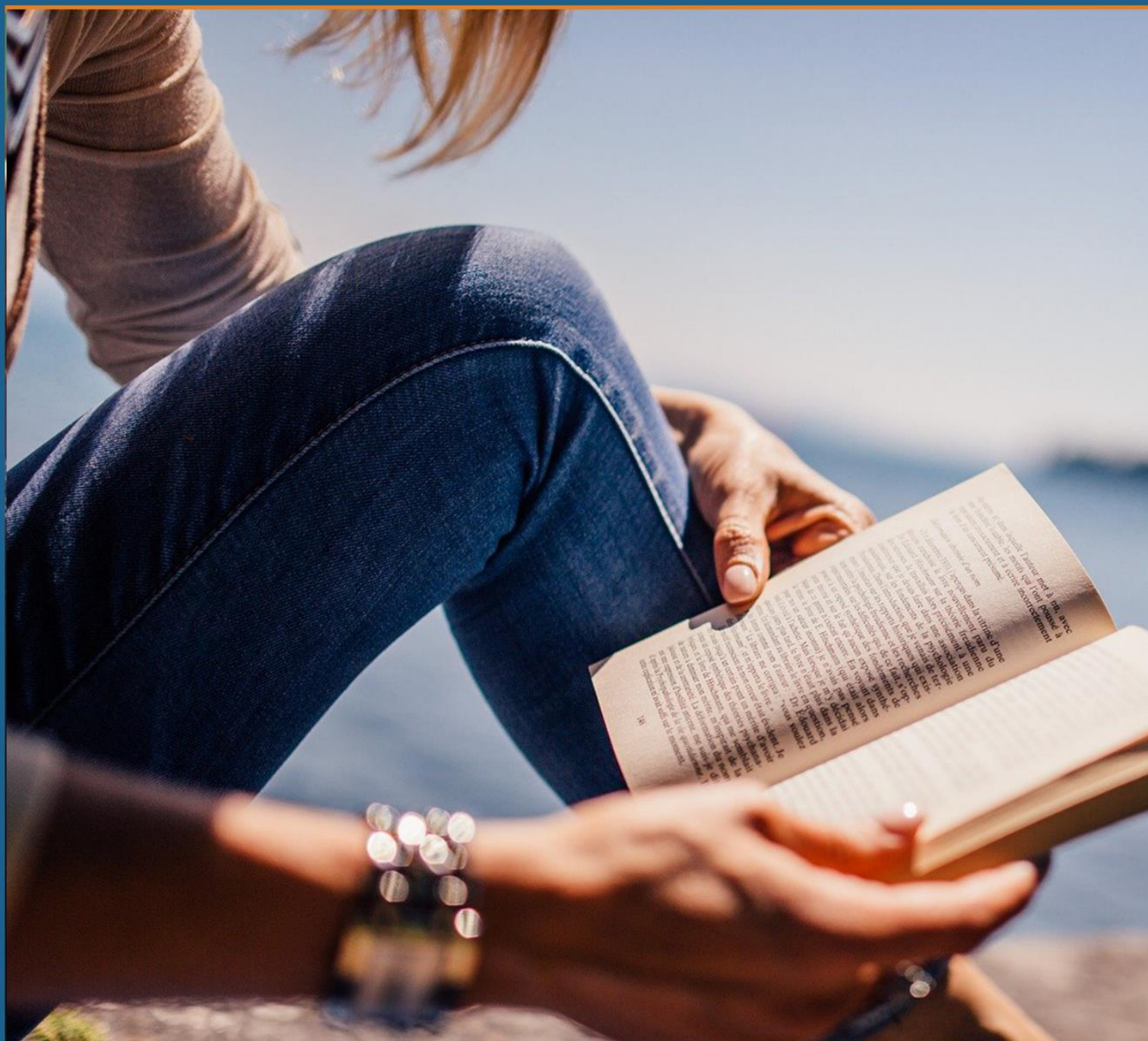


# European Journal of Linguistics

(EJL)



CARI  
Journals

## The Pragmatics of Politeness in Cross-Cultural Communication

 <sup>1\*</sup>Angela Nkirote

Catholic University of Eastern Africa

Accepted: 15<sup>th</sup> Apr 2024 Received in Revised Form: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024 Published: 15<sup>th</sup> Jun 2024



### Abstract

**Purpose:** The general objective of this study was to explore the pragmatics of politeness in cross-cultural communities.

