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Pragmatic Adaptation in Digital Translation: The Influence of Technology on Translating Negative Politeness

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the adaptation of negative politeness strategies in the requests of Jordanian and Omani students in digital communication. The study employs Brown and Levinson's politeness theory to examine how students from these two cultures use politeness strategies (indirectness, asking questions, apologizing, and minimizing imposition) in writing emails, text messages, and social media interactions. Data were collected from 60 students (30 Jordanian and 30 Omani) through semi-structured interviews, surveys, and observational inputs. The study finds variations across cultural expressions. For example, Omani students mostly put their questions in pairs, but they find single questions acceptable, while Jordanian students generally ask for things in single questions. Furthermore, the roles of digital translation tools, such as Google Translate and DeepL, are being studied concerning how they translate politeness strategies, particularly

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indirectness and hedging. The research found that such machine tools have not done very well in reflecting these pragmatic characteristics but instead, in many cases, lose markers of culture and politeness. Pragmatic adoption of digital translation will expressly enhance future research along with culturally aware translation tools. Future studies should investigate better ways to utilize digital devices in capturing the heterogeneous aspects of politeness across cultures. Moreover, Future researchers can investigate the reasons for misunderstanding the negative politeness strategies by native speakers when they interact with non-native speakers like Jordanians and Omanis.

Keywords: Negative Politeness Strategies; Cultural Adaptation; Online Communication; Digital Translation Tools; Inter-cultural Pragmatics

1. Introduction

The purpose of this research is to analyze the ways Jordanian and Omani students make use of negative politeness strategies in digital communication, particularly in requests made through translation tools such as Google Translate and DeepL. While both parties converse in Arabic, cultural differences influence their use of politeness strategies, including indirectness, questioning, apologizing, and minimizing imposition. Thus, these adaptations are often exercised on much-used digital platforms, whether emails or social media, in cross-cultural exchanges. However, how did the use of digital translation tools affect the upkeep or change of these strategies? This has never been well done in pragmatic research.

While much of the existing research has focused on the directness of requests in face-to-face communication, especially concerning social factors such as power dynamics and social distance^[1,2], little attention has been given to how digital translation tools handle negative politeness strategies across cultures. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing how Jordanian and Omani students adapt their use of negative politeness in digital communication and the role machine translation tools play in preserving or altering these strategies, particularly in cross-cultural contexts.

Requests are acts that are directives, as defined by Ellis^[3], meant to make the hearer perform or refrain from performing certain actions. Usually, these face-threatening acts (FTAs) are threats to the hearer's face. According to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory^[4,5], requests impose a direct challenge on the hearers' face because they violate their freedom of action and freedom from imposition. Arabic cultures, such as those in Jordan and Oman, would soften requests in general under negative politeness strategies, es-

pecially when the addressee is in a superior position or even when the speaker does not maintain a close relationship with the addressee. This approach contrasts with those of other cultures, which tend to be more direct. However, the understanding of the extent to which the strategies are preserved, modified, or lost in digital communication, particularly in translated contexts, remains unclear and inconsistent.

This research intends to fill the gap by examining how Jordanian and Omani Arabic speakers adapt their use of negative politeness strategies in digital platforms, such as social media and messaging apps. It further analyzes how digital translation technologies are operating within the terms for maintaining such strategies as regards indirection and hedges, which are other meanings ascribed to negative politeness. The cultural differences in terms of how far expressiveness and in what kinds of use politeness strategies can be found all over the world regarding requests as a speech act. According to Brown and Levinson^[4,5], Searle^[6], and Leech^[7], on indirectness, any request can be said to be less indirect by definition than that of a polite request. This assumption works in Arabic communication strategies, but digital translation tools may struggle to transfer these cultural subtleties. Yenigun et al.^[8] focused on how Oman practices its public diplomacy with new instruments in the region and beyond. They explored that it needs a modern set of tools and strong strategies if it hopes to successfully implement and achieve the goals of its public diplomacy. Vaishnav^[9] concludes that sociolinguistic competence varies according to institutionally determined exposure to English and interactional norms, wherein Arabic seems to have both positive and negative effects.

Rather than capturing the cultural divides on politeness, the investigation has been conducted through the use of translation technologies, including Google Translate and

DeepL. Further, this study outlines indirectness and hedging as modes for translating negative politeness. The study contributes to the research field of pragmatic adaptation in digital translation, specifically regarding how translation tools facilitate or hinder negative politeness strategies across languages and cultures.

The present study investigates how students from Jordan and Oman apply negative politeness strategies, their digital request etiquette, which include indirectness, hedging, excuse-making, and minimizing imposition. It shows how culture influences these strategies in digital communication and examines blank translation engines like Google Translate and DeepL, for their role in preserving and altering such strategies. The efficiency of these translation engines in respecting the nuances of negative politeness in cross-cultural translation is analyzed.

2. Literature Review

The study of negative politeness strategies in requests has been extensively carried out in cross-cultural pragmatics, largely concerning directness and indirectness. However, a significant gap remains in understanding how they adapt to digital communication and digital translation, especially concerning Arabic speakers from Jordan and Oman. This literature review comprehensively discusses the central works that inform the theoretical framework of politeness^[5], as well as cultural variations in request strategies, and the technologies involved in transferring politeness across languages and cultures.

2.1. Politeness Theory

This is a very short introductory note on the far-reaching issues of cross-cultural pragmatics, especially when concerned with FTAs (face-threatening acts such as requests, which are violations of perceived freedom of action of the hearer, imposing on their autonomy). Brown and Levinson's^[4] Politeness Theory has been foundational in cross-cultural pragmatics, especially concerning face-threatening acts (FTAs). Requests are seen as FTAs because they constitute a situation where the speaker (S) is proposing that the hearer (H) act against the hearer's wishes. To mitigate the imposition, there are politeness strategies. According to Brown and Levinson^[4], politeness strategies are classified into two

broad categories: positive and negative. Positive politeness pays attention to the addressee's desire for approval, while negative politeness is concerned with not imposing. These strategies are used by speakers in various socio-cultural contexts, especially in Arabic-speaking societies, where the issue of politeness is of utmost importance for maintaining social equilibrium and respect.

Sociolinguistic surveys on the worldwide nature of politeness have revealed discrepancies in request strategies due to distance, power relations, and cultural norms^[6,10]. For example, the cultures of the Arabic world, namely Jordan and Oman, tend to lean toward indirectness to protect the face of the interlocutor. However, between such variations, directness, and informality can be influenced by gender, age, and social status differences^[11]. In such contexts, face-threatening acts are likely to be mitigated using informal, polite strategies, such as hedging, apologizing, and indirectness, which are frequently employed to avoid offending or imposing on the hearer's face.

An increasing volume of research focuses on request strategies in Jordanian and Omani Arabic, as well as their cultural specificity. Al-Khatani^[12] study shows that Jordanian students tend to be more direct compared to their Omani counterparts, who prefer to be indirect in order to show respect and avoid imposing on others. The Omani preference for an indirect strategy is justified by the hierarchically structured nature of Omani society, which places great emphasis on formality and deference toward authority. By contrast, Jordanian society lends itself to a more informal request, especially when addressing peers.

Further investigation into compliments and refusals highlighted cultural preferences for indirectness to avoid face-threatening situations for the hearer. For example, Omani students tend to apologize and use indirect question forms like "if it's possible" or "I would appreciate it if," which serve to soften the request and minimize imposition on the listener^[13–15]. On the other hand, Jordanian students do not depart from these indirectness strategies, but they mostly rely on less formal hedging when dealing with a close peer.

The intersection of linguistic theories and translation studies further informs how these strategies are carried out across cultures. Rabee et al.^[16] examined how linguistic frameworks integrate with literature and translation stud-

ies, highlighting a stronger influence of linguistic principles in translation studies compared to literary studies. This is likely due to the direct connection between translation and linguistic structures, which plays a crucial role in transferring politeness strategies in bilingual contexts. Moreover, Rabee et al.^[16] suggest that further research should explore the role of linguistic perspectives in other fields like management and medicine, where communication and cultural understanding are crucial, offering valuable insights into how these strategies adapt in various professional contexts.

