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A Comparative Study on the Positive Politeness Strategies Employed by Jordanian and Omani Students in Their Requests

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the use of positive politeness strategies in requests made by Jordanian and Omani students within an academic context. By examining the positive politeness strategies employed in their interactions, the research aims to identify the preferred strategies utilized by these students when communicating with their classmates. Data is collected through memos and semi-structured interviews from a sample of Jordanian and Omani students. The study anticipates uncovering both differences and similarities in the positive politeness strategies employed by the two groups, while also investigating the influence of culture on their request patterns. To analyze the data, the positive politeness strategies will be identified and then classified. The theorists of the politesse model claimed that the politeness strategies are universal and are employed by people in different forms based on various social variables. The study reveals that

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Jordanian students prefer to utilize the four positive politeness strategies of giving reasons, concern for the hearer's wants, promises, and in-group identity. On the other hand, Omani students prioritize the four positive strategies of giving reasons, assuming reciprocity and giving sympathy, hedging, and seeking agreement. Both Jordanian and Omani participants use the giving reasons strategy; otherwise, they use different strategies altogether. Future research could compare the persuasion strategies that could be employed by Jordanian and Omani students in their communication.

Keywords: Positive Politeness; Requests; Jordanian; Omani; Memos

1. Introduction

Despite cultural differences between Jordanians and Omanis, they share the common language of Arabic. Nevertheless, this research explored how Jordanians and Omanis construct and politely respond to requests within an academic setting. Speakers and hearers utilized specific terms and phrases that were contextually and culturally relevant. Examining speech acts of requests is crucial for maintaining positive interpersonal relationships, as it minimizes potential face threats and fosters cooperation. The specific characteristics of request strategies can be identified through the analysis of utterances and phrases, shedding light on the use of positive politeness strategies in this context. The successful execution of a polite request requires a nuanced understanding of the speech context and the relationship between the individuals involved. Requests, by their very nature, are intrinsically face-threatening acts that can potentially disrupt the interpersonal harmony between interlocutors. To mitigate potential threats to the hearer's face, individuals employ careful linguistic strategies to signal their awareness of the social dynamics at play.

Utterances reflect both implicit and explicit meanings, interpreted based on the context, traditions, and culture of the interactants. Disagreements can arise, and listeners may decline requests if they are incompatible with their own intentions. While numerous studies have examined the impact of contextual variables on the realization of request speech acts, there is limited research comparing the perceptions and production of request speech acts between Jordanians and Omanis. Interlocutors' speech acts are manifested through words, with utterances conveying the potential to initiate actions. Participants manage their interactions to ensure smooth communication. This study focused on the role of speech acts, recognizing the importance of polite language with implicit semantic meaning understood within a shared context. Therefore, this study concentrated on

comparing the positive politeness strategies employed by Jordanian and Omani students, aiming to identify both similarities and differences in their request forms in academic interactions.

Thus, this research sought to achieve two objectives:

1. The implicit and explicit positive politeness strategies used by Jordanian and Omani students in their requests.
2. The different formulations of the positive politeness strategies employed in their interactions.

Based on the analytical framework used for data analysis, the study clarified these goals and produced findings that either supported or contradicted them. This study contributed to the broader field of cross-cultural pragmatics by providing insights into the specific linguistic strategies used by Jordanian and Omani students to negotiate social interactions in an academic setting. The next section is literature review. It elaborates the theoretical framework and the past studies. The past study section is divided to two subsections which are Omani sociolinguistic studies and Jordanian sociolinguistic studies.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Brown and Levinson^[1] stated that humans have public self-images known as "face" that they attempt to preserve throughout all social interactions. They were the first theorists to claim that politeness strategies are universal. Furthermore, they claimed that the linguistic strategies utilized by interactants of different cultural backgrounds are the same. The idea of face in their theory was influenced by the work of Goffman^[2]. Brown and Levinson^[1] said that individuals have two similar face wants, namely negative face and positive face. The positive face want refers to the

wish to “be desirable to at least some others,” while the negative face want refers to the desire to have one’s “actions... unimpeded by others” (p. 62). People from various cultural backgrounds have similar face needs. In fact, Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory (1987) ^[1] stated that the majority of human relationships preserve one another’s face through the observance of the universal principles. Additionally, they identified three social variables of polite speech. These include the relative power (P) of the participants, the social distance (D) between interlocutors, and the absolute ranking (R) of the impositions embedded in the act within a particular culture. The FTA is also specified by the interactants. By employing this strategy, the interactants choose an appropriate strategy to suit their needs.

Another essential point is that Brown and Levinson’s ^[1] framework consists of five universal politeness strategies that people use: (1). positive politeness, which involves addressing the positive face of the listener; (2). negative politeness, which involves addressing the negative face of the listener; (3). bald-on record, which is used to express a message directly to the listener; (4). off-record, which allows speakers to execute a face-threatening act (FTA) indirectly; and finally, (5). do not commit the FTA, which is used to avoid threatening the hearer’s face.

This study aimed to find vital findings that contribute to future studies. The recording of the interviews and written notes were duly collected to explore the positive politeness strategies that were employed by Jordanian and Omani students in their forms of request. To indicate the examples that were related to each nationality of the students, codes were used to point them out, such as JMS-1 and JFS-2 for Jordanians and OMS-1 and OFS-2 for Omanis and are shown prior to each example later in this paper.

The positive politeness strategies were listed while listening to the interviews. Notes were taken during the interviews to identify the positive politeness strategies that were performed by the students. Finally, these notes were segregated and examined based on Brown and Levinson’s ^[1] politeness theoretical framework.

