

**Doctoral (PhD) dissertation**

**A Multi-perspective Analysis of Politeness in Syrian Arabic**

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# **A Multi-perspective Analysis of Politeness in Syrian Arabic**

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“Én Christina Hodeib teljes felelősségem tudatában kijelentem, hogy a benyújtott értekezés önálló munka, a szerzői jog nemzetközi normáinak tiszteletben tartásával készült, a benne található irodalmi hivatkozások egyértelműek és teljesek. Nem állok doktori fokozat visszavonására irányuló eljárás alatt, illetve 5 éven belül nem vontak vissza tőlem odaítélt doktori fokozatot. Jelen értekezést korábban más intézményben nem nyújtottam be és azt nem utasították el.”

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this dissertation is to present a holistic analysis of politeness in Syrian Arabic in its metapragmatic, expressive, and perceptual realizations, as seen in the speech act of apology. The research adopts a multi-perspective approach to the analysis of the data in which politeness is accounted for with reference to both participant and researcher understandings. The main research objectives include sketching out a characterization of politeness in Syrian Arabic and identifying which approach(es) to politeness theory best capture it. In addition to this, the study sets out to investigate the metapragmatics of politeness by examining the core components of the concept of politeness, the moral order(s) that underlie that conception as well as the social factors that influence it. This research also examines the nature of politeness expression in Syrian Arabic through the performance of the apology speech act and seeks to identify how such an expression interacts with social distance and social status. Finally, the study explores perceptions of politeness in four naturally-occurring apologies with the aim of examining potential diversity in perceptions. The study also investigates the correlation between the perceptions of (im)politeness and perceptions of the (in)sincerity of the apologies, on one hand, and the correlation between the (in)sincerity of the apology and the severity of the offense, on the other hand.

In order to collect the data, I designed a multi-method approach that best suits the scope of the dissertation and the range of research questions. For the metapragmatic and the expression of politeness experiments, I collected the data in Syria from ten graduate-level university students, who are native speakers of Syrian Arabic, using a self-report questionnaire and roleplays, respectively. As for the perceptual study, by using three 5-point Likert scales in an online survey, I collected the responses of 77 native Syrian Arabic speaking students, located in different universities around the world.

The results of the metapragmatic study show that politeness in Syrian Arabic is both a verbal and non-verbal behavior, such as showing good manners, having certain personal qualities, and respecting others. Politeness as a concept is also underlain by “other-oriented” and “self-oriented,” motivations, and it can also be evaluated negatively.

Additionally, the analysis indicates that, for native speakers of Syrian Arabic, values of equality, consideration for others, respect, family relations, and social status constitute the moral order they fall onto in their prototypical conceptions of politeness.

As far as the expression of politeness through apologies is concerned, the analysis of four roleplay situations, involving different dyads between friends, classmates, and student/lecturers, showed that expressing politeness is discursive in that it is a co-constructed effort between both speaker and hearer, who evaluate the apologies, and other accompanying speech acts, in context and constantly recycle apologies in accordance with emerging understandings. The results also show that despite such discursivity, the expression of politeness is at least partially conventional; the participants resort to shared understandings of the meanings of certain speech acts in their production/evaluation of each other's inputs.

In relation to the perceptions of politeness, the results of the quantitative data analysis of four naturally-occurring apologies indicated variability in politeness perceptions in only one of the situations. The results obtained from Pearson correlation test also indicates that, in three apology recordings, there is a statistically significant correlation between perceptions of (im)politeness and perceptions of (in)sincerity. The test also confirmed that there is a statistically significant correlation between the sincerity of the apology and the severity of the offense.

The major conclusion in relation to a comprehensive characterization of politeness in Syrian Arabic in its metapragmatic, expressive, and perceptual modes, is that it is best analyzed following third-wave approaches; politeness in Syrian Arabic has both language-specific elements (as argued in second-wave approaches) as well as more universal characteristics (as stipulated in first-wave approaches).

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“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”  
(2 Timothy 1:7)

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Rest in Peace.

And to Grace Maria my little niece and the joy of the Hodeib family.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and aim of the study

Politeness research has witnessed an exponential growth in the past few decades. The rapid development of the theory of politeness is captured in what came to be known as the three waves of politeness research (Kádár 2017). The waves reflect the theoretical and methodological changes in politeness research, and although the central aim of politeness theory is to describe and theorize the nature of politeness as a linguistic, social, and cultural behavior, the scope and methods of each wave vary significantly. First-wave theories, such as Brown and Levinson (henceforth B&L 1987) and Leech (1983), are firmly rooted in linguistic pragmatics and are all based on Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle (CP). The aim of these theories was to propose universally and cross-linguistically valid models, which can predict and account for the linguistic production/expression of politeness,<sup>1</sup> taking speech acts such as apologies and requests as the core units of analysis. More often than not, analyses of politeness were confined to decontextualized utterances.

More recent developments in theory, however, have challenged the way politeness has been theorized in first-wave approaches as an inherent property of decontextualized speech acts and as a universal phenomenon. Rather, in the discursive approach, politeness is a co-constructed and negotiated phenomenon, the meanings and nature of which should be analyzed on the idiosyncratic and local level (Watts 2003; Locher 2006). Furthermore, the discursivists emphasized that politeness is not only a matter of linguistic production but also subsumes other dimensions such as the evaluation of others' behaviors as polite or not (evaluative politeness). Additionally, politeness has a metapragmatic aspect in that in everyday situations, lay people engage in comments on the nature of politeness and what constitutes it in their opinion (Eelen 2001).

However, despite offering a deeper characterization of politeness, the discursive approach was criticized as being too methodologically nebulous and lacking in any clear interpretive approach (Haugh 2007). Therefore, third-wave approaches such as Kádár and

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<sup>1</sup> I use the terms 'production of politeness' and 'expression of politeness' interchangeably.



Haugh (2013) build on the core concepts of the discursive approach and aim to present models that can account for politeness both on the idiosyncratic, micro-level, in line with second-wave approaches, and on the macro-level, on par with the universal outlook of the classical theories (Kádár 2017). Most importantly, third wave approaches offer a more holistic view of politeness by attempting to construct a principled account of its evaluative/perceptual,<sup>2</sup>expressive, and metapragmatic manifestations. For example, contemporary analyses of politeness aim to explain the mechanisms and norms that give rise to evaluations of politeness and what factors influence variations in perceptual politeness among users. They also shed light on the co-constructed effort between speaker and hearer in expressing politeness and how these efforts are based on the availability of shared and conventionalized meanings of certain linguistic expressions such as speech acts (Kádár and Haugh 2013). Studies on metapragmatic politeness have also helped shed light on what politeness as a concept really means for users of different languages, showing that despite differences in the way politeness is conceived of, at the core of the notion, common elements can be identified cross-culturally and cross-linguistically (Haugh 2004).

Based on this brief overview of the literature, the aim of this dissertation is to analyze politeness in Syrian Arabic in a holistic manner that attempts to shed light on its metapragmatic, expressive, and evaluative manifestations, taking the apology speech act as a representative case study speech act. The study is couched in two contemporary frameworks to analyzing politeness; Kádár and Haugh (2013) and Grainger's (2018) neo-Brown and Levinson framework. Despite the rapid developments in the field as outlined earlier, politeness research is characterized in the first wave by a focus on the production aspect of politeness, and an interest in the metapragmatic and evaluative aspects of politeness in the discursive wave. There is yet, to the best of my knowledge, a study that provides a comprehensive view of politeness in Syrian Arabic and attempts to characterize it in a comprehensive manner. Thus, this study bridges a gap in the literature by focusing equally and comprehensively on all dimension of politeness, the metapragmatic, expressive, and perceptual/evaluative aspects of politeness in Syrian Arabic as seen in the

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<sup>2</sup> In the literature, evaluations and perceptions of politeness are used interchangeably. I follow the same trend.

speech act of apology. In addition to this, as this study examines perceptions of politeness, it is also a contribution to perceptual studies more generally, which, according to Chang and Haugh (2011) and Fukushima (2013), are still scarce compared to production studies. Thus, another aim of this dissertation is to shed more light on why and how perceptions of politeness might differ between speakers of the same language.

## **1.2 Significance of the study**

In addition to addressing the afore-mentioned gaps, this study deals with a language variety, which to my knowledge, has not been examined before. Although the study is non-contrastive, and thus non-variational, in its sole focus on Syrian Arabic, to the exclusion of other varieties of Arabic, the study is expected to contribute novel findings to the field of pragmatics in Arabic, more generally, and to politeness research in Arabic, more specifically, both of which remain largely understudied. Moreover, with a few exceptions (see for example Asswae (2018) on politeness in Libyan Arabic), the studies are mainly concerned with an analysis of politeness in speech acts such as requests, invitations, and apologies, following traditional, taxonomy-based approaches, which are in turn couched in classical theories of politeness (see Ahmed (2017) for apologies and politeness in Iraqi Arabic). Moreover, this dissertation focuses on apologies as an exemplary speech act for analyzing politeness manifestations in Syrian Arabic, but in doing so it takes a more interactional and updated approach to analyzing apologies in context, which is compatible with Kádár and Haugh (2013) and Grainger's (2018) frameworks. Thus, the study shows that contemporary analyses of politeness need not discard speech acts as core units of analysis, but can still utilize them as themselves negotiated and discursive phenomena similarly to politeness.

## **1.3 Research questions**

As the aim of this dissertation is to comprehensively examine politeness as a metapragmatic, expressive, and perceptual phenomenon, the main research questions address each aspect of politeness as follows:

Q 1: What are the main characteristics of politeness in Syrian Arabic in its metapragmatic, expressive, and evaluative form, as analyzed in the apology speech act?

Q 2: What are native speakers' conceptualizations of politeness in Syrian Arabic, as seen in the range of linguistic labels they use to talk about it?

Q 3: How do native speakers of Syrian Arabic express politeness in their production of the speech act of apology? What role do the social factors of distance and status play in the expression of politeness?

Q 4: What are the participants' perceptions of the politeness of four naturally-occurring apologies? Is there a correlation between (im)politeness perceptions and contextual factors such as the (in)sincerity of the apology and the severity of the offense?

As I will show in the following chapters, I follow a multi-method approach to collecting the data. Now that the main research questions have been presented, in the next section, I outline the structure of the dissertation and present a quick overview of the content of each chapter.

## **1.4 Structure of the dissertation**

**Chapter Two** deals with politeness theories. I begin by outlining a detailed exploration of the development of politeness theory in three waves by presenting the major theories in each wave. I especially focus on the way politeness is conceptualized in each wave, highlighting the scope of enquiry in the relevant approaches, and pointing out critiques that ushered new developments in theory and thus the beginning of the following wave. I conclude the discussion on the development of politeness theories by discussing the theoretical frameworks I adopt for the analysis of the data; Kádár and Haugh (2013) and Grainger (2018). In the second part of the chapter, I provide an overview of previous studies in order to illustrate the applicability of Kádár and Haugh's (2013) and Grainger's (2018) frameworks in data analysis.

**Chapter Three** examines the speech act of apology. At the beginning of the chapter, I present a brief overview of Speech Act Theory as first proposed by Austin (1962) and later elaborated by Searle (1979). I then closely examine the apology speech act, by introducing Edmondson and House's (1981) interactional typology of speech acts and showing how it is particularly useful for analyzing apologies in context. Then I provide some of the definitions proposed in the literature for its function. This is followed by an

examination of the apology speech act from a taxonomy-based approach. In particular, I explore apology strategies in Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) taxonomy, which I adopt for the analysis of apologies in the dissertation. I then point out the inherent deficiencies in taxonomy-based approaches to speech act analysis and suggest modifications to overcome some of the weaknesses. In the following section of this chapter, I examine a more recent view of the function of apologies, as suggested by Deutschmann (2003), showing that the function of apologies is more complex than merely addressing a past offense. After that, I refer to the parallels between apologies and the classical view of politeness, with the aim of illustrating that the recent developments in politeness theories are still compatible with an analysis of apologies as interactional and sequentially organized speech acts (Robinson 2004; Davies et al. 2007). The remainder of the chapter is devoted to a review of the literature on apologies and politeness on Arabic dialects. Throughout the review, I highlight certain gaps in the literature, which the present research is hoped to address.

In **Chapter Four**, I present the multi-method design of the study and the data collection method(s) for each experiment. I start by discussing the main research methods in pragmatics, showing the advantages and disadvantages of each. The aim of this is to motivate my choice of methods, in light of the different research questions and the overall scope of the dissertation. The chapter also contains the details of the three experiments conducted for the present work and an outline of data collection procedures.

Chapters Five, Six, and Seven, are data analysis and discussion chapters. **Chapter Five** concerns the metapragmatics of politeness in Syrian Arabic. Using a self-report questionnaire, I examine the participants' prototypical views of politeness as seen in the range of linguistic evaluators they use to talk about politeness. I also look at how the participants assess the importance of politeness in certain context and analyze how social factors may influence these assessments. I also touch upon what the above-mentioned dimensions of analysis might reveal about the moral order(s) that motivate the participants' prototypical views of politeness.

**Chapter Six** tackles the expression of politeness through the production of the apology speech act in four roleplay situations. By analyzing the input of the speaker(s) and the response of the addressee(s), I attempt to show how politeness is discursively

negotiated. I particularly focus on the conversational junctures in which the participants use different linguistic strategies to signal their attitudes or evaluations of the on-going interaction and how that influences the trajectory of the apology. I also explore the role of the social factors of distance and status in the expression of politeness.

**Chapter Seven** is a quantitative analysis of native speakers' perceptions of (im)politeness, using three 5-point Likert scales. The chapter explores whether native speakers of Syrian Arabic have different perceptions of the (im)politeness of four naturally-occurring apologies. Statistical data analysis is also used to calculate the correlation between the variability of (im)politeness perceptions and perceptions of contextual factors such as the (in)sincerity of the apology and severity of the offense.

In **Chapter Eight** the main findings of the study are summarized and discussed. I also highlight the contributions and the limitations of the dissertation and conclude by suggesting further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **POLITENESS THEORIES**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to present an overview of the development of politeness theories, which can be captured in three waves. The three waves reflect the movement of politeness research from the strictly pragmatic perspective of first-wave theories (B&L 1987) through the social perspective of politeness in the discursive turn (Eelen 2001; Watts 2003; Locher and Watts 2008) to the third-wave of politeness research (Kádár and Haugh 2013; Grainger 2018), which advocates an examination of politeness both as a linguistic and social phenomenon. In this review, I also aim to show how the three waves are logically connected in that the beginning of each wave constitutes the culmination of critiques of the previous wave and an attempt to address its weaknesses. I also attempt to outline the frameworks in which my analysis of politeness in Syrian Arabic will be couched and to present case studies in which these frameworks have been used in the analysis of various politeness-related events. My basic position is that in order to fully understand politeness in its expressive, metapragmatic, and perceptual aspects, an analysis is bound to draw on the plethora of concepts and methodologies of each wave, which, despite differences, are otherwise complementary.

The chapter is structured around three main sections. Each section is devoted to the exploration of the theories within one wave of research, and each section is concluded with a synthesis of critical assessments that paved the way for the emergence of the following wave. Throughout the discussion, I touch upon the basic concepts that are characteristic of each wave and how those contributed to the understanding of the nature of politeness and its characteristics. I start by reviewing B&L's theory (1987) in the next section.