To date, how negative politeness strategies are adapted for digital communication in these two cultures remain an ever-growing field. The rise of digital platforms such as emails, social media, and text messaging points to the need for further investigation into how Jordanian and Omani students adapt their communicative strategies to these spaces. For instance, Al-Yousef et al.^[17] suggested that Jordanian students modify their language in online communications, often opting for formal expressions more than they would in face-to-face communications. In parallel to this, Omani students also maintain formal structures even during digital engagements, owing to their need for preserving respectful distance in communication.

The study of code-switching among bilingual speakers provides additional insights into the pragmatics of communication. Al Yousef et al.^[18] explored the types and motivations for code-switching among bilingual Jordanian speakers of Arabic and English. They identified three primary types of code-switching: intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag-switching, with intra-sentential switching being the most frequent. The study highlights how bilinguals use code-switching to express identity and bridge lexical gaps, showing that pragmatics in bilingual contexts involves more than simply translating words but also managing identity and social interaction through linguistic shifts.

2.2. Arabic Pragmatics

The study of Arabic pragmatics illuminates how the Arabic language is employed in diverse social contexts, considering the profound influence of cultural and societal factors on language use. Within the framework of politeness, Arabic speakers frequently employ a range of strategies to manage social distance, express respect, and navigate hierarchical structures, all of which are fundamental to communica-

tion within Arab cultures. A comprehensive understanding of Arabic pragmatics is therefore critical for discerning how negative politeness strategies, as conceptualized within Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory^[4], are adapted and manifested, particularly in digital communication environments. Key Aspects of Arabic Pragmatics:

2.2.1. Face and Respect

In Arabic culture, the preservation of 'face,' or *karāma* (honor), constitutes a cornerstone of social interactions. This concept is intrinsically linked to an individual's social identity, which is heavily influenced by hierarchical structures based on age, gender, and social status. Negative politeness strategies are routinely utilized to avoid imposing on or threatening the interlocutor's face, especially in contexts where deference to authority or seniority is highly emphasized. This practice aligns seamlessly with Brown and Levinson's^[4] theoretical postulation that face-threatening acts, such as requests, necessitate mitigation through strategies like indirectness, hedging, and apologizing.

2.2.2. Indirectness and Hedging

Indirectness serves as a defining characteristic of Arabic communication, particularly evident in the formulation of requests. The strategic use of hedging expressions, such as "If possible," "I hope you don't mind," or "If it's not too much trouble," effectively softens the illocutionary force of requests, thereby ensuring that the speaker does not overtly impose on the listener. This form of indirectness functions as a crucial negative politeness strategy, upholding the hearer's autonomy. In contrast to communication styles prevalent in more direct cultures, Arabic-speaking societies generally favor circumlocution over straightforward, bald on-record requests, especially when addressing superiors or individuals with whom a formal relationship is maintained^[10].

2.2.3. Apologizing and Minimizing Imposition

Apologies hold a central position within Arabic pragmatics. In Arabic-speaking societies, the act of apologizing extends beyond a mere acknowledgment of error; it functions as a vital mechanism for safeguarding interpersonal relationships and preventing discomfort for the hearer. Common phrases such as "I apologize if I'm bothering you," "Sorry for the inconvenience," and "I hope I'm not troubling you" are routinely integrated into requests. This linguistic practice re-

flects a deep-seated cultural understanding of the imperative to mitigate any potential imposition. Consequently, apologizing actively contributes to establishing a non-threatening communicative environment for the hearer, consistent with Brown and Levinson's negative politeness strategies that prioritize minimizing imposition^[19].

2.2.4. Formality and Informality

Arabic speakers exhibit a notable adaptability in adjusting their level of formality based on their social relationship with the interlocutor. (For instance, Omani students tend to employ more formal language in their requests, even when communicating with close acquaintances, a reflection of the more hierarchical and deference-oriented social structure prevalent in Omani society. Conversely, Jordanian students often opt for a more relaxed, informal register when interacting with peers, consistent with Jordan's relatively less hierarchical social dynamics. Nevertheless, both groups consistently utilize indirect strategies to avoid imposition, underscoring the overarching significance of this feature within Arabic pragmatics^[13].

2.2.5. Gender and Social Hierarchy

Gender plays a considerable role in shaping Arabic pragmatics. Men and women may employ distinct politeness strategies influenced by culturally ingrained gender roles and the specific social context. Women, particularly in formal settings, frequently utilize more hedging and apologetic language as a marker of politeness. Furthermore, the established hierarchy between men and women in some Arabic societies influences the degree of formality adopted in communication. This gendered application of politeness aligns with Brown and Levinson's theories^[4], which posit that social power and the perceived distance between speaker and hearer critically inform the selection of politeness strategies.

The implementation of negative politeness strategies in Arabic contexts closely adheres to Brown and Levinson's foundational model of politeness, particularly concerning its emphasis on avoiding face threats and mitigating impositions. Politeness in Arabic societies often entails a delicate equilibrium, balancing the imperative to maintain respect for others and the necessity of ensuring that requests and directives are not perceived as direct challenges to another's autonomy or face.

Negative Politeness: Strategies such as indirectness,

hedging, and apologizing are profoundly evident in Arabic communication. In both the Jordanian and Omani contexts, the 'negative face'—the fundamental desire to remain unimpeded—is a paramount consideration in the construction of requests. For example, when soliciting a favor, an Arabic speaker typically frames the request to provide the hearer with an honorable avenue for refusal (e.g., "Could you help me if it's not too much trouble?"). This approach effectively mitigates the inherent threat posed by the request, directly aligning with Brown and Levinson's concept of negative politeness.

Cultural Variability: While Brown and Levinson's theory proposes a universal applicability of politeness strategies, Arabic cultures demonstrate variations in the degree and specific manifestations of indirectness based on social context. For instance, Omani students consistently employ a more formal linguistic register, even with close peers, thereby emphasizing the cultural importance of maintaining respect and hierarchy—a characteristic deeply embedded within Omani social norms. Conversely, Jordanian students may adopt a more informal approach in their peer interactions, while still preserving politeness through the use of hedging and indirectness. This observed variation underscores the significant role of cultural norms in shaping how politeness strategies are realized and adapted within specific linguistic communities^[7].

Gender plays a significant role in shaping politeness strategies, as seen in studies on refusal and compliment response strategies in academic settings. Al-Natour et al.^[15] observed that gendered behaviors in interaction were influenced by the cultural setting and the context in which communication occurred. The study suggested that women often employ more face-saving strategies than their male counterparts, especially in communication that involves power dynamics or respect for authority. Furthermore, Al-Mahrooqi et al.^[13] found that students often transfer linguistic and pragmatic considerations from their mother tongue, leading to pragmatic errors in communication in a second language. Al-Natour et al.^[20] investigated refusal in a management context. They revealed that both parties of interaction utilized direct and indirect refusal strategies.

Indeed, negative politeness strategies among Arabic-speaking communities, particularly in Jordanian and Omani societies, are affirmed as valuable by intensive research stud-

ies; however, adaptation in regard to the application of such strategies on digital platforms has remained largely unexplored. When conducting research on e-requests, Jordanian and Omani students at this dialectology school are investigated, especially in relation to translation through digital media. Understanding how translation technologies handle the pragmatic features of indirectness and hedging can significantly improve cross-cultural communication and create more sensitive translations. The effort to enhance pragmatic and digital translation through this research contributes to capturing certain culture-specific subtleties of politeness using these instruments.

2.3. Digital Communication

The rise of digital communication tools has fundamentally reshaped how individuals express politeness across various cultures. While these platforms, including machine translation systems such as Google Translate and DeepL, have significantly advanced cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication, they frequently encounter considerable challenges in accurately preserving the intricate nuances of politeness strategies embedded in human language. This particular challenge is acutely pronounced within the Arabic linguistic and cultural context, where indirectness, hedging, and apologizing constitute essential components of polite interaction, especially in formal requests or face-threatening acts. As posited by Brown and Levinson's seminal Politeness Theory^[4,5], these strategies primarily aim to preserve 'face,' which denotes an individual's intrinsic desire for autonomy and social respect. Specifically, negative politeness strategies—encompassing indirectness, minimizing imposition, and apologies—are indispensable for mitigating the inherent threat associated with requests or demands within Arabic-speaking cultures; however, MT systems consistently demonstrate limitations in adequately capturing these profound cultural subtleties^[17].