2.2. Past Studies

2.2.1. Omani Sociolinguistic Studies

Several studies explored various pragmatic and so-

ciolinguistic phenomena within Omani society. The following studies are particularly relevant to this research. Lenchuk and Ahmed ^[3] showed that EFL learners do use indirect techniques when making requests, despite several assertions in the literature on interlanguage pragmatics to the contrary. This research builds upon these previous studies by examining the specific positive politeness strategies employed by Jordanian and Omani students in an academic setting. Umale ^[4] found that Omanis tend to use more direct strategies than the British when refusing requests and offers. Both groups also employed indirect strategies, particularly when interacting with individuals of higher status.

Further study investigated politeness strategies in the Omanis culture was conducted by Latrech & Alazzawie ^[5]. It investigated politeness strategies in Omani EFL teacher-student interactions in the classroom. Their findings suggest that young learners prioritize their positive face, while adult learners emphasize their negative face. Teachers tend to employ more face-saving acts compared to face-threatening acts, while younger students use more face-threatening acts (FTAs) than adult students. Female teachers tended to use more face-saving acts (FSAs) than their male counterparts. Notably, all teachers indicated a willingness to prioritize saving their own face, even if it meant potentially threatening the student’s face. By comparing the strategies used by Jordanians and Omanis, this study aimed to contribute to a deeper understanding of cross-cultural communication and pragmatic competence in the Arab world. It is evident from these studies that pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic awareness among Omani EFL learners have been the subjects of ongoing study. A key area of focus has been the comparison of Omani speakers with native English speakers, particularly in the use of request strategies and politeness markers.

Previous research has highlighted differences in the request strategies used by Omani students and native English speakers. Rahman et al. ^[6] similarly revealed that Omani learners of English differ significantly from native speakers, particularly in their use of mitigators. That is, while native speakers employ a wide range of syntactic, lexical, and discursal mitigators, Omani learners tend to restrict their use to syntactic mitigators, especially modals. Al Rahbi et al. ^[7] found that non-native English-speaking Omani students use fewer indirect request strategies in En-

English compared to their native English-speaking American counterparts, attributing these linguistic differences to potential limitations in linguistic abilities among Omani students. Al Rahbi ^[8] also found that Omani students use fewer indirect request strategies than their American counterparts, leading to poorer overall performance in producing appropriate requests across different situations.

Building upon these findings, this present research aims to further investigate the request strategies employed by Omani students, focusing on their use of positive politeness strategies in comparison to Jordanian students within an academic context. By examining the similarities and differences in their approaches, this study seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of cross-cultural pragmatics and the factors influencing pragmatic competence in the Arab world.

Despite these observed differences in request strategies, broader patterns of linguistic behavior in Oman reveal a complex interplay of stability and adaptation. This suggests that, while certain aspects of pragmatic competence may be influenced by linguistic proficiency and cultural norms in specific contexts, like requesting, other aspects of Omani communication reflect a more stable linguistic heritage.

Research indicates a complex interplay between linguistic stability, cognitive awareness, and pragmatic transfer in Omani communication patterns. Despite external pressures for linguistic change, Emery ^[9] observed that Omani Arabic usage remains relatively stable in certain areas, with exchange structures largely maintained across different lectal groups. Hessenauer ^[10] identified the “preparatory query” as the politest request strategy employed by Omani students and L1 students, suggesting its role in mitigating imposition.

In the realm of digital awareness, Shirawia et al. ^[11] found no significant variances in the cognitive awareness of digital treatments among undergraduate students at Sultan Qaboos University based on the variables investigated. However, other studies highlight pragmatic variations and transfer phenomena. Al-Rubai’ey ^[12] found that Omani EFL learners often do not perceive instances of pragmatic transfer as errors, but rather as appropriate for their communication goals in the EFL context. Similarly, Rubai’ey ^[13] demonstrated that participants’ pragmatic choices when

refusing in English are influenced by their perceptions of various sociopragmatic and contextual variables.

These findings underscore the importance of considering both linguistic stability and pragmatic adaptability when examining communication patterns in Oman. While certain aspects of Omani Arabic remain consistent, pragmatic choices in EFL contexts are subject to various influences, including perceptions of appropriateness and socio-pragmatic variables. This focus on linguistic stability and pragmatic adaptation provides a foundation for understanding how Omani speakers navigate social interactions and maintain social harmony. These factors influence the selection of communication strategies, leading to both shared and culture-specific approaches in various communicative contexts.

Research on Omani communication patterns reveals both shared and culture-specific strategies for maintaining social harmony. Alaoui’s ^[14] study indicated that speakers in both Arabic and English prioritize minimizing threats to their own face and the face of their interlocutor. Al-Siyabi’s ^[15] study contributed to a deeper understanding of Omani students’ attitudes, expectations of both students and teachers, and student-teacher relationships within the Omani EFL context. Furthermore, Bait Jamil ^[16] found that while some compliment responses are universal across cultures, others are culture-bound, highlighting the influence of cultural norms on social interaction. Further emphasizing the importance of face-saving. These studies contribute to a nuanced understanding of the sociolinguistic landscape in Oman, emphasizing the interplay between universal pragmatic principles and culture-specific strategies. Further research is needed to explore the specific factors that contribute to culture-bound compliment responses and the potential impact of differing expectations on student-teacher dynamics in the Omani EFL context.