#### **2.2 First-wave politeness research: The pragmatic theories of politeness**

The earliest approaches to politeness represent the pragmatic view of politeness as they are based on Grice (1975) and the Cooperative Principle (CP). According to Watts (2003), Grice suggested that a maxim of politeness is worth considering as an additional maxim within the CP. Lakoff's (1975) work is one of the earliest systematic treatments of politeness, along with Leech (1983)'s theory and the Politeness Principle. However, it is

B&L's (1987) theory that remains the most influential among the classical approaches and possibly in politeness research. Thus, I only focus on B&L's (1987) theory as a representative of first-wave approaches, going through a detailed exploration of its basic tenets and the critiques that it has attracted.

### **2.2.1 Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness (1987)**

In the classical period of politeness research, B&L's (1987) theory was the most widely-adopted framework both in inter- and intra-cultural research on linguistic politeness and speech act production. Despite ample criticism to the theory, the model still remains one of the most successful, and the concepts and terminology it contributed to politeness research are still adopted in contemporary analyses (see Grainger 2018 below for more details on this).

B&L's (1987) theory takes speech acts as its primary locus of analysis, but despite it being based on the CP, its novelty lies in the infusion of social and psychological factors in an overall production model that seeks to account for the linguistic production of politeness and set up a predictive theory for what forms of politeness are to be expected in certain situations. The appeal to social concepts is in tune with B&L's (1987) broader aim which motivated their theory of politeness. As they argue, the study of politeness is essentially the examination of the quality of social relationships. Thus, an account of politeness must be situated in an overarching framework of human relations and transaction.

B&L (1987) argue that the CP and the Politeness Principle (PP) are not on the same level. The CP assumes the status of background knowledge, with the natural consequence that the CP is hardly ever flouted. The CP is an overarching principle, and polite behavior is a "deviation" from the rationality and efficiency of the CP, which requires a rational explanation on the part of the hearer (B and L 1987: 4). Since politeness does not have the status of a maxim, it must be derived in the form of a generalized conversational implicature made by the speaker and inferred by the hearer.

According to B&L (1987: 1), the function of politeness is to disarm potential aggression and facilitate communication between "potentially aggressive parties." In order

to account for polite behavior, B&L appeal to the sociological notion of face, a concept which they have borrowed from Goffman (1967) and later modified in their theory. Face in B&L's (1987) model is a universal concept and is defined as the public self-image that every individual wants to claim for him/herself. Whereas B&L's (1987) face is a quality that is claimed by the individual, Goffman's (1967) face has more of a relational and social dimension. Goffman (1967) argues that face is the self-image of the individual that is "on loan" from others who grant it to a person, in accordance with his/her own behavior in a given context/situation. Thus, while face in B&L's (1987) theory is an individual a priori construct, Goffman's face is subject to constant change and development within social interaction (Watts 2003). This conceptualization of face as an individual property has been one of the main aspects that the theory has been criticized for.

Face has two aspects: negative face, which refers to the individual's desire to be free from imposition, and positive face, which refers to an individual's need to be liked and accepted. B&L (1987) maintain that each person's face is vulnerable and, thus, can be threatened, maintained, or enhanced. It is this recognition of face vulnerability which drives people to invest in facework, which is geared towards the mutual maintenance of each other's faces.

Every speech act has the potential to be a face-threatening act (FTA), and FTAs can be categorized as threatening either the hearer's (H) negative face or his/her positive face. Negative face-threatening acts include speech acts that predicate a certain future action of H such as requests and orders, incur a debt on H such as offers and promises, and actions that imply that the speaker (S) wants some possession of H such as compliments. On the other hand, speech acts that threaten H's positive face include actions that signify a negative evaluation of H or an overall antipathy towards him/her. Criticism, disagreement, and lack of cooperation fall under the rubric of positive FTAs. B&L (1987) point out another category of FTAs, which threaten S's negative face such as expressing thanks and accepting H's thanks and apologies. Other acts threaten S's positive face and include apologies, accepting compliments, and emotional breakdowns (*ibid* 1987: 65-68). It should be noticed here that B&L (1987) take actions to have an intrinsic face-threatening or face-

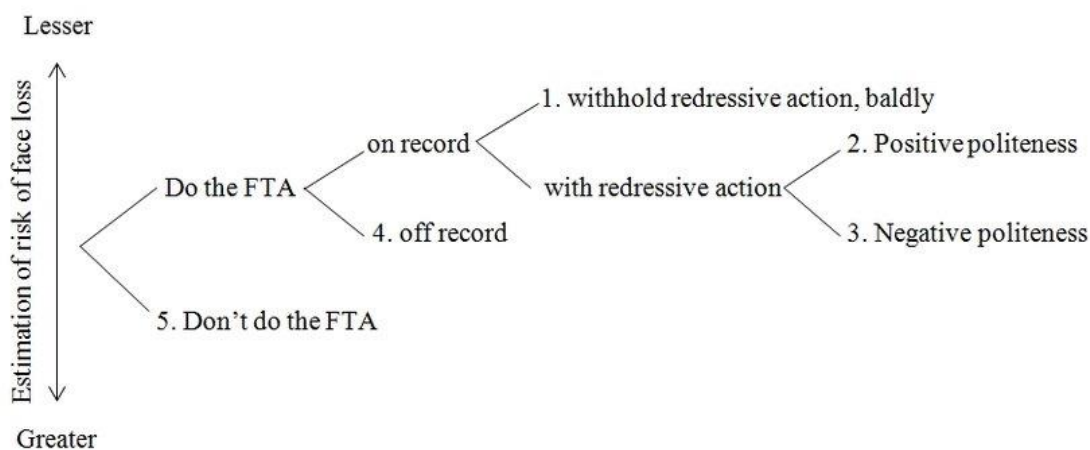


enhancing value, which shows their analysis of politeness as existing in decontextualized utterances.

Given the afore-mentioned vulnerability of face, B&L (1987) argue that “any rational agent will seek to avoid face-threatening acts, or will employ certain strategies to minimize the threat” (*ibid* 1987: 68). In order to present the range of strategies that disarm FTAs, the Model Person (MP), an ideal rational being who is capable of reasoning from means to ends, is introduced. B&L’s (1987) model is based on the assumed universality of face and rationality, in the Gricean sense. In addition to those aspects of universality, B&L (1987) claim that politeness strategies are also universal. They come to this conclusion, which Watts (2003) argues to be a gross overgeneralization, based on the examination of English, Tzeltal, and Mayan, and observing structural similarities in the way FTAs are addressed in these three languages.

In the course of social interaction, the MP may always face the potential of face damage. Therefore, s/he has five main strategies and sub-strategies from which to choose, according to the specifications of the situation, in order to circumvent a possible FTA. B&L (1987) outline a hierarchy of strategies, as can be seen in Figure 2.1 below.

Circumstances determining choice of strategy :



**Figure 2.1 Politeness strategies (B&L 1987: 60)**

According to Watts (2003), the strategies range from the best, which is not doing the FTA at all in no. 5 to strategy no. 1 of doing the FTA baldly on-record without any attempt to

minimize the face-threat. Going baldly on-record means performing the FTA in the most direct and concise manner available, i.e., strictly adhering to the CP. B&L (1987) explain that there are circumstances in which this strategy is not considered offensive such as when communicative efficiency is demanded, in cases of emergency (don't touch that!), or between two interlocutors who have marked status differentials. However, the MP can go on-record while maintaining the face of the addressee by employing either positive or negative face-saving strategies. Finally, going off-record means that the speaker can only imply the FTA, by hinting for instance, and hope that the addressee will orient to the intended meaning. The risk of this strategy is double: the addressee may not understand the hint or may understand it and choose to ignore it. Usually, this strategy is chosen when the risk of face-damage is maximal. The choice of the strategy follows S's assessment of the degree to which the FTA might do face-damage. Thus, the more damaging the FTA is, the more likely it is that S is going to resort to a strategy that is higher up in number.

The MP rationalizes over the choice of the optimal politeness strategy with reference to three social variables: the social distance (D) between S and H, the relative power (P) of S and H, and the absolute ranking (R) of the FTA, which is culturally determined. Although B&L (1987) do not provide an explicit definition of the social variables, they do point out that D and P are pan-cultural concepts, the operationalization of which is subject to variation in accordance with how different peoples understand social relations to be. They further explain that while D is a symmetrical relationship between S and H, P is an asymmetrical relationship that is associated with, but by no means restricted to, role-relations.<sup>3</sup> Examples 1 and 2 below illustrate how certain combinations of the three social variables may influence strategy choice. Both examples are taken from B&L (1987: 80).

(1) a. Excuse me, would you by any chance have the time?

b. Got the time mate?

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<sup>3</sup> Despite an overall treatment of the social variables as static, B&L (1987: 79) explicitly state that fixed social valuations of P are only one element of the equation and that "other situational sources of power may contribute to or adjust or entirely override such stable valuations."

In example (1), P and R have fixed values in that the relative power between S and H is equal and the imposition, which is asking about time, is relatively low. D is expressed differently in (1a) and (1b). Whereas (1a) is expected to be heard between strangers, (1b) indicates that the S and H are familiar with each other. Similarly, in example (2) below, P does not have a fixed value, but D is small and R is again relatively low, one would predict the request in (2b) to be made from an employee to a boss, for example. The request in (2b) has the opposite direction, from a boss to an employee:

- (2) a. Excuse me sir, would it be alright if I smoke?  
b. Mind if I smoke?

As can be seen in the example, the weight of the FTA is calculated based on the values of D, P, and R. The culturally-determined value of R is to be understood as follows: a request to borrow someone's car may be considered a huge imposition in one culture but a normal request in another. Generally, B&L (1987) propose that the more distant the relationship between S and H is, and the more power H holds over S, the more likely it is for the FTA to rank highly in terms of imposition in the relevant culture, which results in an overall more weightiness of the FTA. As is probably clear in the discussion so far, B&L's (1987) model is speaker-oriented; politeness is to be recognized as the communicated intention of the speaker, who assesses the FTA and chooses the best strategy by weighing the benefits of the strategy, as dictated by the situation. Thus, the hearer is only mentioned in passing in relation to the way the speaker assesses P, D, and R, and the active role of the hearer is relegated to inferring the speaker's polite intention. The fact that the theory is speaker-oriented is one of the weaknesses for which the theory has been criticized. However, other critiques have also targeted the notion of face and claims of universality.

### **2.2.2 A critical review of B&L's (1987) theory**

A unifying characteristic of first-wave politeness theories, besides being based on Grice's CP, is their claim of the universality of politeness and the cross-cultural applicability of their rules, principles, and strategies in the explication of polite behavior. However, the idea of universality has been rejected not only by post-modernist researchers, but some of

the most severe critiques of such claims come from Japanese and Chinese pragmatics and sociolinguists.

Ide (1989) claims that B&L (1987) ignore two fundamental aspects in the way politeness is expressed in Japanese, so the claim that their politeness model is universal does not hold water. One ignored aspect has to do with the use of honorifics, which is grammatically and socio-pragmatically obligatory. The other aspect concerns the use of politeness in language, which is based on social conventions rather than being an intentional strategic choice.

Based on the on the idea that linguistic politeness is motivated by social conventions, Ide (1989) suggests a basic distinction of politeness types that a universal theory of politeness must take heed of: the politeness of *wakimae* or ‘discernment,’ which prevails in languages like Japanese, and the politeness of “volition,” more akin to the principle of rationality and more familiar to Western languages. According to Ide (1989), Japanese speakers practice discernment, which means showing that one is aware of one’s role and that one is showing recognition of the role of the addressee or any other referent in social interaction. For example, a Japanese, who refers to a university professor, must choose the appropriate level of formality and the correct honorific form, which is expected by the professor, as a tribute to the professor’s role and status in the relevant situation. The practice of discernment differs from the use of formal language in a manipulative and intentional way, following B&L’s (1987) model, and is dictated by social conventions, giving it an automatic nature similar to the rules of grammar. Volition-based politeness, on the other hand, refers to the use of verbal politeness strategies, as a result of rational thinking on the part of the speaker to achieve a specific communicative goal. The practice of discernment is integral to politeness in the Japanese society, in which individualism takes a background role and a person’s sense of worth and social role are linked to belonging to and identifying with a larger group. This is in contrast with Western societies where individualism supersedes other values, and which B&L’s (1987) theory is firmly based on (Ide 1989).

The focus on individualism as opposed to a focus on the role of the larger groups in which a person functions leads Ide to construct another point of criticism, targeting

B&L's conception of face. Ide's main argument lies in that B&L's "face," which is an individual property and a reflection of the person's conception of his/her own worth, which s/he wants others to recognize, has little relevance to the Japanese society. Whereas face is the basis of interaction in Western societies, group membership is the basis of interaction in societies like the Japanese. Thus, the process of role/status recognition in a particular situation overrides considerations of face (Ide 1989: 241).

Finally, Ide (1989) criticizes B&L's (1987) focus on intentionality. Since it is established that the use of honorifics in languages like Japanese is automatic and is an integral aspect of linguistic politeness in languages that have honorifics, Ide (1989) argues that to restrict politeness to a process of rational and intentional decision-making is to exclude honorific-based politeness and all forms of language use based on convention from a universal theory of politeness. An all-encompassing theory of politeness must incorporate both aspects of rationality and aspects of politeness which derive from adherence to proper social conduct and complying with social conventions.

In addition to Ide's (1989) criticism, Watts (2003) criticizes B&L's (1987) binary system of politeness strategies, explaining that proposing such a system has the following implications: first, it pre-supposes that the MP has to go through a long process of rationalization before producing each utterance, which is counter-intuitive given the rapid and spontaneous character of face-to-face communication. Second, since at each step of the reasoning process, the MP is forced to choose between only two strategies, the system excludes the possibility of two strategies co-occurring in the same utterance.

In connection with the system of politeness strategies, Watts (2003) elaborates at considerable length on the consequences of B&L's (1987) use of decontextualized examples to illustrate the five strategies. Watts (2003) argues that the examples are only considered polite in the vicinity of the FTA, with the consequence that the strategies may not be considered as such in other contexts. For instance, in the following constructed example, taken from Watts (2003: 89), the FTA is in the form of a request. Watts (2003) claims that the positive politeness prefacing strategy of attending to H's wants, and the expressions used to phrase the FTA itself are perhaps only interpreted as polite because of the presence of the FTA:

(3) Jim, you're really good at solving computer problems. I wonder if you could just help me with a little formatting problem I've got.

In addition to the above-example, Watts (2003) constructs an imaginable context for each strategy, and concludes that even if they were interpreted as polite, there is no indication of whether the addressee interprets the speaker's behavior positively or negatively. Finally, the model focuses only on the speaker's strategic choice of politeness strategies, and it ignores the role of the hearer or any third part present during the interaction. Watts (2003) refuses this treatment of politeness as a static and one-sided phenomenon. Instead, he stipulates that politeness is dynamic and involves the evaluations of both the speaker and the hearer.

In perhaps the most radical criticism of B&L's (1987) model, Watts (2003: 2005) suggests that the theory is not about politeness but a model of face-work strategies. As B&L's face is a reinterpretation of Goffman's face (1967), this reinterpretation strips the concept of face from its connection to social and ritual order(s), which are at the heart of the Goffman's conception of face. In Goffman's work, face is constantly present at every interaction and is also constantly granted and re-granted by others "in accordance with the line or lines that the individual has adopted for the purposes of that interaction" (Watts 2003: 105). The consequences of the omnipotence of face are that the lines or attitudes assumed by the individual may sometime involve intrinsic and obligatory face-damage. Politeness cannot be reduced to face-damage redressive strategies; it is much more comprehensive than this. If B&L (1987) only associate politeness with the occurrence of face-damage, their model ends up being a face-saving theory (Watts 2003: 2005).

