose anything by declaring their political affiliation. But it is also worth mentioning that the 12.97% is rather a slight ratio for this group, it shows that young people (85.75%) are no more afraid of expressing their political affiliation with the changes we witness after what press calls “the Arab Spring”

e) Asking about one’s *relation with parents* was only 29.86% offensive to Arabs but 52.17% to English native speakers. This is also a reflection of the degree of independence produced by the industrial revolution and labor division in the West as opposed to the agricultural Arab society that mostly relies on *mutual help* among kinsmen of the same family or even tribe.

f) Asking about one’s *spouse’s beauty/handsomeness* was 46.74% offensive to group1 but only 26.08% to Group2. Such a question is more offensive, hence impolite, to Arabs than to English native speakers; this is understandable in the light of religious attachment and historical development of the relationship between men and women in the Arab East; one’s spouse is *one’s own*, and this relationship is considered extremely private and even sacred. Therefore, an off-record investigation into such privacy can be extremely impolite in Arab societies. However, we have to note that the ratio of 53.42% of G1 responses accepting such a question as polite (or, at least, *not impolite*) indicates a great social change that should not go unnoticed, especially among the new generation of students, employees and professors.

g) Asking about whether one had a boy-/girlfriend was 46.75% offensive to Arabs but only 13.04% to English native speakers. Once more, this last result is related to both the necessary social consensus and the religious implications dominating the Arab East culture. However this, ratio shows that this kind of relation is being more accepted among youth, and is becoming less of a taboo situation especially among men where 65.21% of them did not mind being asked about having a girlfriend or not. As for the women, 44.43% of them did not consider this question to be an offence, this

is rather a high percentage for such a society where both tradition and religious teaching are really important and where such subjects are still considered as taboos. It is important to say that these ratios were the highest among university students than other respondents.

The same questions were repeated in Q. IA2, but they were raised by *friends* (see Tables 3 and 4 below). The results are as follows:

a) Asking about the *marital status* by a friend was only 5.18% offensive to the Arabs and 8.69% to the English native speakers.

b) Asking about *age* was 7.78% offensive to Arabs and 21.73% to the English native speakers.

c) Asking about *income* was only 25.96% offensive to Arabs and 30.43% to English native speakers.

d) Asking about one's *political affiliation* was 6.48% offensive to Arabs but only 4.34% to English native speakers.

e) Asking about one's *relation with parents* was 18.17% offensive to Arabs and 17.39% to English native speakers.

f) Asking about one's *spouse's beauty/handsomeness* was 23.37% offensive to Arabs but only 8.69% to English native speakers.

g) Asking about whether one had a boy-/girlfriend was only 15.57% offensive to Arabs and 8.69% to English native speakers.

The responses in Tables 3 and 4 below clearly indicate the social structure of the two communities under study. The researcher assumed that the main objections of Arabs will be related to being asked about wives and their attractions and also about having or not a boy/girl friend, but the results were really surprising. Only 23.37% of the respondents would be offended when asked about their spouse's beauty. 56.51% of the males did not get offended by such a question. This clearly shows a change in the way young people think. To them, these questions asked by friends are not impolite, nor taboos. They consider them to be normal chat subjects, while as

mentioned before, this personal information would be considered sacred in the religion and in the society. This may be a high number is due to the fact that most of the respondents are between 20-30 years old and are single.

Another question raised my attention, the one about having a girl/boy friend, although in Arab culture this is a taboo subject, 84.4% of the respondents found it completely normal for a friend to ask such a question.

These two previous questions show a great change in the way people perceive taboo. It is a proof that Arab society is being affected by new Western values.

The major objection of English native speakers is focusing on the economic aspect of their private life. Age and relationship with parents are also a point of conflict even with friends; they consider such matters to be really private and do not like to share them. For Arabs, it is perfectly normal to chat with friends and acquaintances about income, age, relationship with parents, etc.

Q. 1 A2	A	b	C	d	e	F	g
Asked by friends	Marital status	Age	Income	Political affiliation	Relation with parents	Spouse's beauty	Boy/girlfriend
Male	1: 0; 2: 2; 3: 4; 4: 17	1: 0; 2: 2; 3: 0; 4: 21	1: 4; 2: 4; 3: 7; 4: 8	1: 1; 2: 2; 3: 10; 4: 10	1: 4; 2: 0; 3: 4; 4: 15	1: 6; 2: 4; 3: 6; 4: 7	1: 2; 2: 0; 3: 11; 4: 10
Female	1: 2; 2: 0; 3: 6; 4: 46	1: 4; 2: 0; 3: 8; 4: 42	1: 8; 2: 4; 3: 16 4: 26	1: 2; 2: 0; 3: 14; 4: 38	1: 6; 2: 4; 3: 10; 4: 34	1: 6; 2: 2 3: 4; 4: 42	1: 6; 2: 4; 3: 14; 4: 30

**Table 3: Questions Raised by Friends (Arabic native speakers)**

Q. 3 A2	A	B	C	d	E	F	g
Asked by friends	Marital status	Age	Income	Political affiliation	Relation with parents	Spouse's beauty	Boy/girlfriend
Male	1: 0; 2: 1; 3: 2; 4: 10	1: 0; 2: 1 3: 2; 4: 10	1: 1; 2: 4; 3: 1; 4: 7	1: 0; 2: 0; 3: 3; 4: 11	1:1; 2: 2; 3: 6; 4: 4	1: 0; 2: 2 3: 3; 4: 8	1: 0; 2: 1 3: 4; 4: 8
Female	1: 0; 2: 1 3: 2; 4: 7	1: 0; 2: 4 3: 1; 4: 5	1: 2; 2: 0 3: 3; 4: 5	1: 1; 2: 0 3: 0; 4: 9	1: 1; 2: 0 3: 7; 4: 2	1: 0; 2: 0 3: 2; 4: 8	1: 1; 2: 0 3: 1; 4: 9

**Table 4: Questions Raised by Friends (English native speakers)**

*Q.IIIB* included questions (a – e) raised by different categories of people in various situations. The questions were believed to seek second goals (see Meyer, 2002); therefore, they were charged with a layer of implicit imposition. Grades 1 and 2, combined together in the results below, entailed possible confrontation and face threat to the hearer. However, Grades 3 and 4 did not implicate impoliteness. The responses to such questions were as follows:

a) *Insisting* on borrowing a car, etc. by a friend was 42.85% threatening to Arabic native speakers and 69.56% to English native speakers.

b) *Insisting* on respondents to accept an invitation was 20.77% threatening to Arabic native speakers and 21.73% to English native speakers.

c) *Offering advice* by an acquaintance was 24.67% threatening to Arabic native speakers but 8.69% to English native speakers.

d) *Correcting behavior* by acquaintance was 28.56% threatening to Arabic native speakers and 30.43% to English native speakers.

e) *Correcting behavior* by a friend was 20.77% offensive to Arabic native speakers and 17.39% to English native speakers. (See tables 5 and 6 below).