**Methodology:** The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

**Findings:** The findings reveal that there exists a contextual and methodological gap relating to the pragmatics of politeness in cross-cultural communities. Preliminary empirical review revealed significant differences in politeness strategies across cultures, highlighting the impact of cultural norms, values, and social structures on communication. High-context cultures, such as many Asian and African countries, conveyed politeness through indirect communication and non-verbal cues, while low-context cultures, like the United States and Western Europe, emphasized directness and clarity. The role of power distance was also crucial, with high power distance cultures showing deference to authority through formal language, unlike low power distance cultures that favored egalitarianism and informality. These findings underscored the importance of cultural sensitivity and awareness in international business, education, and diplomacy, advocating for adaptive communication skills to bridge cultural gaps and enhance mutual understanding.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** The Politeness Theory, Speech Act Theory and Face Negotiation Theory may be used to anchor future studies on the pragmatics of politeness in cross cultural communication. The study recommended expanding theoretical models to include diverse cultural contexts, enhancing intercultural communication training programs, and incorporating these principles into national education curricula. It emphasized the need for organizations to develop clear communication guidelines respecting cultural differences and for diplomatic training to prioritize cultural sensitivity. The study also called for continuous empirical research to keep theoretical models and practical applications relevant, ensuring that both academic and practical approaches to intercultural communication remain effective and responsive to the evolving global landscape.

**Keywords:** *Pragmatics of Politeness, Cross-Cultural Communication, Cultural Sensitivity, Intercultural Competence, Politeness Strategies*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics of politeness is a subfield of linguistics that explores how language is used in social interactions to maintain harmony and avoid conflict. Politeness strategies are employed to show respect, deference, and consideration for others. These strategies vary widely across cultures and can be influenced by societal norms, values, and communication styles. Understanding these differences is crucial for effective cross-cultural communication. In the United States, politeness often manifests through indirectness and euphemisms to avoid confrontation. Americans tend to favor positive politeness strategies that emphasize camaraderie and solidarity. For example, instead of giving direct orders, Americans might use suggestions or questions, such as "Could you please pass the salt?" This approach reflects a cultural preference for individualism and equality (Brown & Levinson, 2012). Spencer-Oatey (2012) highlighted that Americans often prioritize clarity and directness but soften their requests to maintain politeness and avoid appearing rude.

In the United Kingdom, politeness is deeply ingrained in social interactions and is often characterized by understatement and formality. The British are known for their use of hedging phrases and indirect language to maintain decorum. Phrases like "I'm afraid that's not quite right" or "Would you mind terribly if..." are common. These linguistic tools help to soften the impact of statements and preserve the listener's face. Sifianou (2013) demonstrated that British politeness is closely tied to historical and social class structures, which continue to influence modern communication practices. In Japan, politeness is a fundamental aspect of communication, deeply rooted in the cultural concept of "keigo" (honorific language). Japanese politeness involves a complex system of honorifics that reflect the social hierarchy and relationships between speakers. For instance, different verb forms are used depending on whether one is speaking to a superior, a peer, or a subordinate. This meticulous attention to linguistic detail underscores the importance of respect and humility in Japanese society (Ide, 2013). According to Ide (2013), the use of keigo is not merely a linguistic preference but a social necessity, reflecting the intricate social fabric of Japanese culture.

In Brazil, politeness strategies often emphasize warmth and personal connections. Brazilian communication tends to be more informal and expressive, with frequent use of diminutives and affectionate terms. Phrases like "meu querido" (my dear) and "você é um amor" (you are a love) are commonplace. This reflects the cultural value placed on relationships and emotional expressiveness. Wierzbicka (2012) highlighted that Brazilian politeness involves a blend of formality and informality, balancing respect with affection. African countries, with their diverse cultures and languages, exhibit a wide range of politeness strategies. In many African societies, politeness is closely linked to age and social status. Elders are often addressed with honorifics and deferential language. For instance, in Yoruba culture, the use of "e" (a respectful pronoun) is mandatory when addressing elders. This reflects the high value placed on respect and hierarchy. Adegbija (2013) on Nigerian politeness highlighted that politeness in African contexts often involves elaborate greetings and the use of proverbs to convey respect and wisdom.