Werkhofer (2005) also criticized the theory. According to Werkhofer (2005), given the dynamic nature of politeness as a socially conditioned phenomenon, it needs to be studied in context as it is practiced by people. Thus, the introduction of the MP essentially cuts politeness off of social realities and takes it into the realm of scientific abstraction. Werkhofer (2005) also targets the implications of B&L's (1987) focus on intentionality. The presupposition of intentionality rules out cases in which the speaker's input may not be premeditated but triggered by convention, habit, and situational factors. In addition to this, ascribing intentionality to the speaker all the way through leads one to assume that

communication for “pro-social” purposes that do not necessarily constitute a potential face-threat is non-existent.

The critiques of B&L’s model and the pragmatic approaches to politeness culminated in what came to be known as the discursive approach to politeness. The new era of research is characterized not only by a shift of methodology but it is also a call for a theoretical reconsideration of the object of study itself, politeness. A reconsideration of the nature of politeness constitutes a major difference between first and second-wave politeness theorization, which will be the focus of the next section.

### **2.3 Second-wave/discursive politeness research: Basic concepts**

The discursive approach to politeness can be seen as a reaction to the failings of first-wave politeness research (Grainger 2011). Despite the multitude of frameworks that subscribe to the discursive agenda, as Mills (2011) explains, the discursivists agree on a number of core tenets. These tenets include the rejection of politeness universals, the decontextualized analysis of politeness as a purely pragmatic phenomenon, and ignoring the active role of the hearer and the socio-cultural context of politeness.

The basic claim of the discursivists is that no utterance is inherently polite (Locher 2006). This claim is rooted in a view of politeness as a social behavior, which is interactionally achieved by both speaker and hearer. Therefore, the discursivists reject a decontextualized view of politeness and maintain that politeness can only be observed and analyzed in larger chunks of discourse. An appeal to the larger context means taking the nuances of the social environment and the history of the relationship between the interlocutors into consideration in an attempt to locate possible realizations of politeness in the on-going interaction (Locher 2006).

Central to the argument that politeness is not an innate value of any utterance is the view of politeness as a discursive concept, the meanings of which are constantly changing relative to the changes in the linguistic and historical scene (Watts 2003). Watts (2003) illustrates this point using examples from English. He maintains that when people are asked to define polite behavior or polite language, speakers resort to giving examples of polite verbal and non-verbal behaviors such as respect, consideration, and using conventionalized

expression such as “please” and “excuse me.” The most important issue that is raised by these divergent definitions is that no two people understand politeness in the same way.

Building on his argument that politeness escapes concrete definitions, Watts (2003) stipulates that it is of little use to talk about a universal theory of politeness. The linguistic associations of the term “politeness” affect the way people conceive of politeness. Thus, we cannot be sure that in cross-linguistic discussions, a native speaker of English and a native speaker of Japanese, for instance, will be referring to the same human behavior when talking about politeness (*ibid* 2003: 13). Watts (2003) concludes that a universal theory of politeness is untenable and the object of politeness research needs to be the discursive struggle over the various meanings of politeness.

As can be seen, the discursive approach represents a theoretical shift in as far as the rejection of universalism and the decontextualized view of politeness is concerned. It is also a methodological shift; in dismissing a universal notion of politeness, discursivists align themselves with qualitative rather than quantitative research. Most importantly, in stressing the evaluative and discursive nature of politeness, discursive researchers explicitly anchor the understanding and analysis of potential occurrences of politeness to the participants rather than the analyst. This contrast between politeness as examined from the participants’ perspective and politeness as theorized by analysts came to be known as the first/second-order politeness distinction.

### **2.3.1 First- and second-order politeness distinction**

The first-/second-order politeness distinction refers to politeness as a folk concept that is understood and practiced by lay members of a community and politeness as an abstract and theoretical construct that is imposed by researchers, respectively (Eelen 2001). This distinction, although first materializing in Eelen’s (2001) critical work on politeness theories, dates back to Watts, Ide, and Ehlich (1992; 2005). Watts et al. (2005) have voiced concerns over the dangers of treating an intrinsically social phenomenon from the perspective of scientific abstraction, which will force an understanding that may be far removed from the social reality of the phenomenon of politeness and the way it is practiced by language users.



Kádár and Haugh (2013) neatly summarize the problem of second-order theorization. They claim that in the classical approaches, there is a bias for the conceptions of the analyst over that of lay speakers. This results in certain forms of language use, which do not subscribe to researchers' theoretical framework(s) of strategies and/or rules, being dismissed as "inappropriate." For instance, a research who is following the paradigm of B&L (1987), would find a piece of data that does not subscribe to any of the politeness strategies deviant, regardless of the fact that it is naturally-occurring data. The overall picture is a restrictive vision of politeness and a confusion over whether what is examined is the participants' use and understanding of politeness or simply the scientists' version of politeness (*ibid*: 40). Kádár and Haugh (2013) add that the consequence of this view is that first-wave researchers account for differences in politeness strategies in terms of cultural variations in the weight assigned to different strategies (a second-order perspective), while analyses couched in first-order theorization account for divergences as resulting from the way in which politeness is understood differently by different people. Whereas the first type of explanation is grounded in the perspective of the analyst, the second takes account of the perspective of the participants.

The discursivists agree that politeness research should be couched in a first-order perspective, and the aim of research should be to account for the different ways in which people understand and evaluate politeness (Eelen 2001; Watts 2003; Locher 2006). In other words, as Watts (2003) explains, a theory of first-order politeness is one which captures the context-bound discursive struggle over the meanings of politeness.

Although the discursivists focus on first-order politeness and reject politeness universals as scientific constructs imposed by the analyst, both Eelen (2001) and Watts (2003) offer an outline of what a second-order politeness theory should be like. The aim of such a theory is to capture the nature of first-order politeness and the discursive struggle over its meanings. i.e., a theory of second-order politeness should be able to explain why people may evaluate and perceive politeness differently and the processes involved in such evaluations. According to Watts (2003: 24), "the real universality of politeness" lies in the ways it is struggled over in every human society.

However, despite agreement among the discursivists that first-order politeness needs to be the focus of investigation, as Kádár and Haugh (2013) explain, differences can be noticed in the way first-order politeness is conceptualized by different researchers. The question of what really constitutes politeness for lay members of a community and the nature of such a concept has dominated politeness research in general and the discursive approach in particular. Since the aim of this dissertation is to examine politeness in Syrian Arabic, the analysis must take into consideration a first-order perspective. Therefore, it will be important to explore the nature of first-order politeness and its aspects as theorized by the discursivists and as examined from the perspective of users.

### **2.3.2 First-order politeness: Conceptualizations, evaluations, and perceptions**

With the possible exception of Leech (1983), the Gricean-based frameworks of politeness mainly focus on the role of the speaker, who uses politeness strategically to achieve communicative goals in the smoothest manner available. This, combined with the role of intentionality and relegating the hearer's role to deciphering the speaker's intentions, resulted in a pattern of studies, which were mainly interested in classifying the linguistic production and expression of politeness through speech act realization.

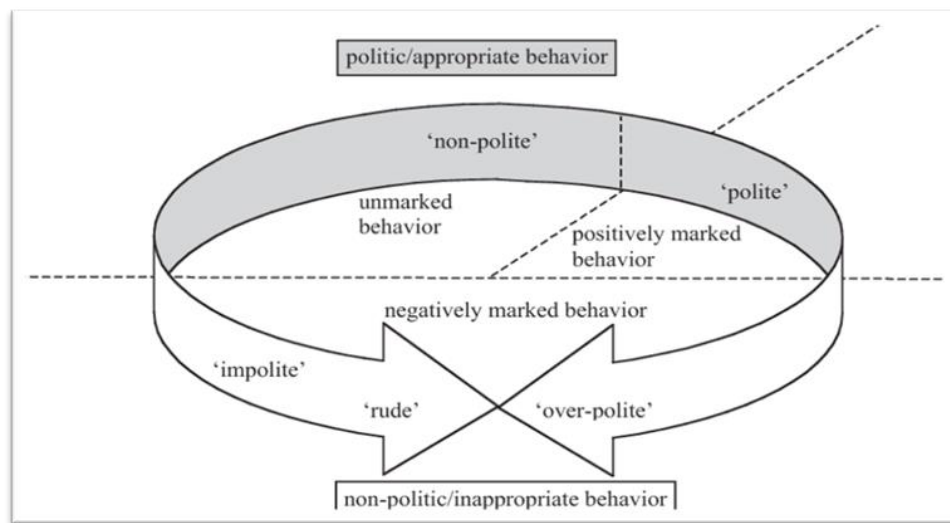
With the appearance of the discursive wave as an alternative way of examining politeness from a first-order perspective, researchers started constructing a more comprehensive view of politeness. For instance, in Watts et al. (2005) and Watts (2003), first-order politeness is a matter of evaluation in that participants engage in assessing the behavior of others as polite or not. Eelen (2001), however, argues that politeness is not only an evaluation but that it also manifests itself in people's behaviors in what he calls "politeness-as-practice."

Eelen (2001) further elaborates on the nature of first-order politeness. He suggests that first-order politeness encompasses both how people use politeness and how they talk about it. Thus, first-order politeness has three kinds: expressive, in which people intend to show politeness, classificatory, in which people evaluate a behavior as polite or not, and metapragmatic, in which people make general remarks about what makes up the concept of politeness in everyday interaction. Since first-order politeness involves commenting on others' behaviors and classifying them as polite or impolite, it is evaluative and normative.

In other words, when people judge (evaluate) others' behaviors, they fall back on a set of norms that form a standard point of reference (Eelen 2001).

The evaluative and metapragmatic aspects of politeness triggered much research into the nature of politeness evaluations: researchers wanted to explain what is involved in the process of evaluation, how it arises, and the sort of norms that give rise to such evaluations. In this respect, Locher (2006) maintains that evaluations of politeness are tied to the peculiarities of the here and now of the context and are made with reference to what speakers consider to be appropriate to the direction of the interaction, based on their expectations. Since evaluations are localized and context-bound, different people will have different evaluations of politeness. Moreover, such evaluations may not always be positive.

In order to account for the range of politeness evaluations in relation to a scale of appropriateness, based on the sort of behavior that is expected in context, Locher and Watts (2008) propose the relational work model to capture a wide spectrum of behaviors, subject to evaluations in terms of appropriateness, in which people negotiate their relationships. Politeness is only one aspect of these behaviors. Figure 2.2 shows the process of evaluating different behaviors in relational work.



**Figure 2.2 Relational work (Watts 2005: xliii)**

As can be seen in the figure above, behaviors can be either marked or unmarked in relation to a scale of appropriateness which derives from the expected behaviors of a given

context. Impolite and rude behaviors are always negatively marked. Similarly, polite behavior may be either positively marked or negatively marked, in which case it will be labelled “over-polite.” A terminological clarification is in order here as well. Polite behavior, following Watts (2003), refers to any behavior, which is in line with what is expected and dictated in a specific situation. For example, greetings are part of the polite behavior of meeting people. In this sense, given their expectedness, they are non-polite and unmarked behaviors. However, when a behavior goes beyond what is expected in a situation, it becomes marked and may be open to an evaluation either as polite, over-polite, or impolite, all of which are marked behaviors.

Although the description of the spectrum of behaviors in the relational work model may seem rather vague, it is in fact supported by empirical evidence, in at least as far as politeness can be negatively evaluated. For example, in a study conducted by Garfinkel (1972), his participants were asked to act formally and use formal language, such as formal address forms, which are conventional markers of politeness to strangers, with their family members. The aim was to evaluate the reactions of the participants’ family members to the ostensibly polite behaviors. The results showed that the family members evaluated the conduct of the participants as “mean,” “selfish,” and “inconsiderate” but never “polite.” More recent evidence comes from Blum-Kulka’s (2005) investigation of politeness in Israeli society. She observes that her participants negatively associated politeness with lack of sincerity and outward appearances.

Despite the success of the discursive approach in taking politeness to a higher level by attempting to present a more interactional view of politeness as a social phenomenon, the discursive theorists have also received their fair share of criticism. The critiques, which targeted many aspects including the status of the discursive approaches as predictive theories and the way they conceptualize first-order politeness, signaled more developments in politeness theory.

### **2.3.3 Critiques of the discursive approach to politeness**

Haugh’s (2007) main proposal is that the discursive approaches are an inadequate alternative to B&L’s (1987) politeness theory because of a number of epistemological and ontological problems that are faced upon closer scrutiny of these approaches. He targets,

first and foremost, relational work (Locher and Watts 2008) and argues that, despite taking a perspective on politeness that foregrounds the role of the participants, the analysis of first-order politeness as a behavior that goes beyond what is expected in a context is essentially a second-order analysis and is not supported by empirical evidence. According to Haugh (2007: 300), native speakers of English associate politeness with “friendliness and pleasantness, respect, appropriateness, and modesty” and, thus, it would be difficult for the concept of politeness as defined in relational work to hold water, unless one is willing to consider the above-mentioned values as marked, unusual behaviors.

Haugh (2007) also criticizes the categorization of the behaviors along a spectrum of appropriateness in relational work. According to Haugh (2007), these categorizations are core analytical tools in the framework, and yet, it is not clear on what grounds the evaluations of over-politeness and impoliteness as negatively marked-behaviors are made. He further adds that it is also not clear whether the categories are based on the participants’ evaluations (first-order) or the researchers’ own analysis (second-order).

Haugh (2007) lists other concerns relating to the ontological status of the discursive approach. First, the discursive approach lacks any clear methodological framework. By excluding corpus-based interpretive methods, the discursivists rely too heavily on the participants’ own reports and evaluations of politeness, which leads to the second issue. According to Haugh (2007), the discursivists only offer “tentative” accounts of politeness as they are firmly based on the participants’ reports of their evaluations of politeness, which are inherently divergent. This practice not only relegates the role of analysts to mere observants/reporters of participants’ evaluations but also overlooks serious concerns relating to the validity of the participants’ reports. Specifically, the participants’ reports are post-factum, which means that, due to memory limitations, their evaluations may not reflect the reality of the situation in which politeness occurred. Ultimately, offering only tentative conclusions undermines the validity of the discursive approach as a model of any theoretical import (*ibid*: 303-304).

In a similar vein, Terkourafi (2005) points out three issues, which according to her call into question the success of the discursive approach as an alternative theory to the classical approaches. The first point Terkourafi (2005) raises concerns the implications of

a lack of definition for first-order politeness. Terkourafi (2005) maintains that, lacking a definition, the discursivists offer no specific manner in which first-order politeness phenomena can be delimited. Moreover, if all what is examined is native speakers' prototypical conceptions of politeness, then the query is reduced to "an exercise in the lexical semantics of the lexeme 'politeness,'" which does not contribute to our understanding of politeness (*ibid*: 242). This is all the more problematic when researchers try to elicit first-order politeness conceptions from native speakers whose languages lack a one-to-one equivalent for the term "politeness." Terkourafi (2005) concludes that the result of such a practice is a second-order definition of politeness being unwittingly introduced as a first-order politeness definition. Overall, then, the distinction between first and second-order politeness in the discursive approach seems to be quite blurred.