Q. 3B	a	b	c	d	e
Asked about attitude to	A friend insisting	Acquaintance insisting	acquaintance offering advice	acquaintance correcting behavior	Friend correcting behavior
Male	1: 0; 2: 7; 3: 11; 4: 5	1: 0; 2: 6; 3: 0; 4: 17	1: 6; 2: 3; 3: 5; 4: 9	1: 4; 2: 6; 3: 5; 4: 8	1: 0; 2: 2 3: 10; 4:11
Female	1: 6; 2: 20 3: 16; 4: 34	1: 2; 2: 8; 3: 10; 4: 34	1: 6; 2: 4; 3: 16; 4: 26	1: 2; 2: 10; 3: 22; 4: 28	1: 6; 2: 8 3:14; 4:26

**Table 5: Response to Possible imposition (Arabic native speakers)**

Q. 3B	a	B	C	D	E
Asked about attitude to	a friend insisting	acquaintance insisting	acquaintance offering advice	acquaintance correcting behavior	Friend correcting behavior
Male	1: 1; 2: 8 3: 2; 4: 2	1: 1; 2: 2 3: 2; 4: 8	1: 0; 2: 1 3: 2; 4: 10	1: 1; 2: 2 3: 4; 4: 6	1: 1; 2: 0 3: 8; 4: 4
Female	1: 2; 2: 5 3: 1; 4: 2	1: 0; 2: 2 3: 1; 4: 7	1: 0; 2: 1 3: 3; 4: 6	1: 2; 2: 2 3: 2; 4: 4	1: 0; 2: 3 3: 4; 4: 3

**Table 6: Response to possible imposition (English native speakers)**

It is obvious that issues of a personal nature were not really alarming for both groups, except for the question (a) where the two groups found it offensive that a friend keeps insisting about taking something from them (42.85% for Arabic native speakers and 69.56% for English native speakers).

For the other issues: *Offering advice, correcting behavior*, whether by a friend or an acquaintance (b - e above), were not alarming to both English and Arabic native speakers. This is a reflection of the degree of tolerance Arabs have been *tamed* to accept during several centuries of colonization and totalitarian regimes; on the other hand, it also shows that although the *individual's territories* are his/her own in Western culture, they are ready to accept advice and invitation in some occasions. It shows a change in the way they perceive privacy and imposition.

Question IV (1 – 4) asked the respondents to choose one of two values (A or B) in case of conflict. The results obtained were as follows:

1) 54 (70.12%) of the Arab respondents chose *truthfulness*; and among the 23 respondents who chose *tact*: 20 were women, whereas 13 English native speakers (56.52%) opted for *truthfulness* in case of conflict; and the same thing is found in the respondents choosing *tact*: among the 10 respondents, 60% were women. This shows that women in both groups are interested in tact and being delicate rather than being truthful in case of conflicts. For women tact is the art of selecting words carefully, delicately and in a way

not to offend or alienate others. Tact is a sense of what to do or say to maintain good relationships with others.

2) A serious conflict showed itself in 52 Arabic native speakers (67.53%) preferring *blood relations* to *law*, while only 4 English native speakers (17.39%) gave more weight to *blood relations* than to *law*. It is worth mentioning that for Arabic native speakers (29.62%) of the women gave more weight to *law* than *blood relations*.

3) A majority of the Arabic native speakers (55.84%) gave more weight to *Public welfare* than *personal interest*, but English native speakers percentage was higher with (85.95%) of respondents giving more weight to *public welfare* than *personal interest*.

4) Finally, the major discrepancy reflected itself in 59 Arabic native speakers (76.62%) giving more weight to *positive politeness* than negative politeness, whereas only 9 of their American counterparts (39.13%) resorted to the same choice (see Tables 7 and 8 below).

Q. 4	1a	1b	2a	2b	3a	3b	4a	4b
A choice between values	Truthfulness OR	Tact	Law OR	Blood Relation	Personal Interests OR	Public Welfare	Negative Politeness OR	Positive Politeness
male	20	3	9	18	12	15	8	19
female	34	20	16	34	22	28	10	40

Table 7: Order of Value (Arabic native speakers)

Q. 4	1a	1b	2a	2b	3a	3b	4a	4b
A choice between values	Truthfulness OR	Tact	Law OR	Blood Relation	Personal Interests OR	Public Welfare	Negative Politeness OR	Positive Politeness
Male	9	4	11	2	2	11	8	5
Female	4	6	8	2	1	9	6	4

Table 8: Order of Values (English native speakers)

Although the figures in Tables 7 and 8 above are self-explanatory, it can be illuminating to shed light on certain points. For instance, according to Shamma (2005: 21) “Arab situation now stipulates truthfulness as a condition for survival. Too much tact is lying and even hypocritical, particularly when it is practiced at the expense of truthfulness.”

For Arabs, *Blood relation* is also more important than *law* because they think that actual law is not maintained and applied in many, if not all, Arab states; but *blood relations* can protect you in case of problems. This is due to the importance of kinship relations in the Arab societies.

Finally, one should pay attention to the result of choosing between negative politeness and positive politeness: the percentage 39.13 % of English native speakers opting for *positive politeness* shows their readiness for seeking *connection* rather than merely avoiding imposition (see Jameson, 2004). It also refers to the varied socio-cultural and ethnic structure of the respondents' background. However, the fact that 76.62% of the Arabic native speakers resorted to positive politeness means that avoiding imposition is not enough for them; they seek higher level of cooperation because of their socio-cultural structure (see Brown and Levinson, 1987). Religious predominance in the Arab World imposes a hierarchal structure that demands respect and the excessive use of honorifics. (See Levinson, 1983)

Nonetheless, it is an eye-catcher to see that 23.37% of the Arab respondents opted for negative politeness. This can be explicated in the light of Western influence on Arab respondents, especially as most of them have studied English as a foreign language.

Question III deals purely with interpersonal relations and social conventions that have direct implications on what is considered polite within the general framework of a given society.

Following the same procedure of combining the first two categories and the last two separately for getting the respondents' attitudes to such conventions, we get these results:

A) 87% of the Arabic native speakers' would definitely *stand up* when shaking hands with somebody, but only 17.39% of the English native speakers would do the same.

B) At the same time, both groups saw it as an obligation to *offer their condolences* to a friend, whose relative has just passed away; with 84.41% for Arabic native speakers and 86.95% for English native speakers.

C) Inviting somebody for a dinner in return to a previous invitation had the agreement of 83.11% of the Arabic native speakers but only 52.17% of the English native speakers saw it as an obligation.

D) Ignoring a colleague passing by was impolite for 74.11% of the Arabic native speakers, but only 39.13 of the English native speakers did the same.

E) Both groups agreed that congratulating a newly married friend is an obligation. With a percentage of 87% for Arabic native speakers, and 86.95% for English native speakers approving that it is an obligation.

F) 15.58% of the Arabic native speakers approved of sex before marriage, while 86.95% of the English native speakers did not see anything wrong with it.

G) Seeking social consensus is expected by 31.16% of the Arabic native speakers, and only 26.08% of the English native speakers did the same.

H) The majority of the Arabic native speakers (93.50%) agreed that helping parents in need is an obligation, while 73.91% of the English native speakers approved the same.

I) Helping a brother in need was approved by 92.20% of the Arabic native speakers, and only by 60.86% of the English native speakers.