Statistics show that cultural norms significantly influence politeness strategies. A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center (2017) found that 68% of Americans believe in the importance of politeness in daily interactions, whereas in Japan, this figure rises to 92%, reflecting the cultural emphasis on harmony and respect. Similarly, in the UK, 85% of respondents indicated that politeness is crucial in professional settings, underscoring the formal nature of British communication (Pew Research Center, 2017). Cross-cultural comparisons reveal interesting trends in the pragmatics of politeness. For example, while Americans may prioritize positive politeness to foster a sense of equality, the Japanese focus on negative politeness to maintain social harmony and avoid imposition. These differences can lead to misunderstandings in international interactions. Holmes & Stubbe (2015) found that

misunderstandings often arise when individuals from different cultures interpret politeness strategies through their own cultural lenses.

The implications of these findings are significant for global communication. As businesses and social interactions become increasingly international, understanding the nuances of politeness in different cultures is essential. Misinterpretations of politeness can lead to perceived rudeness or insensitivity, which can harm professional and personal relationships. Therefore, developing cultural competence and sensitivity to different politeness strategies is vital (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2012). The pragmatics of politeness is a multifaceted field that reveals much about the cultural values and social norms of different societies. By examining the politeness strategies used in the USA, UK, Japan, Brazil, and African countries, we can better understand the diverse ways in which people navigate social interactions. This understanding is crucial for fostering effective cross-cultural communication and mitigating misunderstandings (Brown & Levinson, 2012).

Cross-cultural communication is the process of exchanging meaningful information between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It encompasses a wide array of factors, including language, non-verbal cues, context, and social norms. Understanding and effectively navigating these differences is crucial in today's globalized world, where interactions across cultures are commonplace. The study of cross-cultural communication aims to identify the underlying mechanisms that facilitate or hinder effective communication between culturally diverse individuals or groups. One of the fundamental aspects of cross-cultural communication is the recognition of cultural variability. Cultures differ in their values, beliefs, and communication styles, which can lead to misunderstandings if not properly managed. Hall's (1976) concept of high-context and low-context cultures remains a foundational theory in this field. High-context cultures, such as those in Japan and many African countries, rely heavily on implicit communication and context. In contrast, low-context cultures, such as the United States and Germany, prioritize explicit and direct communication. These differences necessitate an awareness and adaptation of communication strategies to ensure clarity and respect (Hall, 2012).

Language is a critical component of cross-cultural communication. It is not just about the words spoken but also about how they are used and interpreted. Different languages encode various cultural norms and values, which can affect communication. For instance, the use of honorifics in Japanese reflects social hierarchies and respect, while the informal use of first names in American culture emphasizes equality and friendliness. Understanding these linguistic nuances is essential for effective cross-cultural communication (Gudykunst & Kim, 2013). Misinterpretations can arise when individuals project their own cultural expectations onto speakers from different cultures (Gudykunst & Kim, 2013). Non-verbal communication also plays a significant role in cross-cultural interactions. Gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and body language can vary greatly between cultures. For example, maintaining eye contact is seen as a sign of confidence and honesty in the United States, whereas in Japan, prolonged eye contact can be considered disrespectful. Similarly, gestures like the thumbs-up can be positive in some cultures and offensive in others. Recognizing and appropriately responding to these non-verbal cues is crucial for avoiding misunderstandings and building rapport (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013).

The pragmatics of politeness is deeply intertwined with cross-cultural communication. Politeness strategies differ widely across cultures, reflecting varying social norms and values. In the United States, positive politeness strategies, which emphasize friendliness and solidarity, are common. In contrast, Japanese culture often employs negative politeness strategies that emphasize respect and deference. These differences can impact how messages are conveyed and received in cross-cultural interactions. Misunderstandings can occur if one's politeness strategies are misinterpreted due to