As far as the discursivists' rejection of a predictive theory of politeness is concerned, Terkourafi (2005: 245) explains that this position is counter-intuitive since the fact that people can make metapragmatic comments on politeness is indicative of the existence of folk theories of politeness. However, Terkourafi's (2005) main concern is that the discursivists, by denying the possibility of theorizing both at the scientific and folk levels, eventually "do not in any way add up to an explanatory theory of the phenomena under study." All in all, Terkourafi (2005) suggests that the discursive researchers fail to advance the research on politeness in a tangible way.

However, despite the above-mentioned criticism concerning methodology, I believe that the practice of tapping into the participants' evaluations should not be discarded entirely. Taking into consideration possible disadvantages including the fact that reports may distort the reality of the situation, the participants' metapragmatic comments and evaluations can still be used for examining the core components of politeness, which are more or less universally valid (Haugh 2004). Moreover, as I am going to explain in the upcoming sections, third-wave politeness research attempts to solve the methodological problems outlined above by integrating multiple levels of understandings. Third-wave politeness research (Spencer-Oatey 2005; Terkourafi 2005; Haugh 2007;), therefore, is motivated by the need to address the shortcomings of the discursive approach and constitutes a middle ground between first- and second-wave theories in that it "strives to

find a compromise between formal and discursive approaches” (Baider et al. 2020), and the search for a theory of politeness is not given up.

## **2.4 Third-wave politeness research**

As discussed in the previous section, the discursive approaches focus on the production and evaluation of politeness from the perspective of lay users, in localized contexts. This is a reaction to the universalist orientation of first-wave frameworks, which is argued to be untenable given the variability and contestability of politeness (Eelen 2001; Watts 2003). However, as Kádár (2017) notes, despite its success, the discursive approach does not offer an alternative framework by which politeness can be studied at the macro-level. He further adds that although politeness can clearly be examined on the micro-level, as case studies, this does not mean that researchers should not try to create models that can account for the ways in which politeness is produced and evaluated (*ibid*: 4). Third-wave approaches basically retain much of the concepts that can be found in the discursive approaches in that they highlight the contested, contextual, and co-constructed nature of politeness (micro-level analysis), but they also aim to construct a model of politeness that has the ability to account for politeness evaluations and conceptions, similarly to the classical theories (macro-level analysis).

The discursive researchers have been successful in offering a more in-depth characterization of the nature of politeness that exceeds the limits of linguistic production to include evaluative and metapragmatic politeness (Eelen 2001). However, despite such efforts, the discursivists limit themselves to merely describing the various manifestations of politeness (expressive, evaluative, and metapragmatic) and the way they vary among individuals. This is done by interviewing participants in an attempt to tap into their first-order definitions, evaluations, and conceptions of politeness. In other words, neither of the discursive frameworks offers a model that can capture the way in which evaluations of and metapragmatic comments on politeness are made, by whom, and the contextual factors that accompany such processes. Moreover, with the exception of Locher’s (2006) comment on the role of expectations of appropriate behaviors in specific contexts in giving rise to politeness evaluations, one cannot find a thorough exploration of the nature of the cultural/societal norms that constitute the background for politeness evaluations.

In this respect, third-wave approaches attempt to go beyond descriptions to address the above-mentioned gaps that the discursive approaches have left unaddressed. According to Kádár and Haugh (2013), understanding the nature of politeness requires treating politeness as a social practice, which is situated not only relevant to the immediate context but also in relation to social space and time. As one of the major objectives of this dissertation is to explore the production, metapragmatic conceptions, and perceptions/evaluations of politeness in Syrian Arabic, in what follows I present in detail two of the third-wave approaches that, in my opinion, constitute clear and applicable frameworks that provide both conceptual and analytical tools for explaining the production and evaluation of politeness. The first is Kádár and Haugh's (2013) framework and the second is Grainger's (2018) neo-Brown and Levinson framework, useful in capturing the production of politeness as a co-constructed effort, which is influenced by the immediate linguistic and social context as well as role-relationships and the history between the participants-at-talk. I start with a discussion of Kádár and Haugh's (2013) model in the next section.

#### **2.4.1 Kádár and Haugh's (2013) framework: Evaluations of politeness and the moral order**

Kádár and Haugh's (2013) framework is based on the conception of politeness as a social practice and that evaluations of politeness are tied to social actions and meanings that participants can recognize, i.e., that politeness is not the property of a behavior or a linguistic form but results from the meanings associated with certain actions such as complaints, for instance. The model also departs from the premise that politeness is an evaluation of verbal and non-verbal behavior, and Kádár and Haugh (2013) provide a detailed account for what it means for politeness to be a personal evaluation, which has been left relatively unexplored in previous theories. They explain that in the lay sense, an evaluation involves casting people or relationships into a specific category, and assigning them a category-related value by referring to a "normative scale or frame of reference" (Kádár and Haugh 2013: 61). Valenced categories refer to shared common knowledge among participants about people and expectations about their behaviors in context. Valency, in turn, encompasses a whole range of emotive labels such as good/bad,



appropriate/inappropriate, polite/impolite, etc. Finally, evaluations appeal to a set of norms as a point of reference against which people's social actions and meanings are evaluated.

With respect to norms, the discursive approach has only touched upon the matter without further attempts to explain the nature of those norms or pin down the process by which norms are invoked in evaluations of politeness. Third-wave analysts, in contrast, explore the nature of these norms in detail. Kádár and Haugh (2013) characterize norms, or the moral order as they label it, in relation to a definition of politeness taken from Culpeper (2011). Politeness is an attitude, based on positive beliefs, about people's behavior in social contexts, which is articulated by recourse to a set of linguistic labels or evaluators such as *considerate* and *courteous*.

Kádár and Haugh (2013) take up each part of the definition and further elaborate on it to clarify the nature of the moral order. First, beliefs that inform a positive evaluation of politeness are born out of a set of expectations/expectancies about the sort of appropriate behavior, situated in context, which people expect others to uphold. Those sets of expectancies regarding others people's behaviors constitute the moral order. This leads to the second aspect of the moral order, which is the fact that it is socially grounded. What this means is that members of a group hold themselves and others accountable for social actions in relation to a moral order, and failure to abide by the expected behaviors which constitute the moral order results in sanctions and other real-life consequences such as being considered an outsider or impolite. Finally, the moral order is closely connected to the set of linguistic evaluators that are available to members of the same group and which they resort to in making politeness evaluations. In this regard, Kádár and Haugh (2013) warn that the fact that the same linguistic evaluators are available to group members should not be taken to mean that the evaluators have the same meaning for each member. Thus, it will be very important to tease out the meanings of these evaluators and the moral orders that underpin them. To sum up the above discussion, the overall picture about the connection between politeness evaluations and the moral order is as follows: politeness evaluations derive from the set of expectancies about other people's behaviors in context, which in turn form the essence of the moral order (*ibid*: 93-94).

To make the above-discussion about the moral order less abstract, I cite here an example of an evaluative moment from Kádár (2017). The example is an exchange between an elderly woman and a man, who has been having, up until the moment of the elderly woman's intervention, a rather heated and public argument with his girlfriend.

(4) A couple is arguing in the park. Bystanders overhear the argument but seem conflicted over intervention. An elderly female bystander decides to intervene.

1. Boyfriend: Stop crying. Shut up!
2. Elderly female: Hey buddy! Cool it!
3. Boyfriend: Ma'am, can you just let us do my own thing? It's my girlfriend. Can you just leave us alone?
4. Elderly female: No. That's not how you treat someone. How about I call the cops?

According to Kádár (2017), the (im)politeness evaluative moment arises as follows: the elderly woman's intervention is motivated by her appeal to the category of treating others fairly (that's not how you treat someone). The woman assigns the man's behavior a negative valency, evidenced by her warning (how about I call the cops?), which seems to indicate her evaluation of the man's behavior as a breach of the moral order, which is constituted of the expectation that people should treat each other fairly and well. Since the man's behavior is a breach of the moral order, it is open to an evaluation as impolite. On the other hand, the woman does not seem to evaluate her own intervention as impolite since it is motivated by her desire to restore the "normative flow of things," which justifies her intervention (*ibid*: 7).

Kádár and Haugh's (2013) framework does not only offer a more in-depth explanation of the moral order. The model is set to be a framework by which politeness can be studied holistically and from multi-disciplinary perspectives/methodologies. In order for this to happen, it needs to be acknowledged that there are indeed multiple perspectives from which politeness can be viewed and evaluated, whether by participants or analysts. Kádár and Haugh (2013) suggest that a first step in this direction is to

reconceptualize the first/second-order politeness distinction and to extend it beyond a two-way dichotomy of lay people vs. scientist understandings.

#### **2.4.2 Kádár and Haugh (2013): Revisiting the first/second-order politeness distinction**

According to Kádár and Haugh (2013), a distinction between first- and second-order politeness that refers to folk/analyst understandings, respectively, is an over-simplification and glosses over particular situations in which researchers themselves may be participants in the politeness evaluative moment. The difficulty arises in teasing out the dual role of the researcher as both participant and analyst, and a simplistic distinction in such cases may not be viable anymore. Kádár and Haugh's (2013) framework attempts to circumvent this clash between the two perspectives, which they argue is a natural conflict given the object of study: politeness. Kádár and Haugh (2013) consider politeness a given part of our social reality, and similarly to any social reality, there are different perspectives of viewing politeness and trying to understand it. Therefore, it makes sense to talk about understandings of politeness rather than a single understanding. In order to do that, Kádár and Haugh (2013) take the first/second distinction a step further and offer a more nuanced view of the distinction.

In their framework, first- and second-order politeness assume deeper levels of analysis than simply a lay/analyst dichotomy. According to Kádár and Haugh (2013), the distinction is between the perspective of the user (first-order) and that of the observer (second-order). Each order involves a network of interwoven perspectives that must be taken into consideration if a full picture of the understandings of politeness is to be obtained. As far as the user, or first-order politeness, is concerned, four perspectives arise in relation to participation in the evaluations of politeness, on one hand, and to expectations about what counts as polite, non-polite, and impolite, on the other hand. Evaluations of politeness could be made by immediate and actual participants in the politeness incident (perspective 1) and/or by meta-participants, who are indirectly involved in the evaluative moment. For example, viewers of talk shows represent a second perspective as meta-participants. Since evaluations of politeness are made by appealing to a moral order in any relational network or society, two further perspectives are relevant. Firstly, there is the emic perspective based on the moral and social expectations held by members of the society who

are insiders to the moral order. Secondly, there is the etic perspective, which is held by outsiders to the moral order but who, nevertheless, adhere to their own moral order.

Kádár and Haugh (2013) also propose four loci for understanding second-order politeness or the observer's perspective, relevant to observations and conceptualization of politeness. Lay members are always involved in observing politeness in a casual and spontaneous manner, which constitutes the lay observers' perspective. Similarly, there is the perspective of the analysts, who engage in systematic observations of politeness as they study the phenomenon. Conceptualizations of politeness, or accounts proposed as a way for understanding behaviors as polite or not, constitute two perspectives as well. The first is the way lay members try to explain politeness and account for why and how people may be (im)polite. This is labelled the folk-theoretic accounts of politeness. The second type is concerned with principled and rationalized accounts of human behaviors as polite or not, shared by scientists. Kádár and Haugh (2013) refer to this as theoretical understandings of politeness.

The advantages of this framework, according to Kádár and Haugh (2013), is that it explicitly enables researchers to account for how and why politeness evaluations differ even among members of the same social group. They also explain that not all the perspectives will be relevant and only specific ones are going to be salient at a given time. Furthermore, both perspectives might be present in one and the same person. The framework offers analytical and terminological tools to focus the subject of analysis and make it clear at all levels of the analytical process which perspective is being played out. This framework, then, builds on the discursive approach and complements it: whereas the discursive approach made it possible to view politeness in a different light and emphasized the various aspects of politeness, this approach provides an applicable model by which the different manifestations can be methodologically examined. Therefore, Kádár and Haugh's (2013) analysis will be followed in the examination of the evaluations and perceptions in this dissertation. As this model will be followed in the analysis of the data, in the next few sub-sections, I present an overview of studies and examples that illustrate how the afore-discussed perspectives and concepts can be operationalized in the analysis of politeness data that arise in different contexts.

#### **2.4.2.1 First-order perspectives: participant and meta-participant understandings**

Kádár and Haugh (2013) argue that evaluations of politeness that arise in context are not only tied to the perspective of the immediate participants but that different evaluations may arise from the perspective of meta-participants. They note that participants, and by extension meta-participants, have different participation status at any given discourse context. A basic distinction is drawn between what they label ratified participants and unratified participants. Ratified participants are those that are directly present in interaction, regardless of whether they are the direct addressees or side-participants. Ratified participants are held accountable for what they say and have the responsibility to respond to what they receive. Unratified participants, on the other hand, are all those participants that may, due to physical proximity, be able to listen/hear the conversation without being part of it. For example, in a group of friends sitting in a bar, ratified participants would be the friends, and unratified participants may be bar tenders and other customers who may hear the conversation. Such potential hearers are unratified because they are not expected to contribute to the conversation nor are they held morally accountable for their contributions. Unratified participants may be by-standers, those people, who are expected to be able to hear parts of the talk but are not ratified to contribute. There are also overhearers; listener-ins are overhearers, but ratified participants are aware of the fact that they might listen to at least part of the talk. The other type of unratified overhearers are the eavesdroppers, who are secretly following the conversation (Kádár and Haugh 2013: 88). Different participation statuses may have an influence on the way politeness is evaluated. In the next sub-section, I explore how another first-order distinction can be used to tease out differences in evaluations of politeness. Namely, the emic and the etic views of participants and meta-participants can lead to completely divergent views of politeness.

#### **2.4.2.2 First-order perspectives: emic/etic understandings and the moral order**

Evaluations of politeness consist of holding a positive belief about the behavior of others in a social context and, in some cases, voicing that belief by resorting to a set of language-specific articulators. It has also been made clear that such attitudes are not held in a vacuum and that the various judgments that people make about others' behaviors appeal to a moral

order. The moral order is comprised of a set of expectancies that are based on what kind of behavior is acceptable or not in a specific situation. The sum of such expectations may be shared on three levels: the localized norms, in which expectancies are shared among members of a small groups such as families and friends. Next, there is the organizational level in which expectancies are shared by larger-scale groups such as communities of practice, and finally, there is the level of societal and cultural norms. Kádár and Haugh (2013) note that the moral order of each level is embedded within the moral order of the level above.

Emic understandings appeal to conceptual structures and categories that are meaningful to people who belong to a certain group. In contrast, etic understandings refer to judgments and appeals based on schemata and categories that are meaningful to outside groups (Kádár and Haugh 2013: 95-96). An adequate account of politeness should take the perspective of both emic and etic understandings, in cases where these understandings are relevant and available.

Chang and Haugh's (2011) study on the perceptions of an intercultural apology demonstrates well how emic and etic perspectives influence evaluations of politeness. The study concerns an apology which was issued from an Australian man (Wayne) to a Taiwanese woman (Joyce). Briefly putting it, each of the informants evaluated the politeness of the apology from his/her emic perspective, which implies that for each one of them the other has an etic perspective. The clash of perspectives resulted in the apology being evaluated as both polite and impolite, depending on whose perspective the evaluation is anchored in. However, Chang and Haugh (2011) not only consulted Joyce for her evaluations of the apology, they also appealed to the metapragmatic commentaries of lay Taiwanese informants, which constitute a second-order perspective and offered invaluable insights into why and how such perceptions arose.