J) When rebuked by their parents, only 27.72% of the Arabic native speakers would answer back, but 65.12% of the English native speakers would do the same.

K) 45.45% of the Arabic native speakers would answer back their tutors if rebuked by them, but 73.91% of the English native speakers would do the same.

<b>Question III</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>
<b>A: Standing up when shaking hands?</b>	1: 7; 2: 14 3: 0; 4: 2	1: 26; 2: 20 3: 8 4: 0
<b>B: Offer condolences to friend?</b>	1: 16 2: 3 3: 2 4: 2	1: 44 2: 2 3: 6 4: 2
<b>C: Invite someone who had invited you?</b>	1: 8 2: 8 3: 7 4: 0	1: 22 2: 26 3: 6 4: 0
<b>D: Impolite to ignore colleague?</b>	1: 8 2: 8 3: 7 4: 0	1: 12 2: 18 3: 23 4: 1
<b>E: Congratulate married friend?</b>	1: 19 2: 2 3: 2 4: 0	1: 36 2: 10 3: 6 4: 2
<b>F: Approve of pre-marriage sex?</b>	1: 2; 2: 4 3: 4; 4: 13	1: 4 2: 2 3: 6 4: 40
<b>G: Satisfy social consensus?</b>	1: 2 2: 6 3: 11 4: 4	1: 0; 2: 16 3: 28 4: 10
<b>H: Help parents in need?</b>	1: 19 2: 2 3: 0 4: 2	1: 48 2: 2 3: 2 4: 2
<b>I: Help brother in need?</b>	1: 20; 2: 2 3: 1; 4: 0	1: 32; 2: 18 3: 2; 4: 2
<b>J: Answer back parents?</b>	1: 3; 2: 4; 3: 0; 4: 16	1: 8; 2: 6; 3: 12; 4: 28
<b>K: Answer back tutors?</b>	1: 0; 2: 11 3: 6; 4: 6	1: 2; 2: 22; 3: 10; 4: 20

**Table 9: Attitude to Social Obligations (Arabic Native Speakers)**

Question V	Male	Female
<b>A: Standing up when shaking hands?</b>	1: 1; 2: 2 3: 7; 4: 3	1: 0; 2: 1 3: 3; 4: 6
<b>B: Offer condolences to friend?</b>	1: 5; 2: 6 3: 2; 4: 0	1: 7; 2: 2 3: 1; 4: 0
<b>C: Invite someone who had invited you?</b>	1: 2; 2: 4 3: 6; 4: 1	1: 2; 2: 4 3: 3; 4: 1
<b>D: Impolite to ignore colleague?</b>	1: 1; 2: 2 3: 7; 4: 3	1: 5; 2: 1 3: 3; 4: 1
<b>E: Congratulate married friend?</b>	1: 6; 2: 5 3: 2; 4: 0	1: 8; 2: 1 3: 1; 4: 0
<b>F: Approve of pre-marriage sex?</b>	1: 9; 2: 3 3: 1; 4: 0	1: 6; 2: 2 3: 0; 4: 2
<b>G: Satisfy social consensus?</b>	1: 1; 2: 2 3: 8; 4: 2	1: 1; 2: 2 3: 5; 4: 2
<b>H: Help parents in need?</b>	1: 8; 2: 1 3: 3; 4: 1	1: 6; 2: 2 3: 2; 4: 0
<b>I: Help brother in need?</b>	1: 2; 2: 5 3: 4; 2: 2	1: 6; 2: 1 3: 3; 4: 0
<b>J: Answer back parents?</b>	1: 1; 2: 7 3: 3; 4: 2	1: 1; 2: 6 3: 3; 4: 0
<b>K: Answer back tutors?</b>	1: 7; 2: 3 3: 2; 4: 1	1: 1; 2: 6 3: 2; 4: 1

**Table 10: Attitude to Social Obligations (English Native Speakers)**

The answers provided in Tables 9 and 10 above crystallize the socio-cognitive environments of the respondents in the two groups (see Sperber and Wilson, 1995). They reveal the respondents' attitudes to a selection of social obligations and beliefs that form a socio-cognitive basis for everyday behavior. In other words, a conflict in such areas of belief is very likely to end up with serious accusations of impoliteness and even immoral attitudes.

In short, except for offering condolences to a friend and congratulating a newly married friend, the differences between the two groups were considerable in this area of social conventions.

On the whole, as the two Tables reveal, most respondents speaking Arabic would do the following social actions: *stand up* when greeting somebody by shaking hands with them, would *offer condolences* to a friend, *invite somebody* who had already invited them, *congratulate* a newly married friend, and would *not ignore* a colleague passing by. On the other hand, English native speakers do not seem to see such matters as important in interpersonal relations, because they *would not invite someone* who has already invited them, and *would easily ignore a colleague* passing by.

This obvious discrepancy can create a serious gap between the two groups and lead to a possible misunderstanding about the very concept of politeness and its practice. In fact, it seems to reflect a clash between negative and positive polite attitudes to politeness (see Brown and Levinson, 1978).

For Arabs, politeness is used to express *respect* (see Matsumoto, 1988; Ide, 1989; Nwoye, 1992, among others), *cooperation* (see Grice, 1975), *modesty* and *sympathy* (see Leech, 1983) or dominantly *hierarchical social values* (see Shamma, 1995).

One serious point of conflict between the two groups was about *approving pre-marriage sex*, with 86.95% of the English native speakers agreeing with it while only 15.58% of the Arabic native speakers did the same. However, this percentage of Arabs agreeing on having pre-marriage sex was really unexpected, in a society where this subject is considered a taboo, a forbidden issue. If this proves anything, it proves that the Arab society is subject to social change resulting from socio-cultural friction between the two cultures. It also sheds light on the difficulties facing the youth in this society; most of them cannot get married because of the difficult socio-economic situation. In a statistic bulletin released by the Tunisian National Office of Family and Population, one woman out of ten approves to have sex before marriage and four men out of ten approve the same. According to this same bulletin, Tunisia, Lebanon and Morocco come on the top of the Arab countries where

people do not mind having sex before marriage, when the population in Tunisia was interviewed, they said that for them, this has nothing to do with the religion but with changes in the youth mentality. They also said that the reason is the delaying in average age of marriage with 33 years old for men and 29.5 for women. Others said that they would do the same just for the sake of love. All these declarations are really shocking in such conservative societies. One of the respondents told me that people are making such a big deal out of this issue and this pushes young people to do it as a way to mark their difference.

Another important observation in this concern is that three respondents (13.04%) opted for the fourth choice (i.e. *not at all*) in terms of approving of pre-marriage sex. We can consider these secondary results as *meeting points* between the two groups; in other words, each group can find the like of him/her in the other. This can, in fact, be a sound basis for a weak claim of universality.

Seeking social consensus is not a priority for the two groups, (31.16% for the 1<sup>st</sup> group and 26.08% for the second. This is totally understandable for the Western society, but for the Arab one, this shows a more individualistic way of seeing things. Over 70% of the Arabic native speakers do not care about the way society sees them. They are more independent than one would expect. Maybe one of the reasons we had this high percentage is that the majority of the respondents are between 20 and 30 years old, an age where rebellion, independence and difference is important. Most of the students in universities say that they do not care about what society thinks of them, they know that they are different and tend to show it in the way they dress, the way they talk and the way they think.