Understanding Edward Hall's^[21] theory of high-context and low-context communication can shed light on politeness strategies lost in translation in digital communications. Hall^[21] defined high-context communication as that in which the speaker depends mainly on contextual cues, common understanding, and non-verbal signals to convey meaning, whereas low-context communication gives preference to the explicit and direct articulation of verbal expressions.

In essence, the Arabic language, mainly in Jordan and Oman, is a high-context language where indirectness, social cues, and politeness strategies play a significant role in communication. These cultural contexts may not be represented duly in machine translations when communication happens digitally, especially across cultures. Thus, Hall's distinction helps shed light on why MTs often fail with respect to Arabic language politeness strategies: the subtleties inherent in high-context communication are difficult for tools that are predominantly low-context, directly translating words rather than taking the time to understand the cultural elements that shape the entire conversation.

To illustrate, in Arabic, "ممكن لو سمحت" literally translates as, "Can you please?" The politeness of the request is suffused by the social relationship between speaker and hearer, the degree to which he/she respects the autonomy of the hearer, and a non-verbal context included in the interpretation of the request. MT systems, which treat the translation as though it were low-context communication, often miss the cultural cues of high-context speakers and therefore render translations of this type into irrelevant substitutes.

In this sense, Hall's theory emphasizes the importance of laying the groundwork for developing culturally aware systems of translation that accommodate the high-context structure of languages like Arabic, as well as the low-context structure of digital communication. In this way, the MT systems could respect the cultural intricacies and dynamics surrounding the etiquette strategies that are crucial in maintaining face and ensuring effective communication.

2.4. The Role of Machine Translation (MT) and Digital Tools

Politeness theory was formulated by Brown and Levinson^[4,5] to determine the strategies that individuals employ to reduce the threat of face-threatening acts. Most attention is paid to negative politeness strategies. Negative politeness is, in fact, a set of strategies aimed at reducing imposition and preserving the autonomy of the hearer, such as using indirect speech, hedging requests, and apologizing. The above-mentioned strategies, as embedded in Arabic, are deeply rooted in social norms and cultural expectations, especially within formal settings where social distance is emphasized. One of the major differences between native Arabic speakers, such as the Jordanian and Omani students in this study, is

that they often employ indirect requests or apologies when requesting something, in order to avoid imposing on others, as this practice is very important for maintaining social harmony and regard.

Machine translation tools often fail to translate these subtleties satisfactorily. While the actual lexical meaning of the sentence may be translated correctly through MT systems, in most cases, the polite markers embedded in indirectness or hedging are missed or misinterpreted. For example, in the request “ممكن لو سمحت” (“could you please”), MT generally gives the translation: “can you”, thus disregarding the culture-related connotations involved. Consequently, any far-reaching ambiguous interpretation in translation would more or less result in the elimination of those pragmatic functions that support polite communication in the Arabic language. Al-Yousef et al.^[17] showed the ineffectiveness of MT, particularly in academic translations where politeness has a significant role. They construed direct words or their phrases in their translations; however, they could not maintain indirectness, hedging, and apologizing, a very significant aspect of the politeness factor in the component. Results from research indicate that MTs are quite prone to misunderstanding requests, as they simply provide a literal translation without the important politeness markers intrinsic to respectful communication^[3,22].

For instance, although Google Translate and DeepL translate politeness hedges like “if possible” or “I’d appreciate that” accurately, they fall short in understanding their wider implications for cultural meaning in Arabic, which are important for maintaining face and assuring the respect of one’s interlocutor. This limitation of MT systems demonstrates the need for urgent cultural sensitivity in technology for translation, as it would factor in the effect of pragmatic features in the language, as well as the context in which the request is made.

Researchers have improved machine translation tools by teaching algorithms to recognize pragmatic features, such as indirectness, hedging, and face-saving strategies. Al-Rubai’ey^[23] opines that an awareness of the cultural parameters at play in the source language is indispensable for rendering a correct translation, particularly in contexts where face-saving becomes relevant. Rabee et al.^[16] stress the necessity of linguistic theories to complement the practice of translation; a clear indicator of the greater requirement for

MT tools to be trained with regard to the pragmatics of negative politeness.

3. Theoretical Framework

The essential theoretical framework for this study is Brown and Levinson’s^[4] Politeness Theory, which remains a cornerstone for understanding how individuals manage social interactions and maintain face in communication. However, the study investigates the adaptation and challenges of applying this framework to new communication in digital and machine translation, since technological mediation brings in new variables to the whole politeness phenomenon. In conversations, requests, and many other acts threaten one’s social face and are therefore classified as Face Threatening Acts. FTAs act upon the autonomy or doing of the hearer (H) by the speaker (S). For example, requests are FTAs because they ask the hearer not to consider what he/she wants to do, but rather to please the request of the speaker. Regarding this matter, Fasold^[17] considers requests a violation of the hearer’s need for self-esteem and respect (p. 161). In light of this, people initiate facework to minimize the FTAs and thus maintain social equilibrium^[5] (p. 68).

Brown and Levinson Brown and Levinson’s^[4] identified five strategies that form the core of politeness in managing FTAs:

1. Bald on-record: A directly formulated request, no softening applies.
2. Going off-record (indirect): The speaker hints at the request and leaves the hearer to interpret what is meant by it.
3. Refrain from the act: This strategy involves not carrying out the request.
4. Positive politeness: Engaging with the positive face of the addressee, through thus trying to confirm rapport, approval, and solidarity.
5. Negative politeness: Addressing the negative face of the addressee, which needs, in effect, to be unimpeded.

These are hedging, indirectness, apologizing, and minimizing imposition. This is imbued with strategies. The attribution of strategy depends on three dimensions: speaker-hearer social distance, the relative power of the two, and the specific cultural ranking of impositions. These strategies are useful for mitigating threats to the face of the hearer in

requesting activities^[5] (p. 79).

3.1. Cultural Variations in Politeness Strategies

The inherent nature of requests is closely tied to politeness, as trying to redress a person's face is fundamental to any request. According to Brown and Levinson^[4], all languages supposedly have access to a list of strategies that can be called polite, but cultures differ in how to embed these strategies. In this sense, Jordanian Arabic, contrasted with Omani Arabic, represents two sides of the same Arabic language spectrum that can be analyzed according to opposing cultural values concerning politeness and face management.

The application of the term "politeness" in the Jordanian Arabic context may vary significantly from this equivalence in the Omani Arabic context. In other words, while Jordanian students may opt for negative politeness or simply less formal strategies with their peers in line with their cultural preference for informal and direct behavior, Omani students are likely to treat close classmates with dignity and formality as a way to show respect and maintain established social hierarchies. Brown and Levinson^[4,5] contend that although both groups have essentially access to the above speech acts, the group's choices and formulations of these strategies are culturally determined^[24] (p. 183).

3.2. Adaptation of Politeness in Digital Communication

While Brown and Levinson's framework provides a robust foundation for understanding politeness, its application to digital communication necessitates a nuanced perspective. Digital platforms, such as emails, text messages, and social media, introduce complexities by often lacking the non-verbal cues and synchronous delivery present in face-to-face interactions. This absence can significantly influence the adaptation and perception of negative politeness strategies, as indirectness and hedging may lose their subtle effects without traditional communicative processes.

Furthermore, the theoretical framework is extended to critically assess the role of digital translation tools (e.g., Google Translate, DeepL) in mediating politeness. Machine Translation systems, despite their efficacy in translating lexical meaning, often struggle with the pragmatic nuances of politeness, particularly indirectness, hedging, and apologies.

Politely expressed hedges like "if possible" or "I would appreciate it" may just be rendered inaccurate by these programs into Arabic, missing the cultural significance embedded in these expressions. According to previous research, such as Hessenauer^[1] and Emery^[22], indicates that machine translation can 'flatten' levels of politeness strategies, leading to inaccuracies in rendering culturally significant expressions and indirect speech acts.

Thus, this study adopts Brown and Levinson's theoretical framework to analyze the politeness strategies of human communicators and to assess whether these strategies are maintained or altered after going through digital translation interfaces, exemplifying the interaction between technology, culture, and pragmatic strategies.