#### **2.4.2.3 Second-order perspectives: Lay members' observations**

As Kádár and Haugh (2013) explain, an attempt to account for politeness concerns not only the first-order perspectives of participants and emic/etic understandings, but should also appeal to a second-order perspective. This is comprised of observations made by lay-people vs. the analysts, on the one hand, and of conceptualizations made lay-people (folk-

theoretic) and by scientists, on the other hand. In explicating the role of lay-people's observations, Kádár and Haugh (2013) note that such observations are closely tied to emic and etic appeals to a moral order. However, these observations basically draw on the people's understandings of people, relationships, and behavior, which underlie their overall conceptions of the moral order.

In order to explain how that is operationalized in the analysis of politeness, I go back to Chang and Haugh's (2011) study. Chang and Haugh (2011) were interested in investigating whether the differences between Joyce's and Wayne's emic and etic perspectives, which gave rise to their clashing evaluations of politeness, are idiosyncratic or more culturally-ingrained. Therefore, Taiwanese native speakers and native speakers of Australian English were asked to participate in the experiment and assess the politeness of Wayne's apology on a 5-point Likert scale.

The results showed that the differences are indeed not idiosyncratic and that there are visible differences in the evaluations of the two groups of native speakers; on the one hand, the Australians perceived the apology as not impolite. On the other hand, the Taiwanese group evaluated the apology as impolite. As Chang and Haugh (2011) conclude, the participants' evaluations suggest that they hold the same evaluations towards the apology as those of Wayne and Joyce themselves, which were verbally articulated in their phone conversation.

To further investigate the underlying norms that led the two groups to give such divergent evaluations, Chang and Haugh (2011) invited the participants for follow-up interviews. These interviews constitute what Kádár and Haugh (2013) refer to as lay members' observations. The follow-up interviews showed that the different evaluations can indeed be ascribed to intercultural differences. Specifically, even though the two groups associated politeness with sincerity, the Australians and the Taiwanese had very different perceptions of the connotations of sincerity. Whereas the Australians seem to equate sincerity with friendliness/attentiveness, interviews with the Taiwanese show that they associate sincerity with the act of repeating the apology more than once.

As already established, the interviews are a way for the researchers to obtain the observations of the participants', who are lay members of their respective cultures. The

discussion above shows how these observations are important for two main reasons. First, the lay members' observations supported the researchers' initial analysis of a diverging evaluation indexed by Wayne and Joyce's verbal behavior during the phone conversation. The second reason, and the most important one, is that Chang and Haugh (2011), through such observations, obtained empirical evidence in support of the argument that the evaluations of Wayne and Joyce are not idiosyncratic but can be ascribed to higher-order societal/cultural norms. Overall, then, the lay members' observations offered the researchers insights into the underlying moral order(s) that give(s) rise to such diverging evaluations. The next and final perspective, as sketched out in Kádár and Haugh's (2013) model, is concerned with lay members' conceptualizations.

#### **2.4.2.4 Second-order perspectives: Lay members' conceptualizations**

This last important locus in the analysis of politeness, folk conceptualizations, is contrasted with scientific understandings. Folk-theoretic conceptualizations are closely connected to emic understandings of the moral order (Kádár and Haugh 2013). Tapping into people's prototypical views about (im)politeness can be found in many studies that use interviews or self-report questionnaires as a tool to elicit native speakers' opinions about a specific phenomenon (see Barros Garcia and Terkourafi 2014; Fukushima 2009; Pinto 2011).

One of the studies that outline how folk conceptualizations can afford better understandings of the moral order, in particular, and (im)politeness, in general, is Fukushima and Haugh's (2014) study. This study explicitly mentions Kádár and Haugh's (2013) framework and argues that lay people's metapragmatic comments about specific values can offer invaluable insights about politeness/impoliteness in a specific language/culture. In order to show this, Fukushima and Haugh (2014) take up the concept of consideration, which underlies notions of politeness in many languages including English, Japanese, and Mandarin Chinese. They argue, however, that what counts as "consideration" varies cross-linguistically and cross-culturally and propose that analyzing folk conceptualizations of attentiveness, empathy, and anticipatory inference in Japanese and Mandarin Chinese will advance their understanding of how the notion of "consideration" is situated relative to politeness/impoliteness in the respective languages/cultures (*ibid*: 167). The relationship between attentiveness and consideration is



simply put as follows: attentiveness is a form of pre-emptive offering of material and/or immaterial things that are of benefit for the addressee. Such offerings demonstrate the offerer's ability to understand the needs of the addressee (empathize) by putting him/herself in the addressee's position.

The results of the study indicated similarities and differences both inter- and intra-culturally, and, overall, the results show how the participants' folk conceptualizations, which were elicited via interviews, helped clarify how attentiveness, empathy, and anticipatory inference relate to politeness/impoliteness concerns. The metapragmatic comments also helped the researchers tease out cultural nuances that underlie the participants' understandings of the moral order by allowing the researchers to tap into the participants' emic understandings regarding the notion of attentiveness. In effect, a better understanding of the moral order advances the analysts' understanding of politeness/impoliteness with reference to a particular language and/or culture. However, Fukushima and Haugh (2014: 177) warn that despite this usefulness, folk-theoretic conceptualization can only guide the conceptualizations of the analysts to a certain extent and that they need to be complemented by analyses of the participants' behavior in relation to attentiveness in actual interactions.

In the review presented above, I aimed to show how Kádár and Haugh's (2013) framework can be applied to the analysis of politeness from different perspectives. However, as can be seen, this model best serves in the analysis of the perceptions and evaluations of politeness. However, since this work aims to examine expressions of politeness as well, it will be important to choose a suitable framework that offers an equally principled examination of the production of politeness by native speakers of Syrian Arabic. Grainger's (2018) neo-Brown and Levinson framework, which I find to be especially beneficial in teasing out the respective roles of the analyst and the participants in the analysis of production data, is one such framework. The details of this model will be outlined in the next section.

#### **2.4.3 Grainger's (2018) neo-Brown and Levinson framework**

Grainger's (2018) neo-Brown and Levinson's framework is a recent instantiation of neo-politeness approaches. Despite the diversity of these frameworks, they all emphasize the

need to analyze politeness within an interactional model of communication such as rapport management (Spencer-Oatey 2002, 2005, 2008) and conversation analysis (Haugh 2007). Moreover, these frameworks advocate the need for incorporating the role of both participants and analysts in the process of evaluating and analyzing politeness (see Holmes et al. 2012), taking multiple levels of context into consideration by resorting to sociolinguistic concepts such as community of practice (Mills 2003; Holmes et al. 2012) and ethnographically-informed interactional analyses (Haugh 2007: 311) in order to tease out how multiple levels of context and role identities, interact with the expression and evaluation of politeness.

As will be seen in the ensuing discussion of Grainger's (2018) framework, it has many parallels with Holmes et al.'s (2012) neo-politeness approach in that both analyze politeness interactionally, referring to many levels of context, and taking both emic and etic perspectives into account. However, since this dissertation addresses politeness through the lens of the apology speech act, I argue that Grainger's (2018) framework is better suited for the analysis of speech acts from an interactional perspective for the following reasons. First, being a neo-Brown and Levinson framework, besides retaining the social factors of distance, power, and the ranking of imposition in a modified form that does not assume that they have an absolute value, the framework has speech acts as the core unit of analysis. As Grainger (2018: 22) states, speech acts, not other elements, are more useful units in analyzing talk in interaction because they embody the idea of language use as a social practice. Second, Grainger (2018)'s framework offers a more nuanced treatment of the sequential organization of talk, allowing the analyst to capture how evaluations of politeness arise in unfolding turns, rather than larger chunks of discourse. The latter is the focus of the analysis in Holmes et al. (2012). The focus on speech acts as the core units of analysis and the emphasis on a turn-by-turn analysis of interaction, by referring to the notion of uptake as first suggested by Austin (1962), fits in well with Kádár and Haugh's (2013) framework; as will be remembered from the detailed discussion of Kádár and Haugh (2013) in the previous sections, they refer to speech acts as part of shared social meanings that participants appeal to in evaluating politeness. Speech acts such "complaints" and "criticism" embody negative social meanings, which in turn may give rise to negative evaluations of politeness (*ibid*: 65). For these two main reasons, I have

chosen to follow Grainger's (2018) framework in my analysis of the expression of politeness in this study.

Grainger (2018) argues that much of the development in politeness research has been motivated by a reaction to the classical theories. However, she further notes that the discursive perspective, in its focus on the localized meanings of politeness as seen by users, runs the danger of conflating the roles of the user and the analyst. Thus, Grainger's (2018) neo-Brown and Levinson approach is a proposal that allows the researcher to analyze the data based on the observed input of the participants only in so far as the data affords him/her such an analysis. In other words, Grainger's (2018) model provides the necessary tools for the analyst to account for the production of politeness in a principled manner and at the same time base his/her analyses on the perspective of the users, which can be observed in the data.

Despite B&L's (1987) theory being discredited by the discursivists, Grainger (2018) claims that their model is still capable of providing a wealth of terminological and analytical tools that are suitable for the analysis of a variety of politeness and speech act-related phenomena. However, for a proper application, Grainger (2018) suggests a modification of the theory along two main lines: taking the role of context into account and treating interaction, not as static, but as a sequential phenomenon, which is influenced by interlocking forms of contexts.

As far as context is concerned, since classical theories of politeness are based on the treatment of politeness in isolated utterances, the role of context is largely ignored, despite acknowledgment that meaning may stretch over more than one utterance (Grainger 2018: 21). Furthermore, B&L's original model proposes that the social variables of distance, power, and the ranking of the imposition of the FTA are computed mechanically in the choice of the appropriate politeness strategy, which shows that those variables are taken to be static entities. Thus, according to Grainger (2018), the new approach, while still benefitting from the values of power, distance, and the ranking of imposition in assessing face-threat, must take heed of the fact that the social roles and relationships of the participants are constantly defined and redefined as the interaction unfolds. Moreover, the model must show that utterances and strategies do not have fixed meanings but that

meanings are constructed and negotiated among participants, who make use of linguistic resources to negotiate their respective positions and communicative goals during interaction. In order for this to happen, Grainger (2018) considers it useful to use classic pragmatic principles and concepts such as speech acts, which are based on the idea that language use is essentially a form of social action, and the notion of uptake, as found in Austin (1962). The notion of uptake is necessary as it allows the researcher to show that meanings, the production and evaluation of politeness included, are contingent on the way the hearer receives and interprets the input of the speaker. This point is in line with third-wave stance that politeness is a co-constructed interactional endeavor that is dependent on the roles of both the speaker and the hearer (Haugh 2007).

The nature of talk is another aspect that, according to Grainger (2018), needs to be addressed in her neo-Brown and Levinson model. The new model must treat talk as a sequential phenomenon. The sequentiality of talk means that the content and understanding of each turn depends on the content of the previous turn and sets the scene for how the content of the next turn is going to be. The idea of sequentiality is addressed as well by Kádár and Haugh (2013), who maintain that evaluations of politeness are sequential in nature. Talk, in Grainger's (2018), model is also influenced by layers of contexts. The contexts that Grainger outlines are the linguistic context (sequential turns-at-talk) and the social and cultural context in which the interaction may appear. By proposing multiple contexts, Grainger (2018) suggests that face is not only tied to interpersonal identities but can also be activated by considerations of institutional identities and role relationships, which are not static but are constantly negotiated and defined in interaction.

Grainger's proposal that interaction is influenced not only by the immediate context but also by institutional role relationships and the wider social and cultural contexts has clear parallels with Kádár and Haugh's (2013) analysis of the moral order as situated relative to three levels of group norms and relationships. What Grainger (2018), on the one hand, and Kádár and Haugh (2013), on the other hand, drive at is that analyses of interaction and the norms that give rise to evaluations of politeness, respectively, can only be made with reference to both micro and macro-contexts or relational networks in Kádár and Haugh's (2013) terminology.

Since the model is a modification of the classical theory, Grainger (2018) argues that the notions of negative and positive face should not be discarded. They have cross-cultural applicability and can be used formally to account for the way linguistic choices are made in any encounter and to explain how people negotiate their respective stances in talk and how that is related to issues of identity and institutional roles. However, the use of face and the strategies as explanatory tools should be in parallel with a consideration that face-work operates in multiple levels of group relations (individual, institutional, and societal) and that roles and relationships are not static; they are defined and redefined during communication (*ibid* 2018: 23).

According to Grainger (2018), the neo-Brown and Levinson approach is in tune with third-wave politeness research. It focuses on the sequential aspects of talk and the co-constructed nature of politeness as a mutual effort between the speaker and the hearer, whose understandings, both, are relevant for a successful understanding of meanings in context. Moreover, in its focus on the immediate linguistic context, in addition to the overarching social and cultural contexts, the model offers a way in which politeness evaluations and production can be captured relative to both the micro and macro-contexts. Thus, the model aims to move beyond the micro-level of politeness analysis that is characteristic of the discursive wave and into the realm of macro-theorization which is in line with the proposals of Terkourafi (2005) and Haugh (2007). Additionally, Grainger (2018) argues that facework, when adapted in the above discussed manner, is a universal analytical tool. In this way, by using the concepts of face and the strategies, Grainger (2018) opens the door for an analysis of politeness that is both intra- and inter-linguistic/cultural and may contribute to an understanding of politeness at the macro-level (Kádár 2017). Finally, the model does not focus on the intentions of the speaker but seeks to account for the ways in which participants use linguistic resources in interaction to achieve communicative goals.

All in all, in line with Grainger's (2018) proposal of the applicability of a neo-Brown and Levinson framework, I will be using the classical concepts of the theory, which enable me to formally account for the motivations that underlie the various politeness patterns in the data. Moreover, I will be able to show the discursivity of both politeness

and apologies through locating instances of politeness at work. This will be done by analyzing the input of the speaker and the uptake of the hearer and how this is shaped by their respective role relations. Before I conclude this chapter, however, I intend to demonstrate how Grainger (2018) used her framework in the analysis of a discursive struggle over the definition of a situation in an institutional setting, the courtroom.

#### **2.4.3.1 Application on courtroom data**

As already established, the aim of this framework is to show that the classical theory of B&L (1987) can still offer adequate analytical tools that can be applied to the analysis of conversational and naturally-occurring data. It was shown that Grainger (2018) also asserts the importance of introducing some modifications that are meant to address the problems of the classical theory. Specifically, her framework proposes ways in which the role of context can be properly integrated into the analysis by broadening the sense of context to include not only the linguistic context but also the broader institutional and/or societal context and past relations that hold among the participants. Moreover, the framework advocates a reconsideration of the role of the social factors of status and distance by arguing that they are not to be taken as static factor, but rather as negotiable values that are used in the process of defining the situation. Finally, Grainger (2018) proposes the adoption of “facework,” following Watts (2003) and Locher (2006), instead of just orienting to face considerations. In this way all aspects of face-maintenance, enhancement, threat, and even damage, can be captured by negative and positive facework.