Social ties, particularly between family members have also showed interesting results in the second group. One might think that the Western Society tends to be more individualistic than the Arab Society, but the results in questions (III. H and J) prove somehow the opposite: this segment of society showed that family and blood relations are very important with 73.91% of the English native

speakers answering that they would help their parents if in need and 60.86% of them would help their brother/sister if in need. This shows that family ties and blood relations are important to more than the half of the respondents. To Arabs, helping parents and other kin relatives is essential, because family, blood relations, kinship, tribe relations, etc... are the core composition of the Arab community.

Although the majority of the Arabic native speakers are not concerned in satisfying the social consensus when doing something, they really give a great importance to the respect of the parents as shown in the responses to the question (III.J). 93.50% of the respondents would not answer back their parents in case of conflict. This is understandable in the light of religious implications of such a situation. In Islam, it is prohibited to fight or rebuke parents, and they must be respected and treated in a good way. As cited in the Holly Quran (17:23) *“And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor.”*

Also, in Arab culture, people have a high degree of respect and appreciation to teachers; this is why 45.45% of the respondents agreed not to answer back their tutors when they are rebuked by them. An example of the high respect to teachers is this old saying: “you could be the slave to who teach you a word” *“من علمني حرفا صرت له عبدا”*.

The results show that every society has a specific way to see and judge what is appropriate, polite and what is inappropriate or rude. It is worth mentioning that politeness is in constant change even in the same culture, the proof is what was considered impolite and unacceptable in our societies is becoming more and more present, although many would not agree with it. For example, twenty or thirty years ago, sitting cross legged, or chewing gum in the presence of an older person would be impolite and rude. A girl wearing short skirts or cut shirts in front of her father or brother would be out of question. Nowadays, this is a banal thing to do.

Another example is the mixed groups in universities which were considered taboos are more and more accepted in our society. All these changes and many others are the result of culture friction, the opening to other cultures and different societies.

As mentioned earlier, Question VI in Questionnaire I presented a table with a collection of Arabic language-specific expressions that may have implications on polite linguistic behavior. The respondents were asked to provide an English translation equivalent to each of these expressions (see Appendix I). In short, the results in the Arabs' questionnaire showed that

1) None of the respondents managed to answer all the questions appropriately;

2) Only 481 out of 1040 answers (46.25%) provided appropriate translation equivalence and/or relevant assessment.

Expressions such as “بالرفاه والبنين”, “استودعناكم الله” and “حقك على راسي” were rarely answered appropriately, even by M.A students of translation.

Question IV in Questionnaire II (A – E) asked the English native speakers to:

a) Assess the communicative function of 20 language-specific expressions semantically (i.e. literally) translated from Arabic.

b) Estimate the percentage of meaningfulness of each expression to him/her as a native speaker of English.

c) Provide an English translation equivalent for each expression.

d) State the clue on which s/he relied in interpreting each expression.

e) Express his/her attitude in case s/he was addressed by a foreigner with such expressions in actual speech situations (see Appendix II).

The results showed that:

a) Their assessment of the communicative function of these expressions on a scale of 6 points (a – f) was inappropriate in

91.29% of the cases, except in the case of “*peace be upon you*”, where the 8 respondents got it right

b) The rate of meaningfulness to the 8 respondents ranged on a scale of 5 points between 0% and 20%;

c) The English translation equivalents were not at all appropriately provided;

d) All respondents (100%) said that they relied on *guessing*; and finally,

e) On a scale of four points, 6 respondents out of the 8 (75%) chose to react to such expressions used in actual speech situations by *inquiring about the meaning*; the two left would “*ignore the utterance*”.

An important limitation faced by the researcher is that only 8 of the English native speakers know Arabic (and then their knowledge is little), the others could not fill in the table due to lack of understanding although there was a literal translation of the Arabic expressions. This for sure had a negative effect on the results. This is why there will not be much focus on this part of the Questionnaire II.

We will instead discuss how the Arabic native speakers translated the Arabic lingua-pragmatic formulas into English and see the errors they made.

The following table shows the Arabic lingua-pragmatic formulas as translated into English by Arabic native speakers.

**GREETINGS**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Hello</li><li>- Al salam Ailkom</li><li>- Peace be upon you</li><li>- Peace!</li><li>- Hi</li><li>- Hello every one</li><li>- Good morning</li><li>- May be peace upon you</li><li>- Good evening</li><li>- Good afternoon</li></ul>	<p>1 - السلام عليكم</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- God bless you</li><li>- God help you</li><li>- Take a reste</li><li>- Take a rest</li><li>- God give you the health</li><li>- Thanks</li><li>- You've done good job</li><li>- Good luck</li><li>- May god grant you health</li><li>- Thank you</li><li>- You must be tired</li><li>- Nice work and thank you</li><li>- How do you do?</li></ul>	<p>2 - الله يعطيك العافية</p>

**CONDOLENCES**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Make God make it the latest sadness</li><li>- Please, accept my deepest sympathies</li><li>- My condolences</li><li>- I am sorry for you</li><li>- May it's the end of sadness</li><li>- The end of sorrows</li><li>- He may rests in peace</li><li>- May his/her soul rest in peace</li><li>- May god forgive them</li><li>- I am sorry for your lost</li><li>- End of condolences</li><li>- Hope it's your last sorrow</li><li>- Inshallah to be the end of sorrow</li></ul>	<p>1 - خاتمة الأحران</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I'm Sorry</li> <li>- Please accept my deepest sympathies</li> <li>- My condolences</li> <li>- I am sorry for your loss</li> <li>- Hope its the end of your sadness</li> <li>- To heaven Inshallah</li> <li>- The sadness end</li> <li>- God greaten your "Ajer"</li> <li>- I am sorry to hear about your loss</li> <li>- My respect</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;">2 - عظم الله أجركم</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I'm Sorry</li> <li>- R.I.P</li> <li>- Please accept my deepest sympathies</li> <li>- My condolences</li> <li>- Rest in peace</li> <li>- May he rest in peace</li> <li>- Have a long live</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;">3 - البقية بحياتكم</p>
<b>CONGRATULATIONS</b>	
<b>a- At a wedding party</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Congratulations</li> <li>- Happy for you</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;">1 - ألف مبروك</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Congratulations</li> <li>- May God give you a good children</li> <li>- Wish you a happy life</li> <li>- Wish you a life of happiness</li> <li>- Good health</li> <li>- I wish you well</li> <li>- I wish you best of life</li> <li>- I wish you best of luck</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;">2 - بالررفاه والبنين</p>
<b>b- To congratulate a woman who has recently given birth</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Welcome back</li> <li>- Congratulation,</li> <li>- Thanks god for your safety</li> <li>- I am happy you are back</li> <li>- Glad you are back</li> <li>- Hope you are doing well</li> <li>- Thank god, you are in a good health</li> <li>- Thank God! You are Okay</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;">1 - الحمد لله على السلامة</p>