Research into Omani communication also reveals a fascinating interplay between linguistic stability, cognitive factors, and pragmatic adaptation. While Omani Arabic maintains its integrity in certain contexts ^[9], pragmatic strategies in EFL settings are shaped by perceptions of appropriateness and socio-cultural variables ^[12]. Furthermore, studies by Bait Jamil ^[16] and Alaoui ^[14] demonstrate the emphasis on maintaining social harmony through both universal and culture-specific strategies, underscoring the impor-

tance of face-saving and nuanced social interactions. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics, particularly focusing on the interplay between linguistic stability and pragmatic adaptation in various communicative contexts, as well as the factors influencing culture-bound communication strategies within the Omani sociolinguistic landscape.

2.2.2. Jordanian Sociolinguistic Studies

The findings of Al-Natour et al. ^[17] suggest that linguistic and cultural factors exert a significant influence on the specific refusal strategies utilized by students. Adding to this body of research, AlYousef et al. ^[18] explored the intercultural dynamics of persuasion within Jordanian academic discourse, further illuminating the complexities involved in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication, particularly when dealing with culturally embedded terms and expressions. This study underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of cultural context in translation and intercultural communication to effectively convey intended meanings and avoid misinterpretations. Building on this, Migdadi et al. ^[19] identified twelve distinct politeness strategies employed by preachers, categorizing them according to Brown and Levinson's ^[1] framework of politeness, which encompasses positive face, negative face, off-record strategies, and bald on-record communication. These strategies highlight the nuanced ways in which speakers negotiate social interactions and mitigate potential face-threatening acts.

Similarly, Al Salem et al. ^[20] observed that religious markers are frequently omitted or transformed in subtitles, manifesting as various linguistic elements such as speech acts, intensifiers, emphatic expressions, filler words, and even sarcastic utterances. In instances where the Arabic term *wallah* which means (God) was used, it was either paraphrased to convey its meaning or literally translated, indicating a challenge in directly transferring the cultural and religious connotations of the original expression.

The aforementioned studies highlight the multifaceted ways in which linguistic and cultural factors shape communication strategies and intercultural interactions. These observations provide a foundation for examining broader trends in translation and linguistic studies, particularly concerning the negotiation of politeness, persuasion, and iden-

tity within diverse communicative contexts.

Correspondingly, Al-Natour et al. ^[21] analyzed the persuasion strategies employed by US President Joe Biden in his speech at COP27, providing insights into the application of persuasive techniques in international discourse. Furthermore, Al Yousef et al. ^[22] demonstrated that code-switching serves specific motivational purposes, notably the expression of identity and self-confidence through the simultaneous use of both languages. These findings collectively contribute to a deeper understanding of the intricate relationship between language, culture, and communication in diverse contexts. Rabee et al. ^[23] accurately observe that linguistic frameworks within translation studies have exerted a more pronounced influence compared to their impact on literary studies. Expanding on this, Al-Natour et al. ^[24] investigated the preferred positive politeness strategies employed by professors with their students, revealing a tendency to utilize eight distinct strategies to avoid potentially damaging the students' face.

AlSharifin et al. ^[25] examined the effectiveness of a health education-based training program in enhancing health empowerment among refugees in Jordan. Their findings demonstrated a significant increase in health empowerment scores for the experimental group that received the training program compared to the control group, which underscores the potential of targeted interventions to promote health empowerment within vulnerable populations. Expanding on this, Al-Natour and Ateeq ^[26] anticipate that their conceptual paper addressed two key areas: first, the specific politeness strategies utilized by President Joe Biden, and second, the challenges faced by undergraduate translation students in interpreting politeness strategies. In a related field, Al-Natour et al. ^[27] conducted a pragmatic analysis of refusal strategies in management communication, further contributing to the understanding of communication dynamics in specific contexts. Furthermore, Al-Natour et al. ^[28] investigated the core request strategies employed by Jordanians, revealing a spectrum of approaches ranging from direct to indirect, including inquiry, mind, permission, appreciation, and preparatory strategies.

These studies collectively demonstrate the importance of understanding communication strategies in various social and professional contexts. Building upon this foundation, subsequent research has delved into specific aspects

of interpersonal communication and literary analysis within the Arab world. In their investigation of Arabic literary works, Akkawi and Maqableh ^[29] aimed to contribute a new conceptual framework to the subgenres of romance, specifically the Scheherazade Romance. In a related study, Al-Natour and Banat ^[30] explored the politeness strategies employed by undergraduate students when communicating with their professors via WhatsApp, observing varying levels of directness in their messages. Al-Natour et al. ^[31] investigated the role of terms of address in facilitating polite interactions, revealing a preference for their use among Jordanian students. Similarly, Al-Natour et al. ^[32] found that both professors and students employed silence as a strategic communication tool for various purposes; professors, for instance, utilized silence to manage interruptions. This collective body of work highlights the nuanced communication strategies employed in diverse contexts, ranging from classroom interactions to digital communication. More explanations are presented in the next section about the data collection, sample of the study, and the instruments.

3. Methodology

This section consists of three parts. The first part is data collecting, which details the processes that were followed and summarizes them to elaborate on the consistency of doing this research. The second part of this section details the sample of the study, showing the number of informants and the setting of the interactions with the researchers. The third part describes the instruments and the research methods that were adopted to collect the data from the participants. Memos and semi-structured interviews were the two tools utilized to gather data for this research. Each section clarifies the researcher's assiduousness in applying the research with high validity and reliability.

3.1. Data Collection

This study used a qualitative methodology to determine the explicit and implicit meanings of the requests uttered by the interactants. Both Jordanian and Omani students participated in the study. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, five steps were followed. First, to collect the data, the researchers had to get written permission from the heads of the English Departments in both universities. Second, a letter of consent was signed by each student, which enabled them to participate in this study. Third, interviews were performed with the interviewees at a suitable site. Fourth, the researcher recorded the interviewees' responses and took notes during the interviews. Finally, the researchers classified the positive politeness strategies and then analyzed them based on the adopted framework.