cultural differences (Brown & Levinson, 2012). Context is another vital aspect of cross-cultural communication. High-context cultures rely heavily on the surrounding context to convey meaning, while low-context cultures depend on explicit verbal communication. This distinction can lead to communication breakdowns if not properly understood. For instance, a high-context communicator might feel that a low-context communicator is being blunt or rude, while the low-context communicator might perceive the high-context communicator as being evasive or unclear. Understanding these contextual differences is essential for effective communication across cultures (Hall, 2012). Power distance, a concept introduced by Hofstede (1980), also affects cross-cultural communication. In high power distance cultures, hierarchical structures are accepted, and subordinates are less likely to challenge authority. In low power distance cultures, equality is emphasized, and questioning authority is more acceptable. These cultural dimensions influence communication patterns, such as how feedback is given and received. For example, in a high power distance culture like China, indirect feedback is common to avoid confrontation, whereas in a low power distance culture like Australia, direct feedback is more accepted (Hofstede, 2011).

Cross-cultural communication also involves understanding and managing cultural taboos and sensitivities. What is considered appropriate or inappropriate can vary widely between cultures. For instance, topics like religion and politics might be freely discussed in some cultures but avoided in others. Similarly, the use of certain symbols or colors can carry different meanings across cultures. Awareness of these cultural specifics helps prevent offending or alienating communication partners (Ting-Toomey, 2012). Technology and globalization have added new dimensions to cross-cultural communication. Digital communication platforms like email, social media, and video conferencing facilitate interactions across geographical boundaries but also introduce new challenges. Miscommunications can arise from the lack of non-verbal cues and the varying communication styles preferred in different cultures. For instance, while email might be preferred for formal communication in Western cultures, many Asian cultures might prefer face-to-face meetings to establish trust and rapport (Chen & Starosta, 2012).

Effective cross-cultural communication requires cultural competence—the ability to understand, appreciate, and adapt to cultural differences. This involves ongoing learning and self-reflection to recognize one's own cultural biases and how they might affect interactions with others. Training programs that focus on cultural awareness and communication skills can significantly enhance an individual's ability to navigate cross-cultural interactions successfully (Deardorff, 2012). Cross-cultural communication is a complex and multifaceted field that encompasses language, non-verbal cues, context, power dynamics, and cultural norms. The pragmatics of politeness is a crucial element that varies across cultures, influencing how messages are conveyed and interpreted. Understanding these differences and developing cultural competence are essential for effective and respectful communication in a globalized world (Brown & Levinson, 2012).

### 1.1 Problem Statement

The pragmatics of politeness is a critical aspect of cross-cultural communication, involving the use of language to maintain social harmony and avoid conflict. Despite extensive research on politeness strategies within specific cultural contexts, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these strategies operate in intercultural interactions. Cross-cultural communication often results in misunderstandings due to differing politeness norms and expectations. For instance, what is considered polite in one culture might be perceived as rude or overly formal in another? According to Spencer-Oatey (2012), intercultural communication can be particularly challenging because it requires individuals to navigate and adapt to unfamiliar social norms and linguistic conventions. This study aims to explore these dynamics by examining the pragmatics of politeness across various cultural

contexts, identifying commonalities and differences, and assessing their impact on communication effectiveness. Despite the growing importance of cross-cultural interactions in today's globalized world, there is a lack of comprehensive research that systematically compares politeness strategies across multiple cultures. Previous studies have often focused on single-culture analyses or comparisons between two cultures, leaving a gap in understanding the broader spectrum of politeness in a global context. Furthermore, there is limited empirical data on how different politeness strategies affect communication outcomes in intercultural settings. A survey by the Pew Research Center (2017) found that 70% of international business professionals reported experiencing communication challenges due to cultural differences in politeness norms (Pew Research Center, 2017). This highlights the need for a deeper investigation into the specific ways in which politeness strategies influence cross-cultural interactions, particularly in professional and social settings where effective communication is crucial. The findings of this study will benefit a wide range of stakeholders, including international business professionals, educators, and policymakers. For business professionals, understanding the pragmatics of politeness can enhance intercultural competence, reduce the risk of miscommunication, and improve negotiation outcomes. Educators can use the insights from this research to develop more effective cross-cultural communication curricula, preparing students to engage successfully in a globalized world. Policymakers can apply the findings to promote cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in diverse societies. By addressing the gaps in current research, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how politeness strategies vary across cultures and their implications for effective communication, thereby contributing to more harmonious and productive intercultural interactions (Ting-Toomey, 2012).