3.3. The Role of Digital Translation Tools in Politeness Strategies

This research explores how digital translation tools retain or alter negative politeness strategies in requests across different cultures. It is true that Machine translation (MT) systems are effective in the translation of "basic lexical meaning". However, they fail in practicality as indirectness and hedging in language cause such translation problems. According to Hessenauer^[1] and Emery^[22], such tools often translate polite hedges very literally, which does not capture those cultural nuances that are crucial to social harmony and respect in Arabic.

This study attempts to focus on the interplay of culture within norms, pragmatic strategies, and technology in translation. The ability of MT systems to preserve those nuances is paramount for cross-cultural communication, such that the study actually looks into Bright and Levinson's framework on digital translation and how MT tools affect the preservation of negative politeness in translated requests.

3.4. Adapting Politeness in Digital Contexts: Jordanian and Omani Students

This research looks at how Jordanian and Omani students use negative politeness strategies in making requests, with a special emphasis on their cultural differences as well as adaptations in the digital environment, particularly in the context of social media and texting. While Omani students tend to be more formal and indirect, using questions and

hedges to soften requests, Jordanian students are more direct with their peers while keeping polite toward authority figures. The study compared these cultural differences in request-making styles.

The study elaborates on these cultural differences by assessing the role of online translation tools, such as Google Translate and DeepL, in either preserving or misrepresenting politeness markers in digital communication. It further investigates whether these tools succeed in tracking pragmatic nuances, including indirectness, hedging, and apologies, which inherently contribute to negative politeness in Arabic.

4. Methodology

This study explores how negative politeness strategies are employed by Jordanian and Omani students in their digital communication (emails, text messages, and social media interactions). The study specifically examines how these strategies are adapted or preserved in online communication and also investigates the role of digital translation tools (e.g., Google Translate, DeepL) in preserving or altering these strategies, especially in capturing indirectness, hedging, and apologizing.

The research is grounded in Brown and Levinson's^[4] Politeness Theory, which provides a theoretical framework for understanding how individuals use negative politeness strategies to mitigate the imposition of requests. The study also draws from Pragmatic Translation Theory in Translation Studies, focusing on how digital translation tools struggle to preserve the pragmatic nuances involved in these strategies, particularly in relation to face-saving and indirectness. The aim is to assess the extent to which these tools preserve the cultural and pragmatic subtleties inherent in politeness strategies.

4.1. Data Collection Procedures

This particular research study employs the Mixed Method of Research, which combines qualitative and quantitative analysis to encompass negative politeness strategies in cyberspace completely. This study collects data through semi-structured interviews, surveys, and observations from 60 students (30 from Jordan and 30 from Oman) at Jerash University (Jordan) and Sultan Qaboos University (Oman). Data collection steps are as follows:

1. **Permission from Universities:**

The researchers sent a formal request to both universities' English departments for permission to obtain data from the students. Moreover, this is essential for ethical consideration and approval by the corresponding academic bodies.

2. **Consent of Participants:**

The students are asked to sign informed consent forms that explain the objectives of the study, methods of data collection, and confidentiality measures. This ensures that participants understand their role in the research and know that their responses will be used solely for academic purposes.

3. **Selection of Interview Participants:**

A total of 60 students (30 from each university) are chosen as participants in the investigation. The students are selected through random sampling so as to accommodate different disciplines and gender representation among the students. Each student is assigned a unique code for confidentiality: JMS-1, JFS-2 (for Jordanian students), and OMS-1, OFS-2 (for Omani students).

4. **Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews:**

The researchers carry out semi-structured interviews to ascertain students' perceptions of negative politeness strategies in their digital communication. The interviews focus on students' requests in digital contexts, primarily the use of indirectness, hedging, and apologizing. The interviews are audio-recorded to assist with time transcriptions and analyses.

5. **Observational Data:**

The researchers conduct real-time observations of students' digital communication, in addition to conducting interviews. Essentially, this observation involves checking text messages, emails, and social media interactions for negative politeness strategies in students' everyday communication. The observations are recorded on a structured checklist designed to register the frequency and types of politeness strategies recorded.

6. **Surveys:**

In addition to the qualitative data collected through interviews and observations, a survey supplements these, providing quantitative data regarding the use of specific negative politeness strategies. The survey comprises Likert-scale and multiple-choice questions to explore

how often the students employ indirectness, questioning, hedging, and apologizing in their digital requests. With this analysis, patterns and trends in the utilization of politeness strategies are detected.

7. **Digital Translation Tool Evaluation:**

Part of this study investigates how digital translation tools like Google Translate and DeepL hold up in terms of preserving pragmatic nuances of politeness. The students use the tools to translate a set of digital requests, and the resulting translations are analyzed for their accuracy in potentially negative politeness strategies, namely indirectness and hedging.

4.2. Sample of the Study

The sample consists of 30 students from Jerash University in Jordan and 30 students from Sultan Qaboos University in Oman, totaling 60 participants. All courses are carefully selected to represent a diverse range of educational backgrounds. Another critical consideration is gender representation since it helps assess any likely differences in politeness strategies based on gender. Random sampling also accounts for differences in both age and year in the study. Each student is assigned a code so that their responses remain anonymous, after which the researcher analyzes the data.

4.3. Research Tools

This study uses a mixed-method approach that combines qualitative and quantitative research tools for the data-gathering and data-analysis activity:

1. **Semi-Structured Interviews:**

The semi-structured interview is conducted to examine participants' views and practices in the use of negative politeness strategies. Open-ended questions elicit the full spectrum of possible responses, while a certain degree of formality ensures that all relevant topics are covered. The theme of these interviews is the students' comprehension of indirectness, hedging, and apology in the context of digital requests, and the responses are thematically analyzed to pinpoint recurring themes and patterns.

2. **Surveys:**

In addition, structured surveys are used to quantify the

use of negative politeness strategies in digital requests among participants. The survey includes Likert-scale items to measure how often students use specific strategies, such as hedging or indirectness, when they are making requests online. This method generates quantifiable data on the use of politeness strategies across cultural groups and provides comparative data to identify trends in this regard.

3. **Observational Checklist:**

An observational checklist is used in analyzing digital communication. This checklist tracks specific negative politeness strategies used by students in their real-time online interactions (i.e., emails, text messages, and social media exchanges). It keeps track of the usage of strategies that include indirectness, hedging, and minimizing imposition.

4. **Evaluation of Digital Translation Tools:**

This study evaluates whether machine translation tools are effective in transferring negative politeness strategies. A set of digital requests is translated by Google Translate and DeepL and analyzed for correctness and pragmatic appropriateness. This evaluation also compares the tools with translations done by human beings to elucidate the scenarios in which these digital aids failed to embody culture-bound nuances of politeness.

4.4. Data Analysis

After data collection, both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in data analysis:

- Qualitative data arising from interviews and observations are analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns related to the use of negative politeness strategies. The analysis focuses on how Jordanian and Omani students adapt their strategies in a digital context and how cultural norms influence their communication style.
- Quantitative Data arising from surveys are analyzed statistically using methods such as frequency analysis and comparative tests (e.g., t-tests) to evaluate the use of politeness strategies by Jordanian and Omani students. The analysis also examines how well digital translation tools preserve negative politeness strategies during their own translation.

4.5. Ethical Considerations

The principles of ethics are strictly followed in this research to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all participants. All students are adequately informed about the objectives of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time. Consent forms are obtained from every participant, and all data is rendered anonymous prior to any scheduled data analysis.

The implementation of a mixed-methods design aims to explore how students from Jordan and Oman adapt their negative politeness strategies in digital media and how those strategies are preserved or altered by digital tools. This study thus integrates qualitative interviewing, quantitative surveys, observational analyses, and machine translation testing within a single undertaking to understand the role of cultural norms and pragmatic strategies in digital requests across cultures.

5. Analysis

To date, no studies have focused on the actual pragmatic use of negative politeness strategy in requests made by Jordanian and Omani students in digital communications. Therefore, the study compares the negative politeness strategies employed by the two groups with the intent of making explicit areas of similarity and difference between them. In analyzing these strategies in requests, the respective cultures

of Jordan and Oman highlight various factors that impact the application of these strategies and in their interaction patterns.