3.2. Sample of the Study

The sample of the study was Jordanian and Omani bachelor students who study English at Jerash University in Jordan and in the English and Translation Department at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. Ten students from each university were randomly selected. The age of the students was between 18–25 years old. A purposive random sampling method was followed to collect the data from the participants. This method of sampling helps the researcher to decide what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience Bernard, H. R. ^[33]. The interviewees' responses were logged and grouped to determine the most commonly employed positive politeness tactics among these students. The following **Table 1** represents the number of the students and their genders.

Table 1. The Number of The Students and Their Genders.

Nationality	Male	Female
Jordanian students	5	5
Omani Students	5	5

After the researchers got the permission to collect the data from the heads of English Departments, the researchers met the students in their classes to collect the interview-

ees randomly. Then, they asked them for participating in the study and chose 10 from the students who accepted to be interviewed at each university. They told them about the date

of the interview and the venue. After that, they interviewed them in a suitable place at each university.

3.3. Instruments

To analyze the problem of this research adequately, two instruments were used to collect the data. First, there was a semi-structured interview where previously prepared questions were added along with the main question, as per Creswell^[34]. The data that were collected in the semi-structured interview were provided by purposefully selected informants to get a deeper understanding of the usages of the positive politeness strategies in their requests. It clarified the precise denotation of the positive politeness strategies they used when they wanted to make a request. Three experts in the field of this study reviewed the interview questions. Their amendments were taken into account to ensure that the interview questions are valid to examine the hypotheses of this research.

Sankaran^[35] stated that, in qualitative research, memos is a tool that can be utilized by researchers to improve reflection during an action research project. Thus, memos were the second instrument utilized to collect the data. These memos assisted the researcher in identifying the positive politeness strategies employed by the students. Thus, while the students responded to the interviewer's questions,

the researchers took notes to continue recording their reactions to the interview questions.

4. Analysis and Findings

The results of this study showed that the students used overwhelmingly different positive politeness strategies. The Jordanian participants preferred to use four strategies: (1). In-Group Identity; (2). Giving Reasons; (3). Concern for the Hearer's Wants; and (4). Promises. In contrast, the Omani students utilized three other positive politeness strategies: (1). Assuming Reciprocity and Giving Sympathy; (2). Hedging; (3). Seeking agreement, and one strategy that was the same as that used by the Jordanians—Giving Reasons. The analysis was divided based on the strategies that were utilized by both Jordanian and Omani students.

4.1. Jordanian Positive Politeness Strategies

Table 2 shows the Jordanian preferred positive politeness tactics for their requests. These strategies demonstrated a desire to respect their colleagues while saving face. Using these tactics represented every individual's fundamental desire for their public self-image to be demonstrated through interaction with, approval from, and appreciation from others.

Table 2. Jordanian Positive Politeness Strategy.

No.	Strategies
1	Giving Reasons
2	Concern for the Hearer's Wants
3	Promises
4	In-Group Identity

Table 2 exhibits that these strategies were the preferred strategies of Jordanian students. They chose them to save their classmates' face while they were communicating with them. They enjoyed being nice to their classmates, which assisted requestees who were apprehensive about answering questions or demanding explanations. The requesters wanted their colleagues to feel like they were on the same social level to reduce the distance and urge the requestees to be more comfortable in their responses. Moreover, each strategy was analyzed with examples to highlight

the way Jordanians form their requests in their interactions.

4.1.1. Giving Reasons

There were various features utilized by the Jordanian students employing this strategy in their speeches. They sometimes apologized for their inability to give the course material to the requestees or give money to the non-close classmates, to avoid wasting their professors' time, and to allow the females to avoid responding to their male class-

mates. Accordingly, when the students apologize, they are attempting to save their colleagues' face. They were seeking to minimize the threat by giving reasons. These reasons prohibited the students from feeling impinged upon and helped the requestees to positively understand the reasons. The following examples show the use of this strategy by the Jordanian students:

JMS-2: يعتذر لكن ما كتبت الملاحظات والله، إذا تقدر تعطيني: "إياهم ساكون لك من الشاكرين"

"I am sorry, but I didn't write the notes, I swear.
If you can pass them to me, I'd appreciate that."

JMS-3: مش عارف شو بدي اقلك لأنني ما معي فلوس كفاية، معك: "تسلفني شوية مصاري لأنني نسيت فلوسي بالبيت"

"I do not know what to say because I do not have enough money. Can you give me some money because I forgot mine at home?"

JMS-5: اعتذاري الشديد لك لأنه بعرف بذك تدرس على المادة: "اليوم، إذا ممكن اخذها لساعة"

"I extremely apologize because I know that you want to study the material today, but can I borrow it for an hour to review your notes?"

JFS-6: جد، ما بقدر اعطيك إياها لأنه مثل ما بتعرف انا ما بحكي: "مع الشباب"

"Really, I can't give it to you because, as you know, I don't talk to male students."

The examples revealed that the students employed this strategy to evade threatening the requestees' face, as the responses of the students indicated. JMS-2 used this strategy by saying, "...but I didn't write the notes, I swear." He indirectly justified the reason behind requesting the material. Islam's role in Jordanian speech was clear in this example with the use of *wallah* (which means (God) - ("I swear")), which the requester used to soften the request and decline threatening the requestee's face. When it came to requesting money from others, JMS-3 was too shy to make that request, so he hinted at it so that the requestee understood his situation by saying, "I do not know what to say because I do not have enough money." Then, he requested indirectly, providing the reasons for the request by saying he forgot his money at home. Prior to using an indirect request with reasons, he grounded the request with an indirect suggestion for a future request, saving the requestee's face.