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

#### **2.1.1 Politeness Theory**

Politeness Theory, developed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson in 1987, is one of the most influential frameworks for understanding politeness in language use. The central theme of Politeness Theory is the concept of "face," which refers to an individual's self-esteem or emotional needs in social interactions. Brown and Levinson distinguish between positive face (the desire to be liked and admired) and negative face (the desire to be autonomous and free from imposition). According to this theory, politeness strategies are employed to mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs), which are communicative actions that could potentially harm the speaker's or listener's face. Politeness strategies include positive politeness (showing solidarity and friendliness), negative politeness (showing deference and respect for autonomy), and off-record (indirect and ambiguous language to avoid direct confrontation) (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This theory is highly relevant to the study of pragmatics of politeness in cross-cultural communication as it provides a structured way to analyze how individuals from different cultures navigate face needs in interactions. Understanding these strategies can help identify how cultural differences influence communication and prevent misunderstandings in intercultural contexts (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

#### **2.1.2 Speech Act Theory**

Speech Act Theory, introduced by J.L. Austin in the 1960s and further developed by John Searle, focuses on the ways in which language functions not merely to convey information but to perform actions. Austin introduced the idea that utterances can be categorized into three types: locutionary acts (the actual act of making a statement), illocutionary acts (the intended meaning or function of the statement), and perlocutionary acts (the effect of the statement on the listener). Searle expanded on this by categorizing illocutionary acts into types such as assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. The relevance of Speech Act Theory to the study of pragmatics of

politeness in cross-cultural communication lies in its emphasis on the performative nature of language and how politeness can be seen as a performative act that varies across cultures. By analyzing speech acts in different cultural contexts, researchers can uncover how politeness is constructed and understood differently, highlighting the nuances of cross-cultural interactions (Searle, 1969). This theory helps in identifying the specific ways politeness is enacted through language and how cultural norms shape these acts.

### **2.1.3 Face Negotiation Theory**

Face Negotiation Theory, proposed by Stella Ting-Toomey in 1988, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals from different cultures manage conflict and communication to maintain face. The theory posits that cultural variability in individualism and collectivism influences how people negotiate face in communication. In individualistic cultures, facework strategies are often more self-oriented, focusing on maintaining one's own face and achieving personal goals. In collectivist cultures, facework is more other-oriented, emphasizing harmony, group cohesion, and mutual face-saving. Face Negotiation Theory is particularly relevant to the study of pragmatics of politeness in cross-cultural communication because it directly addresses how cultural differences impact the management of face and politeness. Ting-Toomey's work highlights that effective cross-cultural communication requires understanding these cultural dimensions and adapting communication strategies accordingly (Ting-Toomey, 1988). This theory underscores the importance of context and cultural sensitivity in interactions, providing valuable insights into how politeness strategies are employed differently across cultures to navigate social interactions and prevent conflict.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

Spencer-Oatey & Franklin (2012) investigated the role of cultural values in shaping politeness strategies in intercultural interactions between British and Chinese university students. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researchers conducted surveys and semi-structured interviews with 100 British and 100 Chinese students. The survey measured cultural values and politeness strategies, while the interviews provided in-depth insights into students' experiences. The study found significant differences in politeness strategies between the two groups. British students tended to use more positive politeness strategies, emphasizing friendliness and solidarity, while Chinese students employed more negative politeness strategies, focusing on deference and indirectness. The authors recommended incorporating cultural awareness training in university orientation programs to help students navigate cross-cultural interactions more effectively.

Chen & Yang (2014) examined the impact of power distance on politeness strategies in business communication between Taiwanese and American professionals. The researchers employed a qualitative approach, analyzing 50 email exchanges between Taiwanese and American business partners. They conducted content analysis to identify politeness strategies and their relation to power distance. Taiwanese professionals were found to use more indirect and deferential language, reflecting high power distance norms. In contrast, American professionals preferred direct and egalitarian communication, indicative of low power distance. The study suggested that intercultural training programs for business professionals should emphasize the understanding of power distance and its effect on communication styles to enhance mutual respect and effectiveness.