Al-Khawaldeh et al.^[10] have noted that societies of the Arabic world, including Jordanian society itself, are indirect. There are, however, subtle variations among these societies, especially regarding their request strategies, which are worth investigating. This study investigates how the expression of politeness strategies is mediated within the new environment of digital communication. Four main types of negative politeness strategies were identified among both Jordanian and Omani students: indirectness, questioning, apologizing, and minimizing the imposition. **Table 1** summarizes these strategies and explains why they were considered polite based on the students' responses.

Analyzing the negative politeness strategies that Jordanian and Omani students have learned and are employing in requests is structured by realizing the strategies presented in Table 1. Eight interview questions targeting students were posed to understand their culture in terms of politeness. The researchers observed and analyzed the responses of the students while making requests, as well as responses elicited by another individual's request, with regard to a better understanding of how well such students adapted their politeness strategies in a digital communication context. The role of digital media, that is, emails, text messages, and social media communication, should be applicable.

Table 1. Negative politeness strategies used by Jordanian and Omani students.

No.	Negative Politeness Strategies
1	Be indirect strategy
2	Questioning strategy
3	Apologetic strategy
4	Minimize the imposition strategy
5	Be indirect strategy

5.1. Be Indirect Strategy

Both Jordanian and Omani students appeared to be indirect when they responded to requests. A large number of the students indicated the use of this strategy, whether the requestee was familiar or unfamiliar. This strategy was especially intensified when requests were addressed to professors or people with whom they shared formality. For instance, while male students mentioned using indirect strategies with

professors and female students to avoid imposing on them directly, both groups stressed being polite and non-threatening during their requests, particularly in a digital context.

Most Jordanian and Omani students preferred to be indirect in their requests, according to their responses. Some students claimed to have used this strategy with all requestees, irrespective of whether they were close to them or not. Furthermore, male students admitted to practicing indirectness with their professors and female classmates. Their responses

clearly indicated that they did not want to impose directly on the requestee, irrespective of whether their requests were accepted or denied.

Indirect requests include greetings like “Asalamu alikum” or “Hello”, followed by “I hope I did not bother you” or “I would appreciate it if you could.” These formulas served to soften the imposition of the request. In contrast, Omani students employed a more formal register, even with their close peers, while Jordanian students tended to use colloquial expressions, such as مرحبا (marhaba), when greeting their peers.

Both Jordanian and Omani students affirmed their use of the indirect strategy in cases involving words that carry some politeness according to their culture, especially when requestees were not close to them or where social distance was felt. To cite a few examples that reflect their use of this strategy:

JMS3: “ممكّن لو سمحت تقرضني شويّة”
مصاري؟ نسييت مصرياتي في البيت” لمن مع
المقربين أقول “معك مصاري؟ بدّي 5 دناني
”حال”

“Could you please lend some money? I have forgotten mine in my home.” (With non close friend. But from the close friend I can say “do you have money? I need 5 JD urgently.”

JMS5: بقدر احكي معك دقيقة؟ ضيعت”
مصرياتي ومحتاج اخذ منك شوي” لكن مع المقرب
”أقول” سالم، معك 01 دناني؟ ضيعت جزداني
“Can I talk to you for a minute? I lost my money and need to take some from you.” (with non-close friend) but with close friend I can say “Salim, do you have 10 JD? I have lost my wallet.”

JMS8: مل احظااتك مكتوبة بوضوح في”
”كتابك؟ بدّي الكتّبم اذا بتقدر تعطيني إيام
“Are your notes written clearly in your book? I want to write them if you can give it to me.” (with close classmate) comparatively with non-close one:

مرحبا، مكتبتش المل احظاات. انت كتبتهم؟ اذا”
”ممكّن بدّي ام

“Welcome, I did not write the notes. Did you write them? If possible, I want them”

OF2: أسخدم اللهجة الببيضاء لتفادي عدم

الفهم بين المتحدثين لأنه في كل مكان في
عمان لهم لهجة. مثلا انا بقول: املا بنات، ممكّن اذا
في أحد عنده ملف المادة ترسلوه لي”

“I use the white language to be understood by all Omani girls. I can say “Girls, who has the material file? If possible, sent it to us.” “بنات
”من الي عنده ملف المادة؟ ترسله اذا ممكّن (closed classmates)

OM4: هلا اخبارك عنك مل خصات للمادة اذا ما”
”عنك ممكّن تشوف حد من ربك او معارفك

“Welcome, how are you? Do you have the summary for our course? If you do not have them, can you ask you friends or acquaintances? But from non-close friends I can say “السلام عليكم، اذا ممكّن باغي مل خص او النوات
”للمحاضرة لأنني ابغاه ومحتاجها اذا ممكّن

“If possible, I want the summary or the notes for the lecture because I need them. Can you?

OF9: من زميلتي اذا مقرب معاه بقول: هلا”
فلانة، اخبارش مل عندش الورقة الفلانية او مل
حضرتي المحاضرة الي هو حاضرته اريد اشوف
”نوتاتش

“Welcome X, how are you? Do you attend the class last lecture? I want to see your notes? for the non-closed classmate “السلام عليكم
فلانة اخبارك؟ عساك طيبة؟ عندي طلب منك اذا
”مل احظاات الي اخذناه بالمحاضرة عند

“Asalamualikum X, how are you? are you good? I would like to request the notes that you took last lecture” she used the classical dialect to be understood by the other Omanis who are from other regions to be comprehended.

Earlier examples from both Jordanian and Omani students show a preference for making requests in an indirect way. They opted for this and softened the requests for reasons of politeness in a culturally accepted way to save the face of the requestee. These include nice greetings, such as “Asalamu alikum Fahed,” “welcome,” “excuse me,” and “I would apologize if I interrupt you.” Some of these phrases, like “Asalamu alikum Fahed,” bear religious and cultural connotations.

While more polite with close classmates than they were with other students, Omani students were still considered more polite than their Jordanian counterparts, who used

slightly less formal terms like “مرحبا” (Marhaban). The Omani students, therefore, seem to prefer a more formal style of communication to sustain social distance, even when the interpersonal relationship is casual. The Jordanian students seem to prefer light-sounding phrases, mainly due to their wish to communicate informally with their peers.

Strategically, both groups would order their requests using the expressions “could you,” “can you,” and “I wish you can” to show respect toward and save the face of the requestee. Between two might be used more among Omani students than their Jordanian counterparts, implying that politeness markers are of higher significance to them than to their Jordanian counterparts.

5.2. Questioning Strategy

This strategy was used less often than the indirectness strategy by both Jordanian and Omani students. The strategy supposedly helps grant the request to the requestee, without feeling under duress or coercion, in accordance with the negative politeness strategy of questioning. It was employed by both Jordanian and Omani students, but the frequency and patterns were different from one another based on their level of relationship with the requestee. Here are some examples:

JMS3: “ممكن لو سمحت تقرضني شوي؟
“مصارى؟ نسييت مصرياتي في البيت

- “Could you please lend me some money?
I have forgotten mine at home.”

JMS5: “بقدر احكي معك دقيقة؟ ضيعة؟
“مصرياتي ومحتاج اخذ منك شوي

- “Can I talk to you for a minute? I lost my
money and need to take some from you.”

OMS4: “لا اخبارك عنك ملخصات للمادة اذا ما
“عنك ممكن تشوف حد من ربك او معارفك

- “Welcome, how are you? Do you have
the summary for our course? If you don’t,
could you ask your friends or acquaintances?”

Both Jordanian and Omani students used questions as part of their request strategies, but there were culturally distinctive variations. Omani students were somewhat more likely to chain several questions before actually making a request; this was especially true in the case of requests for

money, which could be interpreted as a politeness strategy, as it refrains from imposing too directly. For instance, OM4’s, “welcome, how are you? Do you have the summary for our course?” created an indirect and soft way to allow space to the requestee in deciding; similarly, OF9 received a greeting such as: “Asalamualikum X, how are you? Are you good?” as a polite preamble, reflecting a culture of formality even among peers. Therefore, they helped Omani students cope with face-threatening acts by granting the requestee space to accept or reject without discomfort.

Jordanian students, however, used questioning in a different manner, usually incorporating it directly into the request. For example, JMS3 and JMS5 quickly moved from asking the question to making the request, such as requesting money with little mitigation. However, JMS8’s approach was refined, posing the question, “Did you write them?” after the request, followed by “If possible” to allow the requestee the option of refusal, thus mitigating the imposition.