Grainger (2018) applies her neo-Brown and Levinson approach in the analysis of an institutional context, the courtroom. Grainger (2018) uses courtroom data from a court case involving a judge and a teenaged defendant, who share an ethnic background. The defendant was detained on charges of drug possession. As Grainger (2018) explains, typically, the highly institutionalized context of a trial is associated with strictly defined role relations, has expected and precise norms of behavior, and marked power differentials associated with the institutional hierarchy: the judge has the most power and almost dominates speaking time, which markedly contrasts with the defined role of the defendant, who has the least amount of institutional power. Through a meticulous analysis of the exchange between the defendant and the judge, Grainger (2018) shows how both

participants draw on different resources, both linguistic and non-linguistic, in the process of defining the situation and their respective role relationships. The analysis also reveals how this redefinition of the traditional courtroom dynamics results in a discursive struggle in which the judge resorted to asserting his institutional power and which caused the defendant serious consequences, as a result of her misinterpretation of the situation and the stance indexed by the judge.

For the purposes of this discussion, I will only refer to the most relevant aspects of the analysis through which Grainger (2018) demonstrates how the judge and the defendant redefined their typical role relations, and, thus, redefined status/distance configurations. I will also explore the example exchanges that Grainger (2018) uses to explain how turns and linguistic units that are traditionally and straightforwardly labelled as either negative or positive politeness in the original theory of B&L (1987), can be oriented to in diverging ways in the context of naturally-occurring discourse.

Grainger (2018) highlights the importance of context in the process of interpretation and talks of different and interacting layers of context. The analysis of the courtroom data shows clearly how the clash between the norms of the institutionalized context and the context that arises because of the interactants' shared background sets the scene for the discursive struggle. Moreover, Grainger (2018) effectively draws on non-linguistic cues in her analysis to demonstrate how different implicatures may be drawn based on an inconsistency between the linguistic utterances and the paralinguistic cues, whether they be body language or laughter.

At the beginning of the exchange, the judge proceeds with the conventional forms of address in courtrooms, addressing the defendant with bald on-record utterances such as "you're being charged with..." which in this context do not constitute face-threat to the defendant. However, as the judge later expresses his ignorance at drug-related jargon and laughs it off, allowing the defendant to share the humor, he redefines the context of the courtroom as accommodating light-heartedness and solidarity. This sets the scene for later attempts by the defendant to continue to define the context as such, ignoring the expected norms of behavior and the formality of the situation.

As the judge is in the process of deciding whether the defendant qualifies for pre-trial services, the court official asks about her possessions, to which she replies that she has a lot of jewelry. The clerk goes on to ask about how much she thinks the jewelry is worth. At this point of the exchange, the defendant laughs, which indicates her orientation to the situation as informal. The judge, however, appears to rebuke her by asking her to take matters seriously as “they are not in a club now.” The defendant replies by saying that she is being serious but that the judge made her laugh. The following extract shows this part of the exchange:

(5) m: what do you own?

d: aha I own a lot of jewellery alright?

[...]

j: well how much would you say your jewellery’s worth?

d: hehehe he a hehehe

j: ai it’s not a joke you know we are not in a- we are not in a club now

[...]

j: we are not in a club be serious about it.

d: I am serious about it. but it you just made me laugh

Grainger (2018) argues that the above example is an instance of a conflict between local norms and the norms of the courtroom setting. In normal contexts, telling someone that s/he made you laugh is open to an interpretation as positive politeness. However, in this context, the defendant telling the judge that he is making her laugh may be interpreted as questioning the role/power of the judge who is responsible for keeping things in order in the courtroom. This incidence is further evidence of the defendant’s attempt to redefine the norms of the situation, which is inappropriate.

When the judge returns to the question of how much the jewelry is worth, the defendant continues to disregard the norms of the context by giving vague answers. She replies that she has “Rick Ross” jewelry, which is a valuable brand. Grainger (2018) explains that the defendant not only flouts the maxim of quality but that she also flouts the maxim of quantity by giving too much information. This information, moreover, is not in



her best interest if she is to be eligible for pre-trial services. At this point the judge asks her whether she has been using drugs prior to the court proceedings taking place. He says:

(6) J: “Mam? Have you had any kind of drugs in the last 24 hours?”

d: “Actually no.”

J: “Actually no?”

According to Grainger (2018: 30), the judge shifts the topic and uses “mam” in an attempt to attend to the defendant’s negative face and with “the institutional goal of returning the tone of the interaction to a more formal and professional one.” As can be seen from the judge’s reaction to her answer by repeating “actually no” in a rising intonation, he is trying to indicate the inappropriateness of the defendant’s answer, once again. Moreover, he seems to institute his powerful position by taking an evaluative stance on her response. The overall upshot of the defendant’s failure to provide straightforward answers and to comply with the appropriate norms of behavior is that the judge denies her pre-trial services and exercises institutional power by issuing bald on-record commands, as in the following:

(7) J: “You can go and sell your jewellery.”

J: “Ain’t gonna be no P.T.S.”

The final instance, which I think is worth mentioning, and which clearly reveals how the two participants, at this point, are struggling over the definition of the situation, is the use of an in-group leave-taking term “adios.” After the judge announces that the defendant is not eligible for pre-trial services and asks her to hire her own lawyer, he sets the bail for 5000 dollars and dismisses her by saying “bye, bye,” to which she replies “adios?” and proceeds to leave the courtroom. This response goes very wrong as the judge is obviously irritated by the answer. He calls for the defendant to come back and raises the bail to 10 thousand dollars. Here’s the exchange:

(8) J: Bye? bye.

d: adios.

J: (begins smile, gaze left) heheheheh come back Mam.

J: come back,

J: come back.

J: gimme the paper again.

J: count one. Will be ten thousand.

D: are you serious?

J: I'm serious. Adios.

What went wrong in this scenario is the result of a conflict between the defendant's orientation to the situation as light and solidarity-based, on the one hand, and the judge's mixed-signal attitude between being friendly and asserting his institutional role/power. The defendant's use of "adios" has two connotations: the first is that she is drawing on their shared ethnicity by using this Spanish leave-taking expression. The second connotation is that this expression is not only used by Hispanics but is also used playfully by speakers of other ethnicities. On top of that, as Grainger (2018) explains, the defendant seems to misinterpret the judge's "bye bye" as a true leave-taking expression where it was actually intended as a command. Thus, her "adios" is not only playful but also functionally inappropriate. Grainger (2018) draws on the judge's use of "adios" at the end of the conversation to demonstrate his negative evaluation of the defendant's previous use of the term. By doing this, Grainger is drawing on the role of context and participant uptake (Austin 1962) to analyze the unfolding conversation.

The final stage at which the struggle reaches its culmination is when the defendant totally disregards the proper forms of behavior inside a courtroom, and as an expression of anger, gives the judge the middle finger and hurls a "fuck you" at him. The judge then holds her in contempt and sentences her to 30 days in prison. Grainger (2018) uses the following to show this:

(9) d: ((begins to walk away, gaze unknown, 'flips the bird' with left hand, gaze back to camera,

d: fuck you

The analysis of the case study above shows that the participants were not constrained by the context of the courtroom in their use of multiple verbal and non-verbal strategies in their interaction. Rather, the participants drew on those resources to redefine the context and their role relationships, which in this case did not end well. Additionally, it shows at the end that the in-group term "adios," which, out of context and in the classical

B&L (1987) framework, would be interpreted as a positive politeness strategy, is actually negatively evaluated as a face-threat by the judge. Finally, what the analysis succeeds at showing that the factors of status, distance, and even the institutional setting, are not static values but are manipulated and redefined during the participants' discursive struggle to approach the situation. This is all done with Grainger still making use of classical ideas such as Gricean implicatures and face-related politeness strategies.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to explore the development of politeness theories and show how this three-wave development was motivated by the need to address the problems in each wave of research and to advance the examination of politeness in different directions. As is clear, whereas the classical theories represent the linguistic pragmatics end of politeness research, the discursive wave constitutes a socio-cultural view of politeness. The most recent approaches, however, represent an attempt to combine the linguistic and the social-constructivist view of politeness in one macro-level model of analysis. In this chapter, I also aimed to show the advantages and disadvantages of each wave and the way my analysis of politeness will draw on the variety of approaches available. More specifically, my view is that a holistic examination of politeness cannot be made by couching analyses in the methodologies and concepts of one wave to the exclusion of the others but by making use of the theorizations and argumentations presented by each wave in as far as they are beneficial in accounting for the expressive, metapragmatic, and evaluative manifestations of politeness. It should be noted, however, that such frameworks, especially the third-wave approaches, despite being proposed for an analysis of politeness, are also suitable for the analysis of other interactional phenomena such as speech acts. In the next chapter, I will explore the details of the speech act of apology. I intend to show that the variety of ways in which apologies have been treated, whether from a taxonomy-based perspective or a more interactional, typological lens, are nevertheless compatible with contemporary and context-sensitive approaches to politeness.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE SPEECH ACT OF APOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to examine the speech act of apology. I start by reviewing traditional speech act theory before presenting two approaches to analyzing apologies; within an interactional typology, and the taxonomy-based perspective. I then explore the cross-cultural studies of speech act realization that were inspired by speech act theory. The connection between the speech act of apology and politeness with reference to the classical theories of politeness is also touched on. More importantly, however, I aim to show that recent developments in the field of politeness go hand in hand with developments in the way speech acts in general and apologies in particular are examined: both politeness and speech acts are discursive phenomena and the analysis of speech acts, which can benefit from both traditional taxonomies and more interactional typologies, also fits in well with the discursive scheme of research. I conclude the chapter by presenting a brief overview of speech acts and politeness research on Arabic dialects.

#### **3.2 Speech Act Theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1969)**

In his formulation of speech act theory, Austin's (1962) basic insight is that certain types of utterances, when said, perform an action and effectuate change in the world. He calls these utterances performatives, and explains that they evade a truth-conditional treatment. Rather, performatives are subject to felicity conditions, which must be upheld for the "happy" performance of the performative utterance.

Austin (1962) proposed that there are three levels of meaning by which utterances may be analyzed: the locutionary force of the utterance, which refers to the simple act of actually articulating the utterance, the illocutionary force of the utterance, which refers to the intended meaning of the utterance, and the perlocutionary force of the utterance, which is the real-world consequences of producing the utterance. For example, the following utterance is a statement that may, under specific contexts, have the illocutionary force of a request:

(1) It's cold in here.

The utterance is said to have a perlocutionary force if the hearer of this utterance interprets it as a request and closes the window/door.

Whereas Austin (1962) only talked about felicity conditions without going into details, Searle's (1969) contribution to the theory lies in his detailed analysis of felicity conditions and in his taxonomy of speech act types based on these conditions (Culpeper and Haugh 2014). According to Culpeper and Haugh (2014), Searle proposed five categories of speech act types based on a number of pragmatic factors the most important of which is the direction of fit, which concerns the relationship between the words in the utterance and the world. Searle's categories are as follows:

A. Declarations: naming, sentencing, baptizing.

(2) I sentence to you to ten years in prison.

B. Representatives: stating, affirming.

(3) She graduates at the end of this year.

C. Expressives: apologizing, thanking, congratulating.

(4) I apologize for keeping you waiting.

D. Commissives: promising, threatening, offering.

(5) I will get back to you as soon as I can.

E. Directives: commanding, suggesting, requesting.

(6) Go home.

Critiques to speech act theory have targeted Austin and Searle's claims that speech act categories are universal. Wierzbicka (1985: 173) explains that speech act theory is largely based on "English conversational strategies and Anglo-Saxon cultural values." For example, the rule that it is awkward to give flat imperatives or use explicit performatives is an English rule rather than a universal rule, as Searle (1979) claims; it does not apply to Polish, among other languages/cultures. The consequence of the universality claims is the failure of speech act theory to account for cross-cultural patterns of speech act production, which are rooted not only in the language but also in the cultural ethos of the speakers.

Edmondson (1981) has also criticized Austin and Searle's formulation of speech act theory. He argues that Austin's explanation of the conditions under which some illocutionary acts are performed fails to take into account that illocutionary acts are co-operative achievements between speaker and hearer. Edmondson also points out some problems in Searle's classification of speech acts; in brief Edmondson (1981) claims that the taxonomy is too broad and, hence, is unfit for the analysis of illocutionary acts in discourse. Furthermore, Searle's felicity conditions are not subject to inspection and are merely based on native-speaker intuitions. Most importantly for Edmondson, the notion of direct and indirect speech acts needs to be abandoned in favor of an analysis that recognizes the inherent "indeterminacy" of illocutionary acts. Such an indeterminacy is resolved by taking the sequential position in which illocutionary acts appear and the overall context of interaction into consideration in the process of interpretation. Edmondson's (1981: 20) overall conclusion is that the notion of illocutionary acts needs to be reconsidered in order for it to be properly applied in the analysis of discourse. For this purpose, Edmondson (1981) and Edmondson and House (1981) present the details of an interactional model of discourse analysis based on a more in-depth classification of illocutionary acts.

### **3.3 A model of discourse analysis: An interactional typology of speech acts**

Edmondson's (1981) basic insight is that communicative behavior is made of "both illocution and interaction" in that a speaker not only expresses his/her wishes, desires, intentions etc. (illocution) but also interacts with other participants, negotiating and achieving certain communicative goals (interaction) (*ibid*: 54). Thus, he sets out to present a model of discourse analysis that can capture these two aspects by relating interactional structure and linguistic behavior.

Edmondson (1981) presents a detailed overview of this suggested model with an exhaustive list of illocutionary acts (*ibid*: 140-152), both of which are also presented in Edmondson and House (1981), outlined in a slightly different terminology. According to Edmondson and House (1981), the interactional structure of discourse is composed of the following levels: the most basic unit of interactional structure is the interactional act, which forms the building block of interactional moves. Interactional moves may be built of more than one act. At least two interactional moves, put forward by two participants, form

exchanges. Exchanges are linked together to form phases, and finally, a series of phases make up an encounter. For the purposes of this dissertation, my discussion will center only on two levels of analysis; interactional acts and interactional moves, as using the full machinery of this interactional discourse model is more suited for analyzing long and extended episodes of interactions, which is not the case in this research as will be clear in the analysis of the data.

As already mentioned, interactional acts are the basic unit in Edmondson's (1981) and Edmondson and House's (1981) discourse model. However, before I outline the speech act typology of these models, I will first discuss the interactional structure on the level of interactional move. Simply putting it, a conversation is structured around four interactional moves: an interaction starts with a turn, which is labelled the Initiate, and in the most straightforward case, the Initiate elicits a Satisfy turn, which brings this minimalist exchange to its (positive) conversational outcome. However, an Initiate may be responded to by a Contra, or a rejection of its content. A Fourth possibility would be for an Initiate to be followed by a Counter. The main difference between a Contra and a Counter is that if the Contra is Satisfied, the original Initiate is withdrawn, resulting in a negative conversational outcome. However, if a Counter is Satisfied, this does not mean that the speaker of the Initiate is withdrawing the illocutionary act in the Initiate. In short, a Contra brings the conversation to a halt; a Counter attempts to change the conversational outcome to a result different from the one originally intended in the Initiate. The following example(s) illustrate the difference between a Contra and a Counter.