Moreover, the requester was able to soften his request and change the reasons behind it with the aid of this strategy.

Obviously, JMS-5 apologized politely to the requestee because he knew that the requestee needed to study the material. Thus, he started his request by apologizing to him. Then, he asked to borrow the notes of his classmate for a limited time to decrease the imposition of his request. He said, "But can I take it for an hour to review your notes?" which demonstrated his desire to save the requestee's face. Indicating his understanding at the beginning of the request clearly showed his shyness to request the notes from his classmate, because he knew that his classmate needed to study the course material. He showed his sincere wish to be kind and refrain from insulting the person making the request by combining his understanding in the form of a request with his explanation of the little time allotted for lending the material from his classmate.

The last example, JFS-6, was the response of a female to a male requesting course material. Apparently, it was the most direct threatening response as well. According to both Jordanian and Islamic culture, the female's reply of "...as you know, I don't talk to male students" was not considered impolite because common interaction is only among the same gender. The face of the requester was attacked by the female; however, he knew that his talking to her was not acceptable. Still, he considered her to be a polite girl who follows Islamic regulations and recommendations. Because of that, she justified her rejection. This meant that the requester threatened her face because he knew that she does not communicate with the male classmates.

All the examples clearly exhibited that the students avoided threatening the faces of their classmates by giving them reasons in their requests. Their conversations indicated that they were very polite with their classmates and wanted to save face. Moreover, this result indicated that the giving reasons positive politeness strategy was the preferred strategy used by those making requests to justify their usage of this strategy.

The female directly responded to the male's request, as the previous example showed, which is appropriate in both Jordanian and Islamic cultures. The main reason her response was acceptable was that the male and female had an understanding that, according to their cultural standards, they should not converse unless absolutely necessary. This

means that not all the acts that seemed face-threatening actually were a threat. The Jordanian dialect, like other dialects around the world, is influenced by religion, culture, tradition, and the context of interactions. This result clearly demonstrated that investigators of Jordanian dialogue must consider other social variables such as religion, culture, traditions, gender, and the context of interactions in order to gain a thorough understanding of why such utterances are used in turn-taking dialogue.

4.1.2. Assuming Reciprocity and Giving Sympathy

Assuming reciprocity and giving sympathy was the second positive politeness strategy employed by the requesters/requestees to deliver a reciprocal right to the other party in interactions concerning the issues discussed between them. The following are some examples related to this strategy:

JMS-3: “أتمنى تقدر تعطيني المادة وبعدها بقدر ادرسك الفصول: “المحددة لامتحان المد

“I hope you can give me the course material.
Then, I can teach you the appointed chapter for the midterm exam.”

JMS-7: “اذا بتقدر تسلفني 10 دنانير، بحل مشكلتي وبرجعك: “الفلوس مع بوسة لحية

“If you can lend me 10 JD, I will solve my problem and return the money back to you with a kiss on your beard.”

JFS-1: “اسمعي يا اختي الله يخليك، بدي منك ملاحظاتك وبعطيكي: “ملاحظاتي

“Listen, sister. May Allah bless you. I want to get your notes, and I will give you my own notes.”

JMS-4: “طيب بعطيك ملاحظاتي بس قديش تدفع ههههه

“Okay, I will give you my notes, but how much money will you give me? Ha! Ha! Ha!”

The students used this strategy to somewhat encourage their classmates to accept their requests. Thus, the students did not like to threat their classmates' faces by giving them a choice that can only be achieved by both of them. Furthermore, they sometimes expressed their wishes for the requestees to narrow the percentage of threatening

their face, like the student in JMS-3. He requested to get the course material to be able to help his classmate. So, he used the word *أتمنى/atamanna*, which means “I hope,” to show sympathy toward the requestee. Using words like that minimized the imposition of the request on the requestees to help them feel free to accept or reject the request.

In example JMS-7, he humorously requested money from his close friend, using a common expression that is used by Jordanians when they want to request something from others. The expression was *مع بوسة لحية /mae busat li-hya*, which means “with a kiss on your beard.” The implicit meaning of this expression is related to showing appreciation for the requestee when he accepts the request. It was an example of showing empathy among the Jordanian students in their requests. He requested indirectly, justified his request, and closed the request by using an empathetic expression to be polite with the requestee.

Assuming reciprocity was clearly indicated in example JFS-1, she explained that she could exchange the notes with the requestee. She entered her request with a common expression used by Jordanians that goes “اسمعي يا اختي الله يخليك /asmaei ya akhti allah yukhaliyk,” which means “listen sister, may Allah bless you.” Jordanians used this term in two ways: to communicate their religion and cultural perspectives. The first one was by using the words *اختي/ukti* (“my sister”). The literal meaning of this word is related to the Islamic perspectives, not to the blood relationship. As Prophet Mohammad said, “All Muslims are brothers,” and the word “brothers” in this hadith is used in the Arabic language for both brothers and sisters. Therefore, using this word reduces the potential for face-threatening acts directed at the requestee. Likewise, using the expression “الله يخليك /allah yukhaliyk,” which means “May Allah bless you,” indicates hopefulness to depress the impact of the imposition and makes the requestee feel free to accept or reject the request. All of these expressions preceded the request, which was manifested by the assumption of reciprocity by the requestees.