Markedness considerations were also there, notably with Omani students; for instance, OF9 spoke in terms of a dialectal expression within that region, like “اخبارش، عن ديش” (“how are you? Do you have...?”), a kind of everyday phrase that implies community or intimacy and minimizes social distance toward peer close friends; on the other hand, OF2 employed more neutral, classical language to exhibit carefulness as far as being clear and polite was concerned, being quite conscious of the social context and of the criteria requiring a more formal tone.

These differentiate social contexts and, to some extent, identities and regional dialects from one another with respect to politeness strategies. Omani accented asking in an indirect way formality to avoid imposing, while the Jordanian accented directness in a more straightforward direct approach, but with hedging and polite forms wherever needed. Thus, those who adhere to the cultural norms regarding respect, social distance, and the willingness to maintain face in the interaction are usually more direct.

5.3. Apologetic Strategy

Apologetic stratagems were used, both Jordanian and Omani students, not only to minimize the impact of their requests but also to show their awareness of the trouble their requests might have caused. Thus, by apologizing beforehand, the students were able to make an imposition and soften

the request.

JF7: بعذر منك إذا ازعجتك. ممكن تعطيني. كتابك.

"I apologize if I bother you, can you give me your book." (female to male)

JM4: "اعتذر اذا اخرجتك لأنني بحاجة 01 دينار" لأنني نسيت المصاري مع اخوي. إذا ما معك عادي" "I would apologize if I disturb you to give me 10 JD because I forget my money with my brother. If you do not have it is okay." (with non-close classmate)

JM7: الصريح اننا مش عارف شو أقول، بعذر. لكنني ضيعت كتابي وبدي كتابك اصوره لأدرس على الامتحان اذا ممكن؟ ومشكور عشان هيك.

"Actually, I do not know what to say, sorry but I lost my book and I want to study in the exam. Can you give you book to get a copy? I appreciate that." (non- close friend)

OM5: I can say 'if possible, to give me your course material' and at the end of the request I will say 'العتذر والساموحة اذا ازعجتك' which means in English

"I would apologize if I interrupt you." (with close and non-close friends)

OMS1: "اهلا وسهلا دكتور او كيف حالكم. ممكن ترسل لي او تشرحلي هذه النقطة والعتذر منك والساموحة."

"Welcome professor or how are you? Can you send me or explain for me these points. I would apologize for that." Which means

OFS: الزميلة: رح اسال ليش ورح اعتذر غالبا. بيقول: بغير مباشر اننا بروحي ما معي كيف اعطيك.

"For the classmates I will ask why and apologize mostly."

قريب: رح اسال وأقول رح دبلك المبل غ. بيقول: تمام بجيبهم حال.

When making a request, Jordanian and Omani students often adopt an apologetic strategy, especially in cases where the relationship with the requestee is not well established. For example, when asking for money, students preferred to soften their request by using an apology when the amount exceeded what the requestee could afford to shell out. One

student began her request by saying, "بعذر منك إذا ازعجتك" ("Sorry to interrupt you"), while another apologized in order not to embarrass the requestee: "اعتذر اذا اخرجتك لأنني بحاجة" ("Sorry if I embarrass you, but I need 10 dinars"). This shows that students use preparatory sentences and apologies to make their requests appear polite and nonthreatening to the requestee's face.

Similarly, Omani students also comply with such requests, often using the same strategy. They did not damage the face of the other party by saying something as polite as "العتذر والساموحة اذا ازعجتك" meaning I really would apologize for interrupting you. They would use this expression quite a few times, occasionally to apologize for their offense. Jordanians followed the same strategy, but in a different form, like saying "اعتذر، بعذر" meaning I would like to apologize. The reason for their apology, as they mentioned in their responses, is related to two points. Firstly, they did not have enough money once the requestee requested a large amount, like 50 Rial or above. Secondly, it is related to the level of relationship between them and the other party. Distance is one of the social variables that affects interaction politely or impolitely, as noted by Brown and Levinson^[4,5]. So, the context of the speech with the relationship specifies their responses to the requests or to request from others. They were polite in their interaction by using this strategy because they certainly do not like to threaten the face of the other party in their speeches.

Among all reactions, one that I find particularly interesting is that Omani students save money in their pockets when it comes to those who want to support their classmates regardless of distance. Without much money, students managed to convince others to ask their friends for the money. Similar statements were heard from Jordanian students in their responses, thus projecting their generous cultures, motivating them to help others.

5.4. Minimize the Imposition Strategy

A minimal imposition strategy was applied by Jordanian and Omani students to soften the requests even further and lessen their impact on the requestee. This strategy was seen predominantly when the students requested help from professors or non-close classmates. The strategy allowed students to see their requests as less intrusive, thus giving the requestee more flexibility in making decisions.

JM6: “مرحبا احمد، الصراحة حاب اطلب منك”
 “كنتابك لكن مش عارف اذا بتقدر تعطيني اياه
 “Welcome Ahmad, I really like to request your book but I do not know if you can give it to me.”

JM9: “السلام عليكم دكتور، بدني اجتمع معك”
 لأناقش معك بعض الأمور بالمادة. إذا عندك وقت
 “ومش مش غول، متى ممكن امر عندك.”

“Asalamu alikum Prof, I want to meet you to-day to discuss with you some issues related to the course. If you have time and you are not busy, when can I come to meet you?”

JF10: “سلام خالد، اذا انك فاضي الساعة 00:21”
 اذا ممكن بدني التقى معك ل اخذ منك الملاحظات
 على المادة. إذا عند محاضرات، ممكن نؤجل الوقت
 للقائنا”

“Salam Khalid. If you are free at 1:2: o'clock I would like to meet you to get the lectures notes. If you have lectures, we can postpone the time of our meeting”

OFS6: “ما حصلت الرابط لهذا لكتاب. إذا هي”
 “الأصل تفهم

“I did not get the link for the book. She has to understand my request without telling her”

OMS8: “السلام عليكم دكتور أو اهل وسهل لو”
 سمحت اذا ممكن تعطيني نسخة هذا الملف رح أكون
 جدا مهتنة لهذه المساعدة.”

“Asalamu Alikum doctor, excuse me, if possible, can you give me the copy for the file. I would appreciate you help”

OM4: “اهل دكتور اذا وقت يسمح او يصير ان”
 “نشاركنا تنزل المساعدا لنا

“Welcome doctor, if you have free time or if you can share the supported files for us”

Students would employ a variety of techniques to make their appeals polite or have some appended modifications to prevent them from threatening the requests' hearsay. For example, JM6 greeted his not-so-close classmate and hesitated before actually requesting, saying: “....but I do not know if you can give it to me.” JF10 left the time open to his male classmate while requesting an appointment to meet him. Likewise, JM9 applied the Islamic greeting “Asalamu alikum” and allowed her professor to avail of the time. All of these modifications soften the request.

Omani students also minimized imposition. OFS6 hinted at her request: “ما حصلت الرابط لهذا لكتاب. إذا هي” (I didn't get the link for the book. She has to understand my request without telling her), expecting the requestee to understand her need without stating it explicitly. In this way, her face was kept while avoiding direct imposition. OMS8, on the other hand, framed the request using an Islamic greeting and modal verbs, ending with “....I would appreciate your help.” OM4 also greeted her professor and asked if he could share the course file, minimizing imposition by suggesting flexibility.

Both Jordanian and Omani students minimized imposition by using different forms of polite language, starting their requests with polite terms such as “welcome” or “aslamu alikum” and understanding the time of the requestee. Sometimes, they qualified a possible refusal. They attacked faces and were, thus, expected to be soft and respectful. Although they employ different means, both cultures are more inclined towards polite and face-saving strategies in such conversations.

5.5. Statistical Analysis

This study addresses the four significant negative politeness strategies employed by Jordanian and Omani students in communicating online. The strategies are crucial in softening requests and keeping conversation impolite.

Indirectness: Making requests indirectly to avoid direct imposition.

Questioning: Asking questions correlative to the request to create room for refusal or further discussion.

Apologizing: Start with an apology incident in request demonstrating how it might disturb.

Minimizing Imposition: Softening the request to make it appear less intrusive.

The mean or average percentages really mean the overall exploitation of that 1 strategy by the students in both countries, under the following percentages.