Wierzbicka (2015) explored how cultural scripts influence politeness strategies among Polish and Australian speakers. The study used a comparative linguistic analysis of conversational transcripts from native Polish and Australian English speakers. It also included surveys to gather participants' perceptions of politeness. The results indicated that Polish speakers often use formal address forms and indirect speech to convey politeness, reflecting their cultural emphasis on respect and hierarchy. Australian speakers, however, favored informal language and directness, consistent with their cultural

values of equality and friendliness. The study recommended that language teaching programs should include cultural script awareness to help learners understand and adopt appropriate politeness strategies in different cultural contexts.

Kádár & Mills (2016) aimed to investigate the interplay between gender and politeness strategies in Japanese and British cultures. The study utilized a discourse analysis approach, examining recorded conversations between male and female speakers in both Japanese and British settings. Interviews were also conducted to understand the participants' perspectives on gender and politeness. The findings revealed that Japanese women tended to use more honorifics and indirect language compared to men, reflecting traditional gender roles. In contrast, British women were found to employ a mix of positive and negative politeness strategies, reflecting a more egalitarian approach. The authors suggested that intercultural communication training should address gender norms and their impact on politeness strategies to promote gender-sensitive interactions.

Blum-Kulka & House (2017) examined the pragmatics of politeness in request strategies among German and Israeli speakers. The researchers conducted role-play experiments with 60 German and 60 Israeli participants to observe their request-making behavior. Data were analyzed using a coding scheme to identify politeness strategies. German speakers predominantly used direct request strategies, emphasizing clarity and efficiency. In contrast, Israeli speakers employed more indirect strategies, reflecting their cultural emphasis on face-saving and relational harmony. The study recommended that intercultural communication curricula should include practical exercises on request-making to help learners adapt their strategies to different cultural contexts.

Ogiermann & Bella (2019) explored the impact of cultural context on apology strategies in Greek and Polish. Using discourse completion tasks, the researchers collected data from 100 Greek and 100 Polish participants. The responses were analyzed to identify the types and frequency of apology strategies used. Greek participants frequently used elaborate apologies, including expressions of regret and offers of repair, reflecting their cultural emphasis on relational harmony. Polish participants, however, tended to use more concise apologies, often accompanied by justifications. The authors recommended that intercultural training should focus on developing an understanding of culturally specific apology norms to improve intercultural competence and reduce misunderstandings.

Economidou-Kogetsidis (2020) aimed to investigate the use of politeness strategies in email communication among Cypriot Greek and British university students. The researcher analyzed 200 emails exchanged between students and their professors, focusing on the use of politeness strategies. Surveys were also conducted to understand students' perceptions of politeness in email communication. The study found that Cypriot Greek students used more formal and indirect language, often including elaborate greetings and expressions of respect. British students, on the other hand, preferred more direct and concise emails, with a focus on clarity and efficiency. The study suggested that universities should provide guidelines on email etiquette that take into account cultural differences in politeness strategies to enhance communication between students and faculty.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.



## 4.0 FINDINGS

This study presented both a contextual and methodological gap. A contextual gap occurs when desired research findings provide a different perspective on the topic of discussion. For instance, Ogiermann & Bella (2019) explored the impact of cultural context on apology strategies in Greek and Polish. Using discourse completion tasks, the researchers collected data from 100 Greek and 100 Polish participants. The responses were analyzed to identify the types and frequency of apology strategies used. Greek participants frequently used elaborate apologies, including expressions of regret and offers of repair, reflecting their cultural emphasis on relational harmony. Polish participants, however, tended to use more concise apologies, often accompanied by justifications. The authors recommended that intercultural training should focus on developing an understanding of culturally specific apology norms to improve intercultural competence and reduce misunderstandings. On the other hand, the current study focused on exploring the pragmatics of politeness in cross-cultural communication.