- (7) A: Like to come to my party tomorrow night? → Initiate  
       B: Can't, I'm afraid -- I've got something else on. → Contra  
       A: Oh, never mind, some other time perhaps. → Satisfy

In this example, it can be seen that B Contrasts A's invitation by rejecting it. A Satisfies that Contra in the next turn, which terminates the conversation. Thus, only a Satisfy brings the interaction to its conversational outcome (Edmondson 1981: 170). The following interaction shows that the function of Counters is to change the conversational outcome without the interaction necessarily resulting in the attempted change:

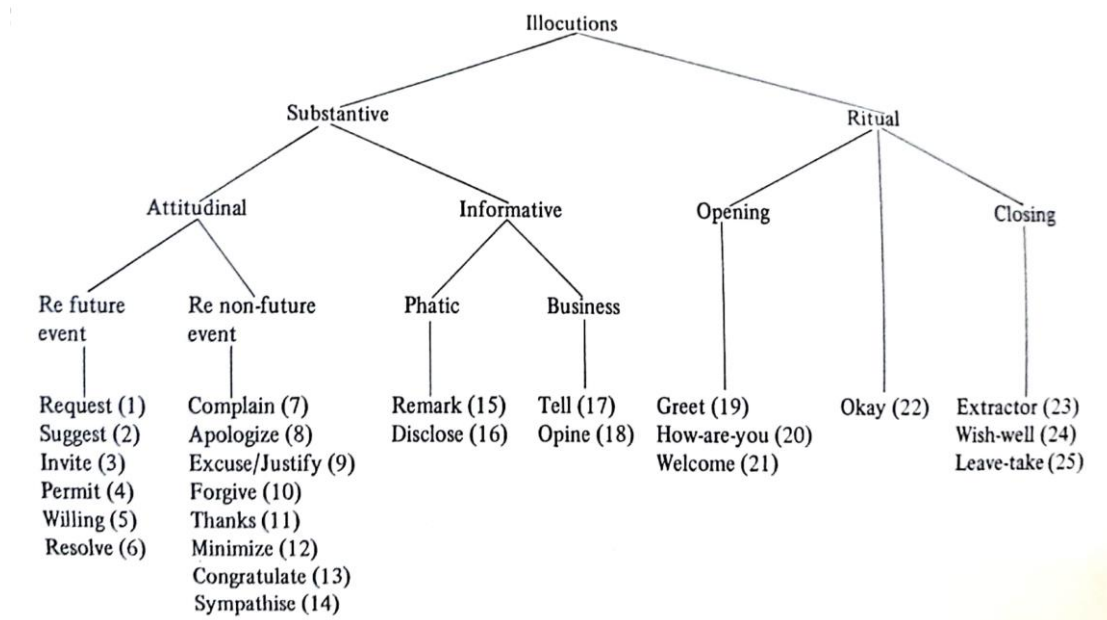
- (8) A: I think we should invite the whole family. → Initiate

B: Oh God, their kids are so loutish. → Counter  
 A: Yeah, I agree, they're pretty horrible, but you know, they did put up with our lot last time. → Satisfy/re-initiate  
 B: Oh God, all right, invite them then, and the bloody dog. → Satisfy

(Edmondson and House 1981:41)

In this exchange, we can see that B's response Counters A's Initiate. Although this Counter is itself Satisfied by A in the subsequent turn, A does not withdraw the initial Initiate (the proposed invitation), and she further re-presents the Initiate (re-initiate). B Satisfies the re-initiate, bringing the conversation to its communicative outcome.

As each interactional move is composed of at least one interactional act, Edmondson and House (1981) present an exhaustive typology of speech acts. They divide speech acts into two broad categories: substantive and ritual. Substantive speech acts, which are of most relevance to this researcher, are further divided into attitudinal speech acts, which express the speaker's desires with respect to some state of affairs, and informative speech acts, which are concerned with different types of information exchange between speaker and hearer. Each category is further divided into sub-categories, as can be seen in Figure 3.1 below.



**Figure 3.1 Interactional speech act typology (Edmondson and House 1981: 86)**



Edmondson and House (1981) explain the meanings of the above illocutions. For example, a Tell concerns the transmission of information that is assumed to be of interest to the hearer and which is taken for granted to be true as it is based on factual information. On the other hand, in an Opine the speaker provides a piece of information that reflects his/her opinion and evaluation of some event. The Opine is based on the speaker's subjective experience and knowledge. Similarly, a remark is a general utterance that is devoid of any non-phatic substance and aims to increase familiarity between the interlocutors. A disclose is autobiographical in nature and concerns personal information that the speaker wishes to share with the hearer.

Most importantly in relation to this research, according to Edmondson and House (1981), the main aim of apologies, which are H-supportive, self-demeaning illocutions, is to "placate the hearer and to restore thereby one's own social status, following a real or potential offense" (*ibid*: 153). As far as their interactional function is concerned, Apologies can function as Initiate, Contra, and Counter moves. Moreover, apologies can be further augmented by incorporating supportive illocutions such as Excuses/Justifies and compensatory Offers. Edmondson and House (1981) also maintain that apologies can be "strategic disarming" moves in the sense that they anticipate an offense, in which case they are more ritual illocutions. As will be seen in the discussion below, Edmondson and House's (1981) analysis of apologies has clear parallels in later taxonomy-based approaches such as Blum-Kulka et al. (1989).

In addition to the different illocutionary acts that form interactional moves, Edmondson and House (1981) maintain that in order to achieve communicative goals, speakers use conversational strategies, which are turns that index the speakers' anticipation of the addressee's possible next move and function as "supportive moves." The supportive moves can be Grounders, which explain why an illocutionary act was made, Expanders, which provide further information related to the illocutionary act, and Sweeteners, which can be used to lower the imposition of requests by addressing possible objections to the request. Finally, Disarmers minimize the effect of speech acts such as requests. The following is an example of a request, accompanied by two Grounders and a Sweetener:

(9) A: John, erm, can you lend me ten pounds- I've run out myself and the banks are closed.  
I can let you have it back tomorrow for sure.

B: Erm, okay then.

(Edmondson and House 1981: 46)

In the above example, the requester gives two reasons (Grounders) for making the request, and the promise of giving back the money at the end of the turn functions as a Sweetener.

Example (10) also shows how Expanders constitute moves that add more information to a head act.

(10) A: I think it's from the antibiotics you gave me and it's very itchy it's all on me face and me hands and me arms it's very itchy.

(Adopted from Edmondson 1981: 181)

The main illocutionary act in this example is a Complaint. The complaint is supported by a series of Tells, which expand the Complaint and support it by supplying more information related to the content of the Complaint.

Finally, example (11) contains a Disarmer, which is usually realized in the illocutionary act of Apologize, as mentioned above. Again, the turn begins with the illocutionary act Apologize, which functions as a Disarmer to a following Complaint.

(11) A: Well, I'm terribly sorry but I'm afraid you're in my seat you've moved my books.

(Adopted from Edmondson 1981: 176)

Edmondson and House's (1981) interactional speech act model provides a useful tool for a systematic analysis of conversational data. It allows us to capture how interaction unfolds based on the negotiability of interactional acts, the different ways in which hearers interpret speakers' meanings, and how these interpretations determine the trajectory of interaction, which is in line with Grainger's (2018) conception of the sequential and contingent nature of talk-in-interaction. Moreover, the speech act typology outlined above provides a wide range of prototypical illocutionary acts, which lend themselves to use across a wide range of interactional situations. Most importantly, as the model takes

interactional acts to be the core units of analysis, the model enables me to demonstrate, by referring explicitly to the interactional meaning/function of speech acts in interactional structure, how evaluations of politeness arise in terms of participants' understandings and orientation to the social meanings embedded in speech acts as minimal units of meaning, following Kádár and Haugh's (2013) conceptualization.

However, despite the advantages outlined above, I argue that this typology suffers from certain inadequacies that limit its applicability for certain data types. The first limitation concerns the lack of a principled criterion by which to distinguish illocutionary acts. Edmondson (1981: 142), in his own typology, refers to this difficulty in the case of Suggest and Request, despite claiming that it should not be considered a weakness of the framework but evidence for the negotiability of illocutionary acts. Although this might be a valid argument, it nevertheless reduces the typology to a descriptive framework that leaves a lot of room for speculation as to what the speaker's meaning might be, without offering criteria for interpreting data beyond paradigm cases. The same difficulty arises with the illocutionary acts of Tell and Opine. Although, Edmondson and House (1981) explain that the difference between a Tell and an Opine is conveying information that is based on facts and personal experience respectively, in actual data, the judgement on the status of such knowledge is not as straightforward, a limitation which they themselves admit. In terms of higher-order interactional structures, the distinction between a Counter and a Contra is blurred, especially in the analysis of moves composed of more than one illocutionary act. For example, it is not clear how to characterize the function of a move when it is composed of an act, which is clearly a Contra, followed by another act, which is a Counter. The question arises as to whether to consider the turn a Contra or a Counter and why.

Another limitation is that the typology, in my opinion, largely glosses over the fact that illocutionary acts can hardly be categorized into one sub-category but not the other. For instance, although Opines are categorized as informative speech acts, they clearly have an attitudinal function in that they index the speaker's opinion and evaluations of a state of affairs. In a similar vein, an apology is not only about a non-future event but can also function as a preliminary to another speech act or an offense that is about to take place in

the future. As already noted, Edmondson and House (1981) analyze apologies as strategic Disarmers, but this also ignores cases in which apologies are not used to lessen the impact of an offense but are made before or after attacks on a hearer's positive face, what Duetschmann (2003: 74) refers to as "face attack" apologies.

The last point is that, despite being detailed, the typology suffers from an oversimplification that has it glossing over more nuanced and less prototypical instances of illocutions. For example, the typology does not accommodate rhetorical questions the illocutionary function of which is clearly not a request for information. More importantly in relation to this research, the typology does not offer a detailed exploration of the speech act of apology in particular, and other speech acts more generally. Since the typology does not aim at an explicit examination of individual speech acts, it does not present a full view of the structural complexity of the speech act of apology and the diversity of forms it assumes, depending on different pragmatic/contextual factors.

Based on the above discussed advantages of Edmondson and House's (1981) model of discourse analysis, I adopt this framework and the interactional speech act typology in the analysis of the interactional roleplay data in Chapter Six as I believe it allows me to capture how the interaction unfolds in a more systematic manner, with reference to the different functions that the illocutions have in conversation. However, given its limitations, specifically in relation to the way it does not address the speech act of apology in sufficient detail, I argue that a complementary taxonomy of the apology speech act needs to be implemented in the analysis of the data in Chapter Seven, in order for me to lay out as complete a picture as possible of the manifestations of this speech act and the way it is influenced by social factors such as distance and status. This is especially important if I want to examine participants' perceptions of this speech act with reference to the possible role of sincerity, which can be indexed by speakers in various apologetic strategies and/or modes of intensification. This, in my opinion, can only be achieved by deploying a taxonomy, which deals exclusively with the speech act of apology without attempting to account for other speech acts.

Another advantage, which I argue is characteristic of taxonomy-based approaches to apologies, is that they explicitly anchor the analysis of apologies, and other speech acts,

to contextual factors such as social distance, status, and the ranking of the imposition or the severity of the offense in the case of the apology speech act. As will become clear in the perceptual study in Chapter Seven, taking account of the severity of the offense is of paramount importance in order for me to identify whether native speakers of Syrian Arabic will perceive apologies differently on the scales of (im)politeness, (in)sincerity, and the severity of the offense for which the apology is extended. Thus, I contend that a taxonomy that takes heed of these paralinguistic aspects of analysis is necessary to incorporate in the analysis of the data.

With regards to such taxonomies, one of the most important projects that attempt to examine speech acts in detail is the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) by Blum-Kulka and her colleagues. This project concerned the analysis of requests and apologies in seven languages and was a breakthrough in directing the analysis of speech acts towards dealing with language data produced by users, as opposed to constructed data, and in offering detailed taxonomies for requests and apologies. The details of the apology taxonomy within CCSARP will be outlined in the next section.

### **3.4 The speech act of apology: Definitions and taxonomies**

In classical speech act theory, apologies are expressive speech acts that are concerned with the psychological state of the speaker who believes s/he has done something offensive and/or harmful to the hearer. According to Culpeper and Haugh (2014), the essence of the apology speech act lies in the sincerity condition, which means that in order for the speech act to count as an apology, the sincerity of the speaker is taken for granted.

Olshtain and Cohen (1983) point out that traditional speech act theory does not offer much in the way of linguistically analyzing the apology speech act beyond noting that explicit apologies have the performative verb “apologize.” However, despite the limited examination of apologies in the theory, apologies are one of the most-widely researched speech acts, and the wealth of definitions and taxonomies proposed for this speech act well attests to this fact. Goffman (1971), for instance, defines apologies as remedial interchanges by which the speaker admits to an offense. For Olshtain and Cohen (1983), an apology is a speech act which is an attempt to set things right. In a similar vein, Holmes (1989) refers to the social role of apologies and their affective function in maintaining good

relationships among people. Finally, Bergman and Kasper (1993) argue that apologies are compensatory acts that address an offense that was costly to the hearer. Two things stand out in the above definitions, which are by no means peculiar to these definitions but are reflective of the general approach to apologies in the early days of cross-cultural scholarship on speech acts. First, apologies are strictly seen as post-event speech acts. Second, the function of apologies is restricted to addressing past offenses. This is a simplistic view, which ignores other functions that apologies might perform according to different sequential positions that they occupy in discourse.

As can be seen from the definitions above, researchers were interested in the linguistic analysis of speech act realization and in identifying their various functions, which speech act theory fails to do. Therefore, a large number of taxonomies that address apologies have been proposed by, among other researchers, Olshtain and Cohen (1983), Trosborg (1987), and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) within the CCSARP. Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) main interest was in the collection of empirical data which form a large set of native and non-native speaker linguistic repertoires through which the researchers can analyze notions of directness and indirectness in speech act realization. The data for this project were collected using a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) that was administered to native speakers of seven different languages, which are German, Hebrew, Danish, Canadian French, and Australian, American, and British English. The findings were published in a book that contains the coding manual which was used in the classification of the data of the two speech acts.

According to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 12), apologies are speech acts that involve the speaker's admission to a breach of social conduct that is costly to the hearer (H). The apology also signals that the speaker is at least partially responsible for this offensive breach. Therefore, apologies are post-event speech acts the form of which is usually exaggerated in support for the hearer. The linguistic realization of apologies takes the form of at least one of five strategies or a combination of more than one strategy. Vollmer and Olshtain (1989), who analyze apologies in German, explain that the speaker goes through a number of considerations/questions in order to choose the appropriate apology strategy. Such considerations include the speaker's perception of the degree of his/her responsibility

for the offense, the expectations of the hearer, and how much the speaker is invested in restoring the lost balance. Vollmer and Olshtain (1989) add that regardless of the speaker's reasoning, apologies are generally composed of an explicit performative verb or an Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) and an admission of responsibility.

The prominence of IFIDs is reflected in the coding manual in which the first strategy for apologizing is the use of an IFID. The IFID may be expressed in one or more of a variety of forms. In what follows, I will list the five apology strategies separately, going through the details of each strategy one at a time.

### **Strategy 1: Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)**

This strategy is the most explicit and the most routinized. It involves the speaker's expression of regret over the offense using one or more of the following expressions:

- a. Sorry.
- b. Excuse me.
- c. I apologize for.
- d. Forgive me.
- e. Pardon me for.
- f. I regret that..
- g. I am afraid.