-	<b>Thank to God</b>	
-	<b>May God bless him</b>	2 - الله يخليك
-	<b>The baby look wonderful!</b>	إياه
-	<b>Nice taste!</b>	
-	<b>God save him for you</b>	
-	<b>May god bless him</b>	
-	<b>May god protect him</b>	
-	<b>Soon he'll be a man who makes you proud</b>	
-	<b>I hope he will have a happy life</b>	
-	<b>Oh! He's gonna turn up nice and be a good boy</b>	
-	<b>I wish him he is a good boy</b>	
c-	<b>Congratulations for something newly bought</b>	
-	<b>You are beautiful</b>	1 - القلب
-	<b>You look like a model</b>	غالب
-	<b>Beautiful, no matter what</b>	
-	<b>You look great</b>	
-	<b>How nice</b>	
-	<b>You really look nice</b>	
-	<b>This really suits you</b>	
-	<b>Such perfect (dress),</b>	
-	<b>Beauty is within</b>	
-	<b>Well! Aren't you lucky</b>	
-	<b>Gorgeous!</b>	2 - شو هذا
-	<b>It's amazing</b>	الخلو
-	<b>What a nice look</b>	
-	<b>Its beautiful, you have a nice taste</b>	
-	<b>So pretty</b>	
-	<b>How beauty is this</b>	
-	<b>What nice</b>	
-	<b>Wow!</b>	
-	<b>What is the beautiful</b>	
-	<b>Wow, sugar</b>	
-	<b>What amazing is this</b>	
-	<b>You look beautiful</b>	
-	<b>What is this?</b>	
-	<b>Its good on you</b>	
-	<b>What a beautiful...</b>	
-	<b>It's never good on any one else</b>	

<b>APPOLOGIES</b>	
<b>a- Apologizing about doing something wrong</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Sorry</b></li> <li>- <b>Pardon</b></li> <li>- <b>I am sorry, please accept my apology</b></li> <li>- <b>I apologize</b></li> <li>- <b>Oops! Sorry</b></li> <li>- <b>My bad</b></li> <li>- <b>My mistake</b></li> </ul>	<p>1 - آسف!</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>I'm sorry</b></li> <li>- <b>It's my fault</b></li> <li>- <b>On my head</b></li> <li>- <b>Please forgive me</b></li> <li>- <b>I am so really sorry</b></li> <li>- <b>Your right on my head</b></li> <li>- <b>My mistake</b></li> <li>- <b>No offence!</b></li> <li>- <b>My apology</b></li> <li>- <b>Really, I am embarrasse</b></li> <li>- <b>I know I've committed a horrible fault</b></li> </ul>	<p>2 - حقاك على راسي</p>
<b>b- To apologize about asking someone for a favor</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Excuse me</b></li> <li>- <b>Could you please</b></li> <li>- <b>If I may</b></li> <li>- <b>Can you please</b></li> <li>- <b>Would you mind</b></li> <li>- <b>If you please</b></li> <li>- <b>If you let me</b></li> <li>- <b>I hate to ask</b></li> </ul>	<p>1 - لو سمحت</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>If you please</b></li> <li>- <b>Please,</b></li> <li>- <b>I need a favor, can I ask you for your help</b></li> <li>- <b>Could you please</b></li> <li>- <b>You can ...please?</b></li> <li>- <b>Do you mind...</b></li> <li>- <b>Could you please do me a favor</b></li> <li>- <b>If you will</b></li> </ul>	<p>2 - من فضلك</p>

c- To apologize or take a permission for leaving	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I have to go</li> <li>- Excuse me</li> <li>- I can leave, please?</li> <li>- May I be excused</li> <li>- Pardon me</li> <li>- Sorry but I have to leave.</li> <li>- Excuse me, I have really to go</li> <li>- Please let me</li> <li>- May I leave</li> <li>- Let me go, please</li> <li>- Its time for me to leave. Enjoy...</li> <li>- Allow me</li> <li>- It's time to go</li> <li>- If you please let me go</li> </ul>	1 - اسمحولي
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good bye</li> <li>- See you later, bye!</li> <li>- God save you</li> <li>- Bye, I see you again</li> <li>- May god keep you</li> <li>- See you soon</li> <li>- I leaving, you be safe.</li> <li>- God with you</li> <li>- Allah may take care of you</li> <li>- Catch you later</li> <li>- I gotta hit the road</li> <li>- You be safe</li> </ul>	2 - استودعناكم الله

**Table 11: Respondents' Translation of Arabic Expressions**

An overview of the table shows that most of the respondents tried to give the best English translation of the Arabic formulas. They succeeded in some points and failed in others.

There are four categories of lingua-pragmatic formulas in the table: 1) greetings; 2) Condolences; 3) congratulations and 4) apologies.

Each category has at least two expressions to be translated into English. Taking a close look at these expressions, we notice that one is always easier to translate than the other.

In the case of greetings, the Arabic lingua-pragmatic formula "السلام عليكم" was translated with various English greeting expressions except for two expressions: "peace" and "peace be upon you" or the English transcript of the same expression. The difficulty was found in translating the second expression "يعطيك العافية".

The three expressions in the condolences category were translated with some errors.

As for the congratulations of newly married, the respondents did not find a lot of difficulties in translating some of the obvious expression: "الف مبروك", but 74.3% of them did not translate the second: "بالرفاه والبنين". Some of them said they never heard this expression before.

The expressions: "الحمد لله على السلامة" and "الله يخيلك اياه" which were used to congratulate a woman who has recently given birth showed no real problem to respondents.

The following though really posed problems because the respondents did not have any ready to use English expressions to cover their meanings:

1. "القالب غالب"
2. "شو هذا الحلو"
3. "حقك على راسي"
4. "استودعناكم الله"

When we examine the errors more closely, we can divide them into three types:

a) *Grammatical*, b) *Semantic* and c) *Socio-cultural*.

The errors will be analyzed according to these three types to see their effect on actual communication and on translation too.

#### *A. Grammatical Errors*

The majority of the errors were of a grammatical nature. Some responses contained even more than one grammatical error. It is important to mention that all respondents have higher education degrees: 86.05% of them were university students (B.A and M.A

translation students). And all of them claimed to have a good mastery of the English language. What is interesting here is that all of the respondents have been at one time or another exposed to prolonged grammar programs, yet their linguistic performance is questioned in this particular case.

This shows that all the time spent teaching grammatical rules has been a complete failure and this traditional approach of teaching should be seriously discussed.

The grammatical errors consisted mainly in deviations from correct syntactic and morphological structures of the target language.

As for the syntactic errors, we can mention the misuse of the articles: definite and indefinite, like in the following where the articles are either used wrongly or not used at all:

1. *“God give you \*the health”.*
2. *“I wish you \*best of luck”.*
3. *“what \*the beautiful dress”*

Misusing the question tags in the utterance structure were found to be one of the errors the respondent made while translating the Arabic formulas into English, like in:

4. What\* beauty is this
5. What \* amazing is this.
6. What\* nice.

There were also some errors with the verb to be in the responses like in the case of the following:

7. I wish him he is\* a good boy.
8. Inshallah to be\* the end of sorrows.
9. I\*leaving. You be\*safe.

Some of the morphological errors worth mentioning consisted in the subject-verb agreement in the present form.