Jordanian Students: It is found that Jordanian students use negative politeness strategies 75%. Inference here implies that Jordanian students have politeness strategies for most of their online communication, but slightly fewer than their Omani counterparts in this aspect. A relatively informal and direct approach is a typical Jordanian phenomenon, particularly when interacting with peers.

Omani Students: On the contrary, Omani students spend 80% of the time deploying negative politeness strategies, an indication they significantly prefer indirectness and formality in making requests. This aligns with Omani culture, where making the social distance and the respect associated with authority play vital roles in the communicative process.

The standard deviation measures the spread or variability of the data involved from the mean. A higher standard deviation means that the data varied greatly, while a low standard deviation means these data points are closer to the mean.

Jordanian Students: The standard deviation of 9.12% is indicative that there is an average case of variance in the usage of different students regarding using politeness strategies. Thus, some students may rely more on indirectness and politeness, while others may not use this strategy often, depending on the context or the kind of relationship they have with the person they are relating with.

Omani Students: The standard deviation is at 7.55%. The deviation is slight, but it is still less than that of Jordanian students. This means that Omani students consistently used politeness strategies. This shows that people in Oman generally uphold the same standards concerning politeness, whereby politeness, respect, and highly formal ways even play an important role in informal digital communication.

Increased Consistency of Omani Students: Because of the cultural-so functionally activated by society, social distance and deference to authority figures are factors that make Omani students exhibit a very predictable and consistent adherence to their use of politeness strategies across different settings.

More Informal and Direct Communication with Peers from Jordan: Negative politeness strategies would be useful for Jordanian students less frequently than Omani students. The way their more informal communication styles—very direct, especially with peers—to put it would speak to this somewhat. Yet, even in informal situations, these students still use some kind of hedging or indirectness, which shows they realize some importance in culture about politeness.

The Omani Culture: The higher mean usage and lower standard deviation in the use of politeness strategies among Omani students are commensurate for the emphasis of the culture on respect and formality. To Omani students, politeness is paramount, and even with peers, indirectness is

maintained to avoid imposing or offending.

The Jordanian Culture: The flexibility of the Jordanian students has to do with using their politeness strategies on demand with the existing relationship with the person addressed. This can explain why this is slightly lower in mean with higher standard deviation, because the variance in how they use their politeness strategies is greater.

The study also aims at evaluating how well the machine translation tools like Google Translate and DeepL could embody these fine cultural nuances that they incorporate in their politeness strategies. Findings base on them as follows:

Machine Translation Limitations: These instruments fail to preserve, indirectness, hedging, and apologies having cultural significance, both in Jordanian and Omani communications. For example, it may be that phrases like “I would appreciate it” or “if possible” are translated literally and miss their intention of politeness.

Cultural Sensitivity in Translation: The analysis indicates future machine translation tools should, then, be designed with culture-sensitive algorithms incorporating pragmatics. This would guarantee actual and accurate translations of requests that respect the face-saving strategies embedded in Arabic communication history.

Figure 1 contrasts the employments of negative politeness tactics across four classifications—Indirectness, Questioning, Apologizing, and Minimizing Imposition—by Jordanian and Omani students. It can be easily observed that Omani students tend to use these strategies more frequently compared to their Jordanian counterparts, with Indirectness and Minimizing Imposition being the most common strategies used by both groups. This means that these strategies are almost used less frequently by the Jordanian students, especially in questioning.

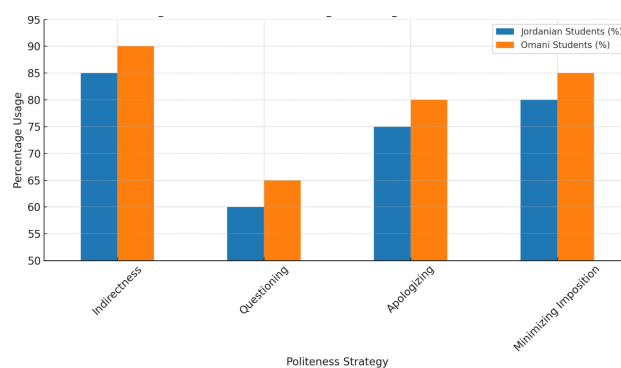


Figure 1. Negative politeness strategies in digital communication.

This indicates an inherent communication-related cultural difference between the two groups: Omani students place their culture on indirectness and formality, and Jordanian students employ rather a flexible system of politeness strategies depending on whom they are associated with.

6. Findings

The analysis of negative politeness strategies used by Jordanian and Omani students revealed that both groups rely heavily on culturally embedded language strategies like indirectness, apologizing, questioning, and minimizing imposition in their requests. However, machine translation tools, such as Google Translate and DeepL, often fail to capture the cultural and pragmatic nuances involved in these strategies. These strategies are context-dependent and deeply tied to cultural expectations that are difficult for MT tools to properly interpret. As such, machine translation struggles to preserve the intended politeness markers, leading to misinterpretations, and the loss of subtle meanings.

1. Indirectness and Polite Phrasing: Both Jordanian and Omani students employ indirect phrases to soften requests, for instance, by beginning requests with greetings like “Asalamu alikum” or “Marhaban,” and following up with polite hedges like “if possible” or “I hope I didn’t bother you.” These phrases are culturally loaded and serve to minimize the imposition. However, machine translation tools often translate these into literal equivalents, losing the underlying respect conveyed in these phrases. For example, translating “Asalamu alikum Fahed” to simply “Hello Fahed” ignores the religious and respectful implications of the Arabic greeting, which plays a crucial role in maintaining social harmony and politeness.
2. Hedging and Modality: Both groups use modal verbs like “could you” and “I would appreciate it” to make their requests less direct. Yet, MT tools often fail to preserve the cultural and social weight carried by these expressions. For example, when translating the request:
 - “ممكّن لو سمحت تقرضني شوية مصاري؟” (“Could you please lend me some money?”), Google Translate might render it as “Can you lend me money?” without conveying the softening ef-

fect that the phrase “ممكّن” (could you) provides in Arabic, which is an important marker of politeness.

3. Use of Apologies: Both groups frequently use apologies as part of their polite requests, such as when a Jordanian student says “بعتذر منك إذا ازعجتك” (“I apologize if I bother you”). In machine translation, such phrases are often translated as simply “sorry,” failing to capture the deeper intentional face-saving aspect of the apology, which reflects respect and deference. The translation of “بعتذر” into a general “sorry” reduces the significance of this cultural practice, where the apology is not just for the action but for potentially disrupting social harmony.
4. Minimizing Imposition: Both Jordanian and Omani students employ strategies like “I don’t know if you can” or “if possible” to soften the request and minimize imposition. While these strategies signal politeness by allowing room for refusal, machine translation tools often strip away these nuances. For example, the phrase:
 - “ما حصلت الرابط لهذا لكتاب” (“I did not get the link for the book”), when translated by MT tools, often misses the cultural and polite context of minimizing imposition. The tone of the original Arabic request is softened, but this is not always conveyed accurately in the translation, which may present the request as more direct than intended.
5. Cultural Variations: While both Jordanian and Omani students share some common politeness strategies, the cultural differences between the two groups often result in variations in how these strategies are expressed. For instance, Omani students tend to use a more formal register even with close peers, whereas Jordanian students employ more casual language. Machine translation tools struggle to capture these cultural nuances. For example, the Omani phrase “ال عذر والساموحة” (“I apologize if I interrupt you”) may be translated as just “excuse me,” which fails to reflect the formality and respect inherent in the original Arabic. Similarly, Jordanian students’ use of “مرحبا” (Marhaban) might be translated simply as “Hello,” stripping the cultural warmth and the informal, friendly tone it carries in Jordanian culture.

6.1. Machine Translation and Pragmatics

While machine translation tools have made significant strides in translating basic linguistic meaning, they struggle with pragmatics—especially when translating politeness strategies. These tools often fail to capture the social context in which requests are made. For example, when translating a phrase like:

- “لو سمحت دكتور بتقدر تساعدي؟” (“Could you please help me, doctor?”),
Google Translate might provide a translation like “Can you help me doctor?”, which loses the politeness and softness that comes with the original phrase, especially in Arabic-speaking contexts.