The last example, JMS-1, epitomized that the requester requested money from his classmate. Then the requestee made a joke with him when he requested money from the requestee to be able to take his notes. As a result, he employed an empathetic expression that did not demand the same reciprocity to reduce the requester's face-threat-

ening behavior. The expression used was *بس قديش تدفع ههههه* / *bas qadiysh tadfai? Hahahahah!* or, in English, “But how much money will you give me?” Moreover, he ended his joke with a laugh to show his positive attitude. Using this feature while employing this strategy obviously exhibited that they were close friends.

4.1.3. Promises

The requestees deemed the requesters extremely polite when they promised to do something for them. In this case, the requestees delivered a message to the requesters that seemed to convey that they care about the requestee’s feelings. Many examples indicated the employment of this strategy by the Jordanian students, as exhibited in the following:

JMS-5: “يمكن اخذ منك ملاحظاتك للمادة الي اخذتها في المحاضرة.”
 “بوعدك ارجعلك اياها بكرة

“Can I get your course material for the notes that you’ve taken in the class? I promise that I will return them tomorrow.”

JFS-6: “يدي 5 دنانير بسرعة وبوعدك ارجعهم لك الشهر الجاي”
 “I urgently need 5 JD, and I promise to pay you back next month.”

JFS-9: بدي منك ملاحظاتك اذا بتوعديني تعطيني ملاحظاتك لمادة اللسانيات

“I want to get your notes if you promise to give me your notes for the linguistics course.”

JMS-10: “بوعدك اكتبلك ملاحظاتي لما اخذ الي عند”
 “I promise to write my notes when I get yours.”

One of the positive strategies that was employed by the students was the promise strategy. JMS-5 began his request with an indirect term using modal verbs to soften his request, then he minimized the imposition using the promise strategy by saying, “I promise that I will return it tomorrow.” Using this strategy with the requestee increased his positive feelings about accepting the request and diminished the threat to his face. Thus, the Jordanians used this strategy of politeness. JFS-6 reiterated her request for money from her friend, promising to return it to her within the next month. She made the promise to reassure her friend that she would indeed get her money back. Using this strategy helped to reduce the threat to her friend’s face and

strengthened the seriousness of the requester.

JFS-9 was a female student who promised to do a favor for the requestee once she gave her the notes of the course. She promised to return the favor in kind for the requestee’s acceptance. It appeared that she stipulated a condition for the acceptance of the requestor, although the pragmatic implication of her commitment was an assessment of her acceptance. Likewise, JMS-10 promised the requestee to return the favor in kind if he agreed to give the notes to him. This kind of request is a very polite request because the requester in this case wanted to decrease the face-threatening by returning the requestee’s favor with the same favor without the requestee even having to ask. As the examples demonstrate, the Jordanian students evaded attacking the requestees’ faces by employing the promise strategy in different forms. They insisted on being indirect and polite in their requests by promising to do a good thing for the requestees.

4.1.4. In-Group Identity

As their responses indicated, various identity markers were used by the Jordanian students in this study. Utilizing the identity markers was a politeness shown toward others from the students’ point of view. The following examples represent that clearly:

JMS-8: هاي يا اختي، بدي ادرس على المادة بس بدي الملاحظات”
 “الأخيرة الي اعطانا أيها الدكتور، تقدري تساعدني بهالشي

“Hi, sister! I want to study the notes of the course, but I need the latest notes that the doctor gave us. Can you help me with that?”

JMS-2: مرحبا أخوي احمد، متى تقدر تساعدني بدراسة المادة.”
 “عندي بعض النقاط مو فاهمها. بتقدر تساعد زميلك ههههه

“Hi, my brother Ahmad. When can you help me study for the course? I have some points that I misunderstood. Can you help your classmate? Ha! Ha! Ha!”

JFS-1: احنا بنعاني في هالمادة يا بنات. خيلنا نناقش هالشي مع”
 “الدكتور

“We are suffering in this course, girls. Let’s discuss that with our professor.”

The identity markers showed that the students belong to a certain place and group. The different examples above

represented these markers that pinpointed the employment of these markers in the students' responses. Most of the markers were related to the common religious and cultural markers. For instance, as explained earlier, words like "sister" and "brother" are related to the religious and cultural aspects. Using these words indicated their closeness, because they mean that all Muslims are brothers and sisters who have to help each other.

The identity marker "girls" is related to the female students. JFS-1 was a female student who requested that the other female students join her in discussing some issues related to the course with their professor. She represented their identity by calling them "girls" to signify the gender of the students with whom she was talking. JMS-2 utilized two identity markers, "brother" and "classmate," to identify that they have to help each other. He was laughing at the end of the request to show his closeness to his friend. Using various identity markers confirms the strong relationship among the students and the solidarity they have, which helps support their requests effortlessly.

To conclude, the analysis showed that Jordanian students generally prioritized being polite by using these positive politeness strategies in their requests or when responding to requests. These positive politeness strategies included Giving Reasons, Concern for the Hearer's Wants,

Promises, and In-Group Identity. According to Brown and Levinson ^[1], assigning the listener's wants and desires in a manner that is comparable to the speaker's wants and desires is one technique to achieve the positive face of the listener. Achieving this kind of politeness was proved through emphasizing solidarity and rapport between requester and requestee through expressing sympathy to the listener and using terms that signify in-group membership ^[1]. Demonstrably, the students employed diverse forms in their responses, which distinguished their strategies from the Omani positive politeness strategies. More elaborations are demonstrated in the next section for the positive politeness strategies used in the requests of Omani students.

4.2. Omani Positive Politeness Strategies

The Omanis use of positive politeness strategies was almost completely different from the strategies used by Jordanians. In fact, the only positive politeness strategy used by both Omanis and Jordanians was Giving Reasons. This strategy was used to justify reasons that were related to their requests. In this instance, the requesters had faith that the requestees would understand their message, attitude, or intention correctly. **Table 3** lists the positive polite strategies utilized by the Omani students.