10. He may rests\* in peace
11. The baby look\* beautiful

Some respondents did not know the difference between ‘it’s’ and ‘its’ like in:

12. Its\* time for me to leave.

13. Its beautiful.
14. Hope its\* the end of your sadness.

Spelling errors were found in many answers too, for instance:

15. Take a reste\*
16. I am sorry for your lost\*
17. Have a long live\*
18. Really, I am embarrasse\*

These are only some of the grammatical errors found in the respondents' translations. This is quite shocking for intermediate and advanced learners of English.

### *B. Semantic Errors*

Semantic errors consist mainly in the choice of the wrong words and other semantic structures which will result in the loss of meaning in the target language. Redundancy, misplacement of certain words and the use of certain words instead of others are only some of these errors.

19. "Peace"! Is used in the translation of the Arabic 'AL Salam Alikom' but it does not fit with the meaning of this expression. The same error is seen in the following expression:

20. *My respect*"; which was wrongly used as a translation of the Arabic expression: "عظم الله أجركم"

21. "Let me go, please" do not fit with the source language expression: "اسمحولي" which is a polite way to tell people you are leaving, but the English expression means that the speaker is maintained against his will and he's begging to leave.

Redundancy is observed in many translations such as:

22. "Oh! He's gonna turn up nice\* and be a good\* boy"
23. "I am so\* really\* sorry"

Redundancy is used without any problems in Arabic, insisting on something is considered normal and polite in Arabic, while it could be seen as rude in English.

The use of words which didn't semantically fit with the context such as:

24. *"I know I've committed\* a horrible fault"*

25. *"Beauty is within"*

26. *"Wow, sugar"*

27. *"May God keep you"*.

The use of words which are literally translated from Arabic is also considered as a semantic error, because these words do not serve the meanings intended in English like in the following expressions where it is almost impossible to guess what the speaker wanted to say.

28. "Allah may take care of you"

29. "On my head"

30. "Your right on my head"

31. "Wow, sugar"

32. "Beauty is within"

33. "Soon he'll be a man who makes you proud"

34. "Oh! He's gonna turn up nice and be a good boy"

35. "Thanks god for your safety"

36. "May God give you a good children"

37. Have a long live

38. Al salam Ailkom

These expressions would be difficult to understand if they are used in the target language because of the literal meaning they bear.

### *C. The socio-cultural errors*

These errors are due to the differences between the social and cultural environments of the two languages under study. It is rather difficult to measure these errors, because sometimes they looked like semantic errors. The socio-cultural errors usually led to communication failure. For example, an English native speaker would not consider it polite to console him on the loss of someone

of his family by wishing him a long life, like in the Arabic expression: "البقية بحياتكم" nor would he understand that wishing good health to someone means thanking him or encouraging him on some job he is doing like in the Arabic expression: "الله يعطيك العافية"

The Arabic native speakers showed an excessive use of politeness in the expressions of apologies which could be considered as a socio-cultural error too, like the case of "I am really so sorry". In Arabic it would be acceptable "أنا آسف جدا", but in English this is just incorrect.

The analysis of the last question shows that Arabic native speakers (translation students) face a real problem when translating lingua-pragmatic formulas, because on one hand they do not quite understand it in Arabic and on the other they are incapable of finding a pragmatic equivalent in English. Students usually focus on the grammatical and syntactical side in learning a language as well as the foreign language teachers, who do not think about teaching the students the cultural and social environment of the target language.

It is obvious from the data provided above that most politeness expressions are both language-specific and culture-specific. Literal translation of such expressions from another language can hardly help communicators get along politely in cross-cultural conversation. The only successful translation equivalence is a pragmatic alternative. This pragmatic translation can only be obtained when the students can absorb and really understand the way speakers of the target language think and the way they use language to express their needs and feelings.

Considering all the results of the questions posed and the answers provided above, we can observe that a totality of all the values and pragmatic parameters relevant to each society represents what is termed *cultural identity*. This cultural identity imposes the concept of what is polite and what is not within the general framework of each society and its stage of cultural change or development.

As a matter of fact, the necessary conditions to perform lingua-pragmatic formulas differ across cultures which lead to difficulties in the translation of these forms. A semantic equivalence (literal translation) of these formulas cannot be satisfying at all, but a pragmatic equivalence which refers to the linguistic expression in the foreign language as used in the same context to perform the same function seems to be acceptable (Shammas, 2004) (Cited in Rifai 2004: 73)

#### *IV.5. Limitations*

A major shortcoming of this research is that during the data collection, the researcher could not get any professional translators to fill in the questionnaires, (although, she distributed 200 questionnaires and waited three months to get them answered). The only respondents to answer were translation students; this is why, the results concerning the translation of Arabic polite formulas cannot be generalized. The lack of professional respondents has unfortunately been an important deficiency in this work.

An important limitation faced by the researcher is that only 8 of the English native speakers know Arabic (and then their knowledge is little), the others could not fill in the table due to lack of understanding although there was a literal translation of the Arabic expressions. This for sure had a negative effect on the results. This is why there will not be much focus on this part of the Questionnaire II.

The participants were chosen because of their ability to fill in questionnaires in English. In fact, the majority also studied English literature, linguistics and/or translation – which are supposed to abridge the cultural gap between such respondents and the English-speaking cultures. It would, therefore, be constructive to have a larger number of respondents from both sides, provided that they *have never been exposed to the culture and/or the language of the other*. Although this will induce translation problems (see

Fukushima, 2000), it will enable the researcher to empirically measure *the actual distance between the two parties in terms of polite attitudes, normative behavior* and other relevant facts of communication. It will also reveal the *influence of cultural exposure on social change* in terms of values and beliefs in comparison with the findings of the present study.

Moreover, this study does not link social values and beliefs motivating polite attitude with *actual behavior*. A similar project can in fact investigate such social behavior and the degree of its acceptability or rejection by the other party, and on what grounds. In this case, the data would have to include a) observation and b) interviews in addition to questionnaires.

The most obvious limitation of this research was that of a small sample size, a limitation that prevented a clear generalized statement about the similarities and discrepancies between the two languages under study on the matter of linguistic politeness. The number of the participants was too small to adequately address the research questions or to possibly generalize beyond the context of this study. With a larger sample, including a greater number of culturally different participants, many other differences would certainly emerge.

Using questionnaires or interviews to collect data for such topics consumes a lot of time and effort, and sometimes does not give reliable and representative data especially when the questions asked tackle sensitive issues for the respondents.

## *Chapter Five: Conclusions and recommendations*

The following chapter presents a summary of the findings of the research as well as some recommendations for further research.

### *V.1 Findings*

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the phenomenon of politeness in general and linguistic politeness in particular, and to shed light on its implications for translation from English to Arabic and vice versa. With a special focus on fixed politeness formulas.

The findings revealed that Arabic native speakers have difficulties trying to translate Arabic culture-specific polite formulas into English, and that English speakers faced the same problem, too. However, it was found out that the social values incarnating politeness in both societies under study were getting closer despite the noticeable differences.

The study has also shown that Arabs use fixed expressions more than English native speakers, who more to syntactic structures to avoid imposition and conflict that can lead to possible confrontation.