The lack of recognition for these pragmatic nuances means that MT tools are often not effective at preserving the face-saving and indirectness that are essential elements in maintaining politeness within Arabic culture. As these subtleties are crucial for interpersonal relationships, their loss can result in miscommunications and may even be perceived as disrespectful or impolite.

6.2. The Need for Culturally Aware Translation

The cultural context plays an essential role in politeness strategies, and this is especially important when translating requests in the Arabic language. The results of this study underscore the importance of developing culturally sensitive machine translation tools that can accurately account for the pragmatic features of indirectness, hedging, and face-saving strategies. It is clear that machine translation systems like Google Translate and DeepL, need to move beyond literal translations and incorporate cultural awareness into their algorithms in order to better preserve the intentions and meanings behind requests.

Future advancements in MT must aim to recognize and preserve these pragmatic features so that they can accurately capture not just the language but also the cultural practices and social norms that shape communication. By doing so, we can improve the effectiveness of digital translation tools and foster culturally sensitive communication across language barriers.

This study reveals significant cultural differences in the negative politeness strategies employed by Jordanian and

Omani students in their requests. While machine translation tools have improved in their ability to translate linguistic meanings, they still fall short when it comes to preserving the pragmatic subtleties of these strategies. The study highlights the need for machine translation systems to adapt to the cultural and pragmatic contexts in which these strategies are employed. By improving the ability of MT tools to understand and convey indirectness, apologizing, hedging, and minimizing imposition embedded in polite requests, we can ensure that cross-cultural communication remains respectful, effective, and culturally appropriate.

6.3. Critical Implications

The study emphasizes the shortcomings of the current machine translation (MT) tools, like Google Translate or DeepL, regarding cultural nuances and pragmatic subtlety, especially concerning negative politeness strategies. Such tools break barriers in language but fail in social contexts, facework strategies, and cultural norms that span generations of politeness. The research indicates that MTs are incapable of effectively transmitting indirectness, hedging, and apologetic expressions important for social harmony within Arab societies. These problems can cause misapprehension, ruining trust in both business and social relationships, thus underlining the necessity of developing MT systems not just through linguistic correctness but also concerning cultural and interpersonal dimensions.

Consequently, it is crucial for future advancements in MT technology to increasingly promote the creation of culturally aware translation systems. These systems would be exceeding merely converting one language into another and instead serve as sophisticated tools that can identify and interpret the cultural and pragmatic dimensions of communication. An MT system would be able to understand literality, the intention behind speech, hierarchical structures governing politeness choices, and social roles dictating appropriateness of speech. To accomplish this, MT tools need to incorporate pragmatic and sociolinguistic frameworks for analysis of the context in which languages are used.

This means the future of machine learning models must rely on context-sensitive models that would change their translations according to social context and interpersonal relationships, as well as cultural customs. For example, translating tools could automatically adjust a request made to a

superior or elder in a polite and indirect way while hedging and apologizing, which are important elements in Arabic-speaking cultures. Thus, the translated message is said to preserve the levels of respect and formality intended in the source language by the speaker.

To bring this about, interdisciplinary collaboration is a dire need; linguists, cultural experts, and technologists must work across the bridge of linguistics and technology. Whereas the former two fare better in pragmatic considerations, face-work, and cultural norms, technological experts can establish the required AI frameworks capable of processing these complexities and other nuances of communication. Collaborative work is crucial to creating systems that accommodate not only language translation but also the interpersonal and sociocultural dimensions that mark human interaction.

The ability to develop cultural empathy-understanding and considering the views, beliefs, and values of another culture will be a crucial aspect of future MT systems. An empathetic translation model should include all these aspects and recognize not only the politeness strategies but, more importantly, the cultural sensitivity required to render those strategies in different languages and cultures. This makes respectful communication, a digital translation possible as explicit presentation of social intricacies and face-saving actions within cultures dominates these ways of communication.

Machine translation is at the core of worldwide digital communication, creating cross-cultural dialogue and fostering cooperation. Translation often entices misunderstanding due to the loss of these subtleties, such as the degrees of politeness and facework. Therefore, a future focus of MT should be developed on the conveyance of cultural nuances, i.e., sociocultural issues, alongside linguistic accuracy. It suggests dynamic frameworks within MT tools that may adjust to contextual information about the user and user interaction to preserve cultural subtleties and enhance the cross-cultural communication process. This development would turn into an interactive global communication platform, one in which users cooperate from diverse backgrounds with respect, understanding, and harmony.

7. Conclusion

Concerning the study of how the concept of Brown and Levinson's politeness theories has been adapted into nega-

tive politeness strategies, this is in the digital environment of Jordanians and Omanis, where it tries to focus on digital translation tools such as Google Translate and DeepL. At the same time, it would reveal the insurmountable cultural differences on how those strategies are expressed in Arabic. Both groups indicate some use of indirectness, questioning, apologizing, and minimizing imposition; nevertheless, there would be differences in the levels of formality and context, thereby indicating how cultural background shapes politeness in digital interaction.

7.1. Cultural Implications in Politeness

The comparative study, it may be noted, tends to throw light on some very diverse cultural orientations regarding politeness in the two groups. Omani students carry a more formalized and indirect style, attached to their cultural norms that give much importance to social distance and authority-worship with respect to their communication. Meanwhile, Jordanian students speak in a more relaxed tone to their closest friends and associates, reflecting a less formalized style of communicating with each other. All of this reiterates that the ways in which cultural backgrounds are able to induce the appropriation of politeness strategies through the cold and barren digital environments, as contrasted with their manifestations in face-to-face contact.

7.2. The Role of Digital Translation Tools

Despite enhanced technologies of the day, human-like traits, culture, and pragmatic subtleties of requests are often lost on these tools: Google Translate and DeepL. Such tools can afford to translate culturally loaded expressions literally and omit vital polite markers, such as indirect hedging. The limitation lies in the imperative for the translation system to evolve from being mere linguistic approaches to being culturally aware so that interpersonal relations and politeness markers can be preserved.

7.3. Moving Toward Culturally Sensitive Translation Technologies

In the world of machine translation, the complexity of politeness strategies should underpin intercultural communication, with culture-specific elements, such as respect,

hierarchy, and social roles, being taken into account. Sociolinguistic and pragmatic contributions striving to advance cross-cultural communication and render precision in politeness strategies would blend into the next generation of translation tools. While this study does shed light on cultural differences regarding politeness, more research is needed in order to improve translation systems' cultural sensitivity and close communication gaps for completely respectful, contextually appropriate digital interaction.

The study concludes with the cultural contrasts in politeness strategies applied by Jordanian and Omani students and the play with the shortcomings of current translation tools in capturing these subtleties. Future research should be directed toward increasing cultural sensitivity in machine translation systems to maintain culturally rich polite communication. A multidisciplinary approach is needed, with linguistics, cultural studies, and computer science supporting the development of translation tools that improve the prospect for effective cross-cultural communication.

7.4. Recommendations

7.4.1. Integration of Pragmatic Models into Machine Translation

Recommend Pragmatic Models Integration in Machine Translation that preserves the nuances of indirect, hedged, and polite strategies. This will enable the interpreting tool to include sociocultural information proper to these strategies, hence improving communication across cultures.

7.4.2. Broaden Research to Include Positive Politeness Strategies

Include positive politeness strategies in the research scope and propose further studies on how these are adapted into digital contexts in different cultures. Such improvement will provide a fuller picture of how politeness is realized and interpreted in online communication, giving way to more powerful translation tools.

7.4.3. Interdisciplinary Collaboration for Contextualized Algorithms

Collaborate linguist, a cultural expert, and computer scientist towards developing context-specific machine translation tools or algorithms. This would help machine trans-

lation tools to convey culture as well as social dynamics of communication, including saving face strategies and politeness itself.

By addressing these challenges, digital communication tools would operate as expected in culture by improving the behavior of interpersonal interaction with intercultural understanding in a more global world of digital technology.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, M.I.M. and M.M.A.; methodology, R.F.A.; software, H.M.A.; validation, I.M.Z., formal analysis, M.I.M. and M.M.A.; investigation, A.W.A. and H.M.A.; resources, N.M.A.; data curation, A.W.A. and M.M.A.; writing—original draft preparation A.W.A. and M.M.A.; writing—review and editing, H.M.A.; visualization, I.M.Z.; supervision, M.M.A. and H.M.A.; project administration, S.A.J.B. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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