Table 3. Omani Positive Politeness Strategy.

No.	Strategies
1	Giving Reasons
2	Assuming Reciprocity and Giving Sympathy
3	Hedging
4	Seeking Agreement

Below is a detailed analysis of all Omani positive politeness strategies, demonstrating how well they employed them based on their answers to the interview questions.

4.2.1. Giving Reasons

Frequently used by Omani students, this strategy was used by requesters to provide justifications for their demands so that the requestee would find them reasonable. Additionally, the requesters believed that the requestees had no valid excuses for refusing to comply with their requests. The following examples represent their employment of this strategy as indicated in their responses to the interview

questions:

OMS-2: "ليش ما ندرس سوى ونراجع الملاحظات حق المادة؟"

"Why don't we study together to revise the notes of the course?"

OMS-5: "ليش ما تبغى تسلفني الكتاب لاكتب الملاحظات؟ العذر والسموحة طبعاً اذا ازعجك"

"Why didn't you lend me your book to write the notes? I apologize if I disturbed you because of that."

OFS-1: "العذر والسموحة بس ليش ما تقدر فطوم تعطيني الفلوس؟ هههه؟"

"I apologize, but why can't Fatoom give me money? Ha! Ha! Ha!"

The examples above demonstrated the use of the giving reason strategy in the students' requests. They used this strategy for requesting the materials, books, notes, and money, using various forms of requests. OMS-2 reflexively used this strategy to indirectly leave the choice of accepting or rejecting the request up to the requestee to evade threatening their face. Similarly, OMS-5 used the same technique to request a book from the requestee. He closed his request with Omani words of apology—"العذر والسموحة"/"aleudhr walsumuha"—meaning "I apologize," to minimize the face-threatening on the requestee. Integrating the reasons with the apology undoubtedly softens the request and leaves the requestee free to provide their assessment to the requester by accepting their request, as illustrated in this example. Conversely, OFS-1 utilized her friend Fatima's nickname, "*Fatoom*." Therefore, she indirectly requested the money from her friend and minimized the imposition by combining the request with the nickname. She laughed at the end of the request to demonstrate her closeness to her friend, with whom she felt comfortable enough to joke around. Thus, both Omanis and Jordanians used this strategy in different forms and similarly utilized the apology to decrease the face-threatening acts toward the requestees.

4.2.2. Assuming Reciprocity and Giving Sympathy

By using this tactic, the requester asserts certain rights against the requestee, reducing the threat to the requester's face-threatening act because the requester and the requestee are partners. The idea of reflexivity distinguishes this method from the others, as the requesters assert reciprocity, which communicates cooperation. When the requesters asked Omani students to provide them with their notes, they used these strategies to get the cooperation of the requestees by asking to exchange the course materials. Additionally, they employed this tactic while making financial requests by stating that they would reciprocate the request if the requestees made future requests for money. The following examples illustrate their use of this strategy:

OMS-4: "تقدر تسلفني 50 ريال لأسبوع. مثل ما تعرف انه نحن" الطلاب نتعرض لمثل هالموقف وانا بساعد إذا صار مع أصدقائنا

"الحال نفسه"

"Can you lend me 50 rials for one week? You know all students run into this situation sometimes, and I would help my friends if they ran into the same situation."

OMS-7: "تقدر تعطيني ملاحظاتك على مادة اللسانيات الاجتماعية" "ورح اكتب لك ملاحظاتي الي كتبتها"

"Can you give me your notes for the sociolinguistics course, and I will write the notes for you that I have taken."

OFS-9: "والله اذا تسلفيني 50 ريال رح اعزمك على الغداء الأسبوع" "الجاي ههه"

"I swear, if you give me 50 rial, I will invite you next week to have lunch with me. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

The requesters in the above examples tried to soften their requests by telling the requestees that they could do something good for them to minimize the threat of their requests. OMS-4 requested money from his friend and explained that he would do the same for him or other friends if they were in the same kind of situation. Showing a willingness to help other friends in the same situation indicates a respect for others. He diminished the threat to the requestee's face by explaining that it is a common reaction for anyone. In this case, the requestee admitted to himself that he could find himself in the same situation, which motivated him to lend him the money.

OMS-7 provided a favor for the requestee by writing his notes for him once he received his notes. Thus, the requester offered the same in exchange to convince the requestee to give him the notes. He said, "... and I will write the notes for you that I have taken."

A humorous request was employed by OFS-9 when she requested money from her friend. She offered reciprocity by inviting her friend to lunch if she lent her the money, and then she laughed. This kind of request among close friends is common, as the student explained in her response to the interview question, because they always like to make a joke to soften their requests, especially when they request a large amount of money, like 50 rial. Using this strategy clearly showed that the students like to give the same or other duties to the requestees to decrease their imposition and to politely averted threatening their faces.

4.2.3. Hedging

By providing a glimpse of some shared knowledge between the requester and the requestee, Omani students used this tactic to increase the requester's confidence that the requestee would comprehend the requester's objective. The requester believed that by using this strategy, the requestee would comprehend the request implicitly without requesting directly. To illustrate the usage of this strategy, the researcher provides the following examples.

OFS-8: “بقول ما حصلت الرابط لهذا الكتاب اذا هي الأصل تفهم”
“هي المفروض تفهم”.

“I did not get the link for this book. She has to understand.”

OMS-3: “هلا محمد، بتعرف، نسيت محفظتي بالبيت”

“Welcome, Mohammad. You know, I forgot my wallet at home.”