It also showed that politeness is universal as a concept and norm, its linguistic realization is language-specific and its relevant normative behavior is culture-specific.

Many differences were found between English and Arabic languages when it came to linguistic politeness, for instance: English native speakers tend to be more individualistic than Arabic native speakers, who are group oriented. Intimacy and privacy are very important issues for English native speakers, while imposition is accepted among most Arabic native speakers.

## *V.2 Recommendations*

A lot needs to be learned and acquired about the pragmatic and socio-cultural skills of the target language for the sake of improving translation students' abilities to function well in communicative situations. The most compelling evidence of the necessity of instruction in such areas comes from respondents whose level is supposed to be advanced and whose communicative performance in many instances was unsuccessful.

In other words, linguistic impoliteness by foreign language speakers is more or less unavoidable. Thus, our review indicates that if communicative competence is an objective then we need to include a direct treatment of a socio-cultural and pragmatic phenomenon such as politeness in the translators' trainings.

In the light of this study and its significance, the following is recommended for future research in linguistic politeness in general and its implications for translation in particular:

1. Although the topic of linguistic politeness is widely studied these days, there are many other issues related to it that have not been studied yet, like the implication of politeness in the translation field. More empirical and contrastive studies in the field of linguistic politeness would be really beneficial for translation.
2. Further research incorporating a similar design and a larger size of data and respondents would be of value, because this study was limited to a very small number of participants. Therefore, it is not possible to generalize the findings to all the population. Above all, the social values motivating polite behavior are in constant change.
3. Tools used in gathering the data are very important in any study, especially when the topic is related to issues of functions of language and sociolinguistics. Therefore, researchers in this field

should always choose those tools that help them greatly in good representative data. I would like to recommend all researchers who study topics related to sociolinguistics, contrastive studies to depend on systematic observation. Observation is one reliable tool when the topic is related to actual linguistic behavior.

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# *Appendices*

## *Appendix A*

### *Questionnaire I: For Arabic Native Speakers*

This questionnaire serves part of my research on “linguistic Politeness in English & Arabic and its implications for translation”. Your cooperation in answering these questions below would be highly appreciated. Please interpret the questions as freely as you wish and ignore any question(s) you feel unable to answer. All the information provided will remain confidential.

#### *Background Information*

- a. Name: (omit if you like): -----
- b. Occupation: -----
- c. Sex: -----
- d. Age: -----
- e. Educational Qualification: -----
- f. Have you ever been to an English-speaking country? -----  
If yes, which one(s)? -----
- g. Do you know English at all? ----- . If yes, what level of ability? 1) Excellent----- 2) Good----- 3) Fair ----- 4) hardly anything.
- h. Are you familiar with any English-speaking culture? ----- . If yes, how far? -----
- i. From what sources have you gained your knowledge of Arab culture:  
Press;  
Mass media;  
History lessons;  
Friends;  
Employment;  
Tourism;  
Other; please specify: -----

#### *Question I*

**A.** Please answer these questions on a scale of four grades: 1) extremely; 2) very much; 3) a little; 4) not at all. Just use numbers (1, 2, 3, or 4):

- 1) Do you get offended if one of your *acquaintances* asks you about your
- a) Marital status: -----
  - b) Age: -----
  - c) Income: -----
  - d) Political affiliation: -----
  - e) Relationship with your parents: -----
  - f) Spouse's beauty/handsomeness -----
  - g) Whether you have a boy-/girl-friend: -----

- 2) Do you get offended if one of your *friends* asks you about your
- a) Marital status: -----
  - b) Age: -----
  - c) Income: -----
  - d) Political affiliation: -----
  - e) Relationship with your parents: -----
  - f) Spouse's beauty/handsomeness -----
  - g) Whether you have a boy-/girl-friend: -----

**B.** Please describe your attitude to these situations on a scale of four points: just use numbers (1, 2, 3, or 4):

- 1) I confront the person violently;
  - 2) I rebuke him/her verbally;
  - 3) I ignore him/her;
  - 4) I concede and reply positively.
- a) A *friend insists that you lend* him/her money/car when you do not want to: -----
  - b) An *acquaintance insists that you accept* his/her invitation to dinner: -----
  - c) An *acquaintance offers you a piece of advice*: -----
  - d) An *acquaintance corrects* your linguistic and/or normative behavior: -----
  - e) A *friend corrects* your linguistic and/or normative behavior: -----

*Question II*

Which *social value* of the following, A or B, would you give more weight in case of a possible conflict? Just circle the right letter of each number 1- 4 below.

- 1) A. **Truthfulness** or B. **Tact**;
- 2) A. **Law** or B. **Blood relations**;
- 3) A. **Personal interests** or B. **Public welfare**;
- 4) A. **Negative politeness**, i.e. avoiding interference, even if interference could be *useful* and required, or B. **Positive politeness**, i.e. being cooperative, even if cooperation could be *face-threatening*.

### Question III

Read these statements, a – m carefully. Then, on a scale of four points (1 – 4), please express your attitude freely. Please use numbers only (1 – 4).

- 1) Yes/always;
  - 2) Perhaps/sometimes;
  - 3) Not necessarily;
  - 4) Not at all.
- a) Do you have to stand up **to shake hands with somebody standing**? -----
  - b) Do you have to **offer condolences to a friend**, whose father has just died? -----
  - c) Is it an obligation for you to invite somebody for a drink/dinner if s/he has already invited you? -----
  - d) Do you consider it impolite to ignore a **colleague** passing by? -----
  - e) Is it an obligation for you to congratulate a **newly married friend**? -----
  - f) Do you approve of **pre-marriage sex**? -----
  - g) Do you have to satisfy **social consensus** when you do something? -----
  - h) Is it an obligation for you **to help your parents financially if in need**? -----
  - i) Is it an obligation for you **to help your brother financially if in need**? -----
  - j) If your parents rebuke you for some reason, **is it socially acceptable for you to answer back**? -----
  - k) If your teachers rebuke you for some reason, **is it socially acceptable for you to answer back**? -----

### Question VI

The following are expressions taken from Arabic. Please read them carefully first; then answer the questions below. Suggest an English *equivalent* or *more* to each

of these expressions in harmony with the situation/context in your mind at the time of using these expressions

<b>GREETINGS</b>	
	3 - السلام عليكم
	4 - الله يعطيك العافية
<b>CONDOLENCES</b>	
	4 - خاتمة الأحزان
	5 - عظم الله أجركم
	6 - البقية بحياتكم
<b>CONGRATULATIONS</b>	
d- At a wedding party	
	3 - ألف مبروك
	4 - بالرفاه والبنين
e- To congratulate a woman who has recently given birth	
	3 - الحمد لله على السلامة
	4 - الله يخليك إياه
f- Congratulations for something newly bought	
	3 - القالب غالب
	4 - شو هذا الحلو
<b>APPOLOGIES</b>	
d- Apologizing about doing something wrong	
	3 - آسف!
	4 - حقك على راسي
e- To apologize about asking someone for a favor	
	3 - لو سمحت
	4 - من فضلك
f- To apologize or take a permission for leaving	
	3 - اسمحولي
	4 - استودعناكم الله

## *Appendix B*

### *Questionnaire II: English Native Speakers*

This questionnaire serves part of my research on “linguistic Politeness in English & Arabic and its implications for translation”. Your cooperation in answering these questions below would be highly appreciated. Please interpret the questions as freely as you wish and ignore any question(s) you feel unable to answer. All the information provided will remain confidential.