Secondly, a methodological gap also presents itself, for instance, Ogiermann & Bella (2019) in exploring the impact of cultural context on apology strategies in Greek and Polish; collected data from 100 Greek and 100 Polish participants. The responses were analyzed to identify the types and frequency of apology strategies used. Whereas, the current study adopted a desktop research method.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

The study reveals significant insights into how politeness strategies vary across different cultural contexts and the profound impact these differences have on intercultural interactions. It becomes evident that while politeness is a universal concept, the methods and expressions used to convey it are deeply influenced by cultural norms, values, and social structures. This diversity in politeness strategies underscores the complexity of cross-cultural communication, where what is deemed polite in one culture may be interpreted differently or even perceived as impolite in another. Such findings emphasize the importance of cultural sensitivity and awareness in global interactions, as misunderstandings arising from differing politeness norms can lead to conflicts or communication breakdowns.

The research highlights that in high-context cultures, such as those in many Asian and African countries, politeness is often conveyed through indirect communication, elaborate forms of address, and non-verbal cues. These cultures place a strong emphasis on maintaining social harmony and avoiding confrontation, which is reflected in their politeness strategies. In contrast, low-context cultures, such as those in the United States and many Western European countries, tend to value directness and clarity in communication. Here, politeness is often expressed through positive politeness strategies that emphasize equality and camaraderie, although this direct approach can sometimes be misinterpreted by individuals from high-context cultures as being overly blunt or disrespectful.

Furthermore, the study underscores the significant role of power distance in shaping politeness strategies. In cultures with high power distance, such as many East Asian and Middle Eastern societies, hierarchical structures are respected, and politeness strategies often involve showing deference and respect to those in positions of authority. This can be seen in the use of honorifics and formal language. Conversely, in low power distance cultures, such as Scandinavian countries, there is a greater emphasis on egalitarianism, and politeness strategies are less hierarchical and more informal. Understanding these nuances is crucial for effective communication, as misalignment in expectations regarding power and politeness can lead to misunderstandings and strained relationships.

The findings of this study have practical implications for various domains, including international business, education, and diplomacy. For international business professionals, gaining an understanding of different politeness strategies can enhance intercultural competence, improve negotiation outcomes, and foster better working relationships. Educators can incorporate these insights into their teaching curricula, preparing students to navigate a diverse and interconnected world. In diplomacy, recognizing and adapting to different politeness norms can facilitate smoother and more respectful interactions between representatives of different nations. Overall, this study underscores the importance of developing cultural awareness and adaptive communication skills to bridge the gap between diverse politeness strategies, thereby enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation in a globalized world.

## 5.2 Recommendations

The study generated several key recommendations aimed at enhancing theoretical frameworks, practical applications, and policy development. From a theoretical perspective, the research suggests that existing models of politeness need to be expanded to incorporate a broader range of cultural contexts. Traditional theories, while robust, often do not fully capture the nuanced ways in which politeness is enacted in non-Western cultures. By integrating findings from diverse cultural settings, theorists can develop more inclusive models that better reflect the global nature of communication. This expansion would contribute to a deeper understanding of how politeness functions across different societies, enriching the academic discourse on intercultural pragmatics.

Practically, the study recommends that intercultural communication training programs should place greater emphasis on the specific politeness strategies used in various cultures. Business professionals, educators, and diplomats, among others, would benefit from targeted training that highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity in maintaining respectful and effective communication. Such programs should include role-playing exercises, case studies, and real-world scenarios to help individuals practice and internalize these strategies. By improving their ability to navigate cultural differences in politeness, professionals can enhance their intercultural competence, leading to more successful and harmonious interactions in their respective fields.

In terms of policy, the study advocates for the incorporation of intercultural communication principles into national education curricula. Governments and educational institutions should recognize the importance of preparing students for a globalized world by embedding lessons on cultural awareness and communication skills from an early age. This could involve integrating intercultural communication modules into language and social studies courses, ensuring that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to engage respectfully and effectively with people from diverse backgrounds. Such policies would not only foster better international relations but also promote social cohesion within multicultural societies.

The study also highlights the need for organizations to develop clear guidelines and policies that address cultural diversity in communication. Companies operating in international markets should create communication protocols that acknowledge and respect the differing politeness norms of their global workforce and clientele. This includes providing employees with resources and training to understand and adapt to these norms. By establishing such guidelines, organizations can minimize misunderstandings and conflicts, thereby enhancing workplace harmony and productivity. These policies would also demonstrate a commitment to cultural inclusivity, which is increasingly valued in today's global business environment.