OMS-5: “ما كتبت الملاحظات بالمحاضرة”

“I did not take notes in the lecture.”

Hedging is a positive politeness strategy that conveys an implicit request. As the students explained in their answers to the interview questions, they utilized this strategy when they were communicating with non-close classmates. In the case of OFS-8, the requester wanted her classmate to comprehend the request tacitly rather than explicitly. She ensured that the requestee understood what she needed without telling her frankly. This example demonstrated that students who share a common understanding of requests like the one she mentioned use this strategy.

OMS-3 hinted to the requestee that he needed to get money from him without telling him his need. He expected that the requestee would understand and give him the money he needed. This strategy particularly helped the requester to eschew threatening the face of the requestee by leaving the decision to help him or avoiding the request altogether. When he said, “*I forgot my wallet in my house*,” he indirectly wanted the requestee to understand he was asking him for money. The requester showed that he was too shy to ask for money directly, thereby letting the requestee choose whether to offer him money or not.

Likewise, OMS-5 clearly pointed out that he did not take notes in the lecture, trying to make the requestee understand that he wanted to get his notes. Moreover, he did

not want to embarrass the requestee by directly requesting his notes. As a result, he requested the notes in an indirect manner, giving the requestee the option to assist him.

4.2.4. Seeking Agreement

This strategy can be articulated by both safe topics and repetition. “Safe topics allow the requester to stress his agreement with the requestee and therefore satisfy the requestee's desire to be right or corroborated in his opinions”^[1]. Another way to use it would be to emphasize some or all of the requester's statements throughout the conversation. When responding to requests for course materials, notes, and funds, Omani students frequently employed this strategy. Their use of this strategy was illustrated by numerous incidents.

OMS -6: “العذر والسموحة للإزعاج. ممكن تعطيني ملاحظاتك”
“على المادة”

Requester: “I’m sorry if I’m interrupting you. Could you give me your notes for the course?”

Requestee: “لا تعتذر. بعطيك إياهم”

“Don’t apologize. I can give it to you.”

OMS-10: “هلا، بحاجة 5 ريال لانسخ الملاحظات. ممكن تعطيني؟”

Requester: “Welcome. I need 5 rial to copy the notes. Can you give them to me?”

Requestee: “ابشر وبكل سرور” هذه الفلوس واذا تحتاج “اكتر انا جاهز”

“You are most welcome. Here’s the money, and if you need more, I am ready to give it to you.”

OFS-1: “العذر و السموحة ولكن احتاج اخذ كتابك ليومين اكتب”
“الملاحظات”

Requester: “I apologize, but I want to borrow your book for two days. I want to copy your notes.”

Requestee: “اكيد رح اعطيك إياه. خذيه”

“Sure, I’ll give it to you. Take it.”

As shown in the above examples, the requestees demonstrated their willingness to help the requesters. They directly agreed and repeated some of the words in the requests to ensure their understanding and agreement. To show his support for OMS-6’s request, the requestee asked him not to apologize and directly consented to provide the funds. To save face, he tried to reduce the imposition of

the requester's request. Moreover, the requestee replied to OMS-10's request by using the very polite term *ايشر/aib-shur*, which means "you are most welcome." It is commonly used by Arabic societies generally and among Omani society specifically when they are willing to do something for others. This term was followed by another polite reply, with the requestee saying that he was willing to lend the requester money and agreed to give even more should the requester need that. As a result, the agreement between the two is the result of a very positive polite strategy that softens the speech and saves the face of the requesters.

OFS-1 requested a book from her classmate to take notes. The requestee willingly agreed with her by saying, "Sure," which explicitly meant that she agreed with her and gave her the book directly. Thus, the agreement strategy was utilized by the Omani participants for direct reasons, as they notated in their responses to the interview questions. They claimed that they had to assist others because it was their Islamic duty to do so, particularly when the people making the requests asked for something that they could provide. They sought to agree with their classmates to decrease the face-threatening acts and represent their generous culture. One well-known trait of the Omani people is their generosity. Therefore, asking for agreement was a sign of respect that they could express in their conversations.

5. Conclusions

People naturally seek to be accepted when they interact with one another, and they lessen the clashes in their interactions to do so. One way to do that is through the employment of politeness in their interactions. Thus, politeness plays a crucial role in human communication. This study was conducted for those reasons to help people around the world understand the preferred positive politeness strategies that are employed by Omani and Jordanian students in their interactions. Moreover, it shed light on the different forms they utilized in their requests to be accepted by their classmates. This qualitative study involved two qualitative methods: a semi-structured interview and notes. To identify positive politeness strategies, the researcher adopted Brown and Levinson's ^[1] analytical framework. The study found out that Jordanian students employed four positive politeness strategies: (1). Giving Reasons, (2). Concern for the Hearer's Wants, (3). Promises, and (4). In-Group Identi-

tity. Omani students also utilized four positive politeness strategies, with three of them being different from those of the Jordanians: (1). Giving Reasons, (2). Assuming Reciprocity and Giving Sympathy, (3). Hedging, and (4). Seeking Agreement. The Giving Reasons strategy was a similar strategy utilized by both Jordanians and Omanis, although the forms were different.

The study's findings may help Jordanian academics determine the best positive politeness techniques for Omani students once they are employed by Omani universities. Additionally, after speaking with Jordanian professors and students, Omani professors and students might select the appropriate positive politeness techniques to employ. To improve mutual understanding and facilitate effective communication in their interactions, researchers can carry out additional studies on the positive politeness techniques used by Jordanian and Omani students in their refusals and persuasions. By reducing the gap of miscommunication between the two civilizations, this research and others like it can support the development of solid partnerships between them.

Author Contributions

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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