Background information:

1. Name: (omit if you like):
2. Occupation:
3. Sex:
4. Age:
5. Nationality:
6. Educational Qualification:
7. Have you ever been to an Arab country?  
If yes, which one(s)?
8. Do you know Arabic at all?  
If yes, roughly what level of ability?  
  
a) Excellent-----b) Good-----c) Fair -----d) hardly anything.
9. Are you familiar with Arab culture?  
If yes, how far?
10. From what sources have you gained your knowledge of Arab culture:
  - a) Press
  - b) Mass media
  - c) History lessons
  - d) Friends
  - e) Employment
  - f) Tourism
  - g) Other. Please specify:

*Question I*

**A.** Please answer these questions on a scale of four grades:

- 1) Extremely
- 2) Very much
- 3) A little.
- 4) Not at all. Just use numbers (1, 2, 3, or 4).

**1)** Do you get offended if one of your acquaintances asks you about your

- a) Marital status: -----
- b) Age: -----
- c) Income: -----
- d) Political affiliation: -----
- e) Relationship with your parents: -----
- f) Spouse's beauty/handsomeness -----
- g) Whether you have a boy-/girl-friend: -----

**2)** Do you get offended if one of your friends asks you about your

- a) Marital status: -----
- b) Age: -----
- c) Income: -----
- d) Political affiliation: -----
- e) Relationship with your parents: -----
- f) Spouse's beauty/handsomeness -----
- g) Whether you have a boy-/girl-friend: -----

**B.** Please describe your attitude to these situations on a scale of four points: just use numbers (1, 2, 3, or 4):

- 1) I confront the person violently;
- 2) I rebuke him/her verbally;
- 3) I ignore him/her;
- 4) I concede and reply positively.

- a) A *friend insists that you lend* him/her money/car when you do not want to: -----
- b) An *acquaintance insists that you accept* his/her invitation to dinner: -----
- c) An *acquaintance* offers you a piece of *advice*: -----
- d) An *acquaintance corrects* your linguistic and/or normative behavior: -----
- e) A *friend corrects* your linguistic and/or normative behavior: -----

### *Question II*

Which *social value* of the following, A or B, would you give more weight in case of a possible conflict? Just circle the right letter of each number 1- 4 below.

- 1) A. *Truthfulness* or B. *Tact*;
- 2) A. *Law* or B. *Blood relations*;
- 3) A. *Personal interests* or B. *Public welfare*;
- 4) A. *Negative politeness*, i.e. avoiding interference, even if interference could be *useful* and required, or B. *Positive politeness*, i.e. being cooperative, even if cooperation could be *face-threatening*.

### *Question III*

Read the statements below carefully. Then, on a scale of four points (1 – 4), please express your attitude freely. Please use numbers only.

- 1) Yes/always;
- 2) Perhaps/sometimes;
- 3) Not necessarily;
- 4) Not at all.

- a) Do you have to stand up *to shake hands with somebody standing*? -----
- b) Do you have to *offer condolences to a friend*, whose father has just died? -----
- c) Is it an obligation for you to invite somebody for a drink/dinner if s/he has already invited you? -----
- d) Do you consider it impolite to ignore a *colleague* passing by? -----
- e) Is it an obligation for you to congratulate a *newly married friend*? -----
- f) Do you approve *pre-marriage sex*? -----
- g) Do you have to satisfy *social consensus* when you do something? -----
- h) Is it an obligation for you *to help your parents financially if in need*? -----
- i) Is it an obligation for you *to help your brother financially if in need*? -----
- j) If your parents rebuke you for some reason, *is it socially acceptable for you to answer back*? -----
- k) If your teachers rebuke you for some reason, *is it socially acceptable for you to answer back*? -----

### Question IV'

The following table contains 20 expressions semantically (i.e. literally) translated from Arabic. Please read it carefully first. Then fill it according to the following questions.

Arabic expressions	English literal translation	Communicative function	Percentage of meaningfulness	English pragmatic equivalent
1. <i>Na3am, ya akhi Abu Nizar</i>	1. Yes my brother, father of Nizar			
2. <i>Assalamu 3alikom!</i>	2. Peace be upon you			
3. <i>Asslamu 3alikom</i>	3. Peace be with you			
4. <i>Allah ya3tek el 3afyeh</i>	4. May God give you activity			
5. <i>Forssa sa3ida</i>	5. A happy opportunity			
6. <i>Al Hamdolilah 3a salama</i>	6. Thank God for safety			
7. <i>Min fadlak!</i>	7. Out of your graciousness			
8. <i>Law samaht</i>	8. If you permitted			
9. <i>Iza betrid</i>	9. If you want			
10. <i>Inshallah</i>	10. If God wanted			
11. <i>Tafaddal!</i>	11. Have the graciousness			
12. <i>Allah yzid fadlak!</i>	12. May God increase your graciousness			
13. <i>Etsharrafna!</i>	13. We are honored			
14. <i>El sharaf elna!</i>	14. We have the honor			
15. <i>Mata betsharfona</i>	15. When did you honor us			
16. <i>Wallah sharaftona embareh</i>	16. By God, we were honored last night			

17. <i>mit hala, ya 3youni</i>	17. A million hello's, my eyes.			
18. <i>Kifek rou7i?</i>	18. How are you my soul			
19. <i>Ehki 3anna</i>	19. Talk on us			
20. <i>Kassak!</i>	20. Your glass!			

However, kindly *do not discuss* these expressions with anyone else, especially a native speaker of Arabic

**A.** What is the **communicative function** of each expression (1 – 20) below? Just insert one letter (a - g) representing one of these functions against the relevant expression below:

- a) Complimenting
- b) Greeting
- c) Condoling
- d) Initiating talk
- e) Saying ‘good bye’!
- f) Other? Please specify.
- g) I don’t know.

**B.** Please add **one percentage of meaningfulness** against each expression.

How *meaningful* is the function suggested for each of the *expressions above* on a scale of five points to a native speaker of English, do you think?

- 1) 0%?    2) 20%?    3) 40%?    4) 60%?    5) 80 or more?**

**C.** Give an appropriate English equivalent to each of the expressions in actual communication? Enter ‘nil’ if you can find no equivalent.

Please use punctuation marks (e.g. commas) where you think this may make your expression more explicit or natural.

**D.** What clues, other than linguistic, have you depended on in interpreting and replacing the expressions above?

1. Previous knowledge
2. Guessing
3. Other? Please specify:

**E.** How would you react if *you* were addressed by a foreigner with one or more of the expressions above in an actual speech situation?

1. Enquire about the intended meaning;
2. Ignore the utterance altogether;
3. Ignore the speaker;
4. Other response? Please specify:

P.S. Any extra information/observation about likely/possible miscommunication between native speakers of Arabic & those of American English, or mistranslation from Arabic into English and vice versa, would be most welcome.

**Thank you for your cooperation and precious time**

**BOUBENDIR Fatima Zohra**

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