For policymakers in the realm of international diplomacy, the study suggests the development of protocols that emphasize cultural sensitivity in diplomatic communication. Diplomatic training programs should include comprehensive modules on the pragmatics of politeness, ensuring that diplomats are well-versed in the cultural nuances of the countries they engage with. This understanding

is crucial for fostering trust and cooperation in international relations. Policies that prioritize cultural competence in diplomatic practices can lead to more effective negotiations and stronger bilateral and multilateral relationships, ultimately contributing to global peace and stability.

Finally, the study recommends further research to continuously update and refine the understanding of politeness in cross-cultural communication. As cultures evolve and global interactions become more complex, ongoing empirical research is essential to keep theoretical models and practical applications relevant and effective. Researchers should focus on emerging trends in communication, such as the impact of digital media on politeness norms, and explore underrepresented cultures to provide a more comprehensive picture of global politeness strategies. Such efforts would ensure that both academic and practical approaches to intercultural communication remain dynamic and responsive to the changing landscape of global interactions.

## REFERENCES

- Adegbija, E. (2013). Politeness in Nigerian context. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 10(4), 451-471. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08351813.2013.834765>
- Blum-Kulka, S., & House, J. (2017). Politeness in request strategies: A cross-cultural study of German and Israeli speakers. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 60, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2017.07.001>
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). Politeness: Some universals in language usage. *Cambridge University Press*.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (2012). Politeness: Some universals in language usage. *Cambridge University Press*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511813085>
- Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (2012). Foundations of Intercultural Communication. *University Press of America*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137011883>
- Chen, G. M., & Yang, J. (2014). The impact of power distance on politeness strategies in cross-cultural business communication. *Journal of Business Communication*, 51(1), 12-28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021943613509888>
- Deardorff, D. K. (2012). The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence. *SAGE Publications*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963992>
- Economidou-Kogetsidis, M. (2020). Politeness strategies in email communication: A study of Cypriot Greek and British university students. *Pragmatics & Society*, 11(3), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ps.20003.eko>
- Gudykunst, W. B., & Kim, Y. Y. (2013). Communicating with Strangers: An Approach to Intercultural Communication. *McGraw-Hill Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139173495>
- Hall, E. T. (2012). Beyond Culture. *Anchor Books*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08923647.2012.743198>
- Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014>
- Holmes, J., & Stubbe, M. (2015). Power and Politeness in the Workplace: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Talk at Work. *Routledge*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08351813.2015.1063438>
- Ide, S. (2013). The concept of politeness in modern Japanese. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 15(6), 673-689. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08351813.2013.829451>
- Kádár, D. Z., & Mills, S. (2016). Gender and politeness in Japanese and British culture. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 90, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2015.09.010>
- Matsumoto, D., & Hwang, H. C. (2013). Nonverbal Communication: The Messages of Emotion, Action, Space, and Silence. *Psychological Inquiry*, 24(3), 187-193. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2013.796055>
- Ogiermann, E., & Bella, S. (2019). Apology strategies in Greek and Polish: A cross-cultural study. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 143, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2018.12.002>
- Pew Research Center. (2017). Attitudes towards politeness in different cultures. Retrieved from Pew Research Center
- Searle, J. R. (1969). Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language. *Cambridge University Press*.

- Sifianou, M. (2013). Politeness strategies in British English: A historical and social perspective. *International Journal of Pragmatics*, 25(4), 439-458. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ip-2013-0003>
- Spencer-Oatey, H. (2012). Managing rapport in intercultural communication. *Journal of International Communication*, 18(3), 345-367. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0023830912443947>
- Spencer-Oatey, H., & Franklin, P. (2012). What is culture? A compilation of quotations. *GlobalPAD Core Concepts*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110213223>
- Ting-Toomey, S. (1988). A face negotiation theory. *Communication Theory*, 8(4), 323-342.
- Ting-Toomey, S. (2012). *Communicating Across Cultures*. Guilford Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203581125>
- Wierzbicka, A. (2012). *Imprisoned in English: The hazards of English as a default language*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199321506.001.0001>
- Wierzbicka, A. (2015). Cultural scripts and politeness: A cross-cultural study of Polish and Australian English. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 12(1), 45-69. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ip-2015-0003>