These expressions are conventionalized in any language. For example, "I'm sorry" is the most conventionalized apology form in English (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). Vollmer and Olshtain (1989) explain that there is a weak-strong continuum of IFIDs, and that the speaker's choice may depend on his/her evaluation of the severity of the offense. The severity may be reflected in the choice of a strong IFID, which expresses sincerity in the regret over the offense. A weaker version of the IFID may also be used. In this case the speaker merely complies with the social expectation of expressing sympathy with H over the breach of conduct and the form does not really signal sincere feelings of regret. In this respect, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) explain that IFIDs may be intensified in order to maximize the sincerity of the explicit apology. Internal intensification of IFIDs takes the form of adverbials such as "very," "so," "terribly," etc. or saying please. External forms of

intensification include showing concern for the hearer, which can be expressed, for example, in similar utterances like (12) below:

(12) I hope you're okay/you're not hurt.

### **Strategy 2: Taking on responsibility**

In this strategy, the speaker's aim is to placate the hearer by expressing responsibility for the offense. A number of sub-categories are listed under this strategy and they differ on a scale that oscillates between maximal self-humbling in taking on the responsibility for the offense to total denial for the need to apologize. Taking on responsibility may be expressed in one or more of the following sub-strategies:

- Explicit self-blame  
(13) My mistake.
- Lack of intent  
(14) I didn't mean to upset you.
- Justify hearer  
(15) You're right to be angry.
- Expression of embarrassment  
(16) I feel awful about it.
- Admission of facts but not responsibility  
(17) I haven't read it.
- Refusal to acknowledge guilt
  - Denial of responsibility  
(18) It wasn't my fault.
  - Blame the hearer  
(19) It's your own fault.
  - Pretend to be offended  
(20) I'm the one to be offended.

It may appear strange that the refusal to acknowledge responsibility is listed as a sub-strategy, but Vollmer and Olshtain (1989) rationalize this category by explaining that the speaker's declining willingness to express responsibility is tied to the face-loss/cost inherent in such an admission of fault. Thus, the speaker may resort to such sub-strategies as a self-oriented measure to lessen the cost of the apology.



### **Strategy 3: Explanation or account**

This strategy is situation-dependent and can count as an apology by itself in certain contexts (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). In making an account, the speaker appeals to external factors over which s/he had no control. The wording of accounts naturally includes an explanation of the offense itself. A typical account goes along the lines of the following examples:

- (21) a. The car broke down.  
      b. I ran out of oil.

### **Strategy 4: Offer of repair**

An offer of repair is a context-bound strategy that most frequently appears in cases of physical damage. For example, the speaker may offer the following repair, which is intended as an apology:

- (22) I'll pay for the damage.

### **Strategy 5: Promise of forbearance**

This final strategy, which is context-dependent, involves the speaker's heightened sense of responsibility which pushes him/her to promise for the offense not to happen again such as saying:

- (23) This won't happen again.

As Olshtain and Cohen (1983) explain, the choice of the appropriate strategy depends on three main factors: social distance, social status, and the degree of the severity of the offense. The values of distance and status are culturally-specified. Despite the fact that the social factors are not readily computed, Olshtain and Cohen (1983) report that intensified apologies are highly likely in case of severe offenses. Similarly, people of higher social status receive more apologies than they produce.

It should be clear, however, that such taxonomies, similarly to the issues that arise with Edmondson and House's typology (1981), suffer from inherent inconsistencies of classification, which undermine their reliability as analytical tools. This point has been

made by several researchers including Meier (1998), Deutschmann (2003), and more recently Ogiermann (2009). The critiques seem to converge on the fact that none of the taxonomies provide a principled account for how the apology strategies and sub-strategies are devised. Moreover, as Meier (1998) points out, apology taxonomies either use different labels for the same strategy or suggest different sub-strategies within the same strategy. Deutschmann (2003) also argues that, with the exception of IFIDs, there is a general lack of consensus over what constitutes an apology strategy. This appears most clearly, according to Ogiermann (2009), in the case of accounts and taking on responsibility where the two strategies are conflated: the sub-strategy of “admission of facts but not responsibility” can be easily confused for accounts, which are treated as appeals made to outer circumstances that the speaker has no control over.

The critiques do not only concern the strategies but they also target the influence of the social factors over apology format. According to Meier (1998), apology studies show inconclusive results as to the role of these factors in influencing the choice of the apology strategy. Meier (1998) notes that as far as the influence of social status is concerned, the results of the studies are less divided: generally, higher status individuals elicit more intense and elaborate apologies from lower status individuals. However, the same is not true of the severity of the offense and the role of social distance. For example, whereas some studies conclude that more severe offenses result in more elaborate apologies, other studies report the exact opposite; people do not apologize at all in highly offensive situations. As for social distance, the studies also show contradictory results. Some of the studies note that the less the distance is the more intense the apology is, but others show that no such relationship holds (Meier 1998).

Despite such deficiencies, I believe that Blum-Kulka et al.’s (1989) apology taxonomy can still provide a working analytical tool for describing and classifying different apology types, especially when applied to the analysis of non-interactional data such as multi-turn spoken utterances by a single speaker. Furthermore, as the results of the CCSARP demonstrate, the strategies are robust enough to apply in the analysis of native and non-native speaker production of apologies in a variety of languages such as Hebrew

and English. Therefore, the taxonomy will be adopted in describing/analyzing apologies in Chapter Seven.

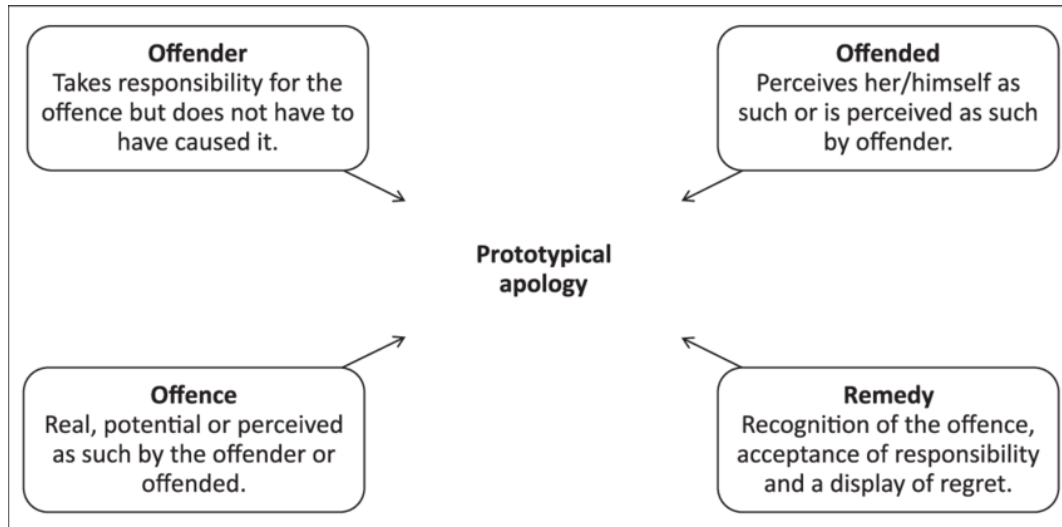
While the analysis of the perceptual data in this research will be couched in Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) taxonomy, in line with Ogiermann's (2009) proposal, I introduce to the taxonomy some modifications which, will circumvent the conflation of accounts and taking on responsibility. I take accounts to be every excuse that appeals to internal or external circumstances. This means that the sub-strategy of "admitting self-deficiency" by saying things along the lines of "I forgot" or "I didn't wake up" are classified as accounts. On the other hand, taking on responsibility includes an explicit linking between the speaker and the offense as well as admitting that the hearer deserves the apology or has the right to be angry. In the next section, I move on from the CCSARP to explore a different perspective by which apologies have been analyzed.

### **3.5 Reconsidering the function of apologies**

As can be seen in the definitions of apologies explored earlier, most researchers define apologies as speech acts that intend to remedy a past offense and restore harmony. The most important aspect about apologies, as Leech (2014) explains, seems to be for the speaker to pay H's debt, which essentially makes apologies a hearer-oriented speech act. However, both Leech (2014) and Holmes (1990) refer to a speaker-oriented function of apologies in that when the speaker takes responsibility for an offense, s/he intends to save his/her own face, using B&L's (1987) terminology, and to minimize the face threat that results from breaching a social conduct.

The idea that apologies have a salient function, among other functions, is expressed by Deutschmann (2003), who proposes an analysis of the function of apologies based on the prototypicality of an apology form. Under this view, the prototypical apology can be defined in terms of a semantic field that encompasses four related concepts: the offender, the offended, the offense, and the remedial work. In its prototypical function, for an apology to happen there must be an offense that the speaker/offender acknowledges and takes responsibility for whether or not s/he is the real cause. The offended is the one who is perceived by others or by him/herself to be on the affected end of the offense. Deutschmann (2003) explains that the apology may be real or potential, as perceived by

either the offender, the offended, or both of them. Finally, the remedial work is undertaken in the form of offense recognition, acceptance of responsibility, and display of regret. The semantic field of the prototypical apology can be seen in Figure 3.2 below:



**Figure 3.2 The components of the prototypical apology (Deutschmann 2003: 46)**

As Deutschmann (2003:46) argues, however, the prototypical view is not sufficient to capture the full functional complexity of apologies. He divides less “prototypical” functions into three categories as follows:

a. Formulaic apologies: in which the apology is uttered when the offense is minimal or non-existent as in apologizing for social gaffes, and “talk-offenses,” etc. Deutschmann (2003) uses the following example in which the formulaic apology is uttered in the middle of the sentence after a slip of the tongue. The apology is a simple, detached IFID, and functions as a discourse management device.

(24) Terri: [...] And I'm, I'm faxing <pause> erm <pause> **I'm sorry**, I'm not gonna fax it, I'm just going to send a letter to national office <pause> about The Savoy in First Leisure.

b. Formulaic apologies with added function: the apology is used in case of minimal offenses, such as hearing failures. Such apologies can also be used to signal another action such as using apologies to preface a request. In the following example, from Deutschmann (2003), is a hearing offense/failure that gets the addressee to repeat what s/he has said.

(25) PS0T0: Still recording Simmone?

Simmone: **Pardon?**

PS0T0: Still recording?

c. 'Face attack' apologies: the remedial function of such apologies is questionable: they are used "before or after premeditated attacks on a hearer's positive face needs" (Deutschmann 2003: 74). In the following example, the apology functions as a disarming device for a following reprimand during a business interview. The interviewer, Rod, is reprimanding the job applicant, Trevor, for questioning the terms of the salary:

(26) Rod: Yeah but surely sorry I I have to why do you question that now? That has to have been explained to you on the phone. It must have been.

Trevor: Yes.

Rod: Trevor with respect you've just wasted a hell of a lot of time for you and me, haven't you?

In a way 'face attack' apologies are paradoxical. They ask absolution for an offense that is nevertheless going to happen, despite the speaker's full knowledge of its cost to H (Leech 2014).

Despite the fact that most researchers define apologies in terms of their prototypical function, Deutschmann's (2003) analysis of explicit apologies in the British National Corpus (BNC) shows that real/prototypical apologies account for only about 35% of the IFIDs used in the corpus. The rest had different functions as formulaic, formulaic with added function, and finally as 'face attack' apologies. As for the traditional conception of apologies being typical negative politeness markers, Deutschmann (2003) also concludes that this is not the case of apologies in the BNC in which a majority of the IFIDs functioned as markers of regret over not paying regard to H's positive face needs. Moreover, the IFIDs exhibited a clear speaker-oriented function of putting the speaker in a better light and to getting "the speaker off the hook."

The analysis in this dissertation, despite taking apologies as exemplary speech acts through which politeness may be exhibited, is not aligned with one function of apologies to the exclusion of others. In the analysis of the data, I will make sure to point out non-prototypical uses of apologies as these also reflect on the way the value of the social factors

of distance, status, and the severity of the offense are evaluated and manipulated in context by the participants and in yielding different forms of apologies. However, with this holistic view in mind, apologies, nevertheless, are still intuitively connected to politeness. In the next section, I outline in detail the relationship between apologies and politeness in light of the development of politeness theories.

### **3.6 Apologies and politeness**

As shown in this chapter so far, apologies have received a fair share of attention from researchers, who converge on the definition of apologies as harmony restoration remedial speech acts (Goffman 1971; Holmes 1989). As can also be recalled from the discussion of the functions and first-wave definitions of politeness, there is a clear parallel between the functions of politeness and apologies, the former being conceived of as a tool for reducing friction and maintaining harmony. This overlap of functions has been noted by Deutschmann (2003), who adds that apologies have associations with politeness in the folk sense.

In addition to the intuitive sense in which apologies are linked to politeness, apologies are traditionally associated with politeness in the classical theories. For instance, Leech (1983: 106) claims that apologies are inherently polite, and as convivial speech acts, they tend to be characterized as an instance of positive politeness in that they seek opportunities for comity. Similarly, B&L (1987) treat apologies as polite acts, but in their model, apologies have a double status: whereas they are speech acts that attend to H's positive face, they result in face loss for S, who admits to committing a socially undesirable act (Olshtain 1989).

As I have also shown in the previous chapter, the discursive development of politeness theory is based on the view that politeness is essentially a discursive phenomenon. The consequences of such a view are that the analysis of politeness could no longer be restricted to speech acts. Moreover, the discursive approach considers politeness both a linguistic and a social phenomenon. However, the discursive approach is not incompatible with the study of speech acts in relation to politeness. Apology studies have also witnessed a great deal of development, which owes a lot to sociological frameworks such as Conversation Analysis (CA) (Sacks 1995).

Within a CA-approach to the nature of speech, apologies, in addition to other speech acts, have been shown to be a discursive phenomenon. For example, Robinson (2004) is an interesting study about the discursivity of apologies. Robinson, who analyzed the sequential organization of apologies, argues that apologies stretch over multiple turns and that, depending on their structural position in conversation, their function changes (Robinson 2004). He explains that when apologies are used to initiate a sequence, or in the terminology of CA, are uttered as first pair-parts, they have the primary function of addressing a past offense. This analysis is no different than the classical analysis of the function of apologies. However, according to Robinson (2004:319), even when apologies are used to initiate a sequence, they may have non-apology functions such as extending condolences. Duetschmann (2003) also makes the same observation and maintains that apologies can be pre-event speech acts, in which case they foreshadow an FTA, or they can be used as post-event speech acts. In this position, they are used to set the record straight concerning a perceived or actual past offense.

A major way in which apologies appear to be discursive speech acts has also been demonstrated in recent studies (Robinson 2004; Rieger 2017). Specifically, such studies have been interested in the kinds of responses that naturally-occurring apologies tend to elicit and how those reflect the successful delivery of the apology and the attitude of the offended. Robinson (2004) shows that apologies elicit two types of responses: preferred responses in which the offended absolves the offender. Such responses include “it’s okay,” “that’s fine,” etc. Apologies may also be met with dispreferred responses that endorse the apologizer’s claim to have committed an offense.

In connection with the kind of responses that apologies elicit, Rieger (2017) challenges the prototypical view that explicit apologies (IFIDs) always function as apologies to address an offense. She bases her argument on the existence or lack thereof of a response to the IFID. According to Rieger (2017), IFIDs such as “sorry,” which are uttered in the vicinity of social gaffes such as coughing or lapses of the tongue, are not at all apologies; her evidence is the absence of a response from the hearer who does not orient to the IFID as an apology. What the discussion above clearly shows is that the traditional view of the function of apologies as polite speech acts has been questioned in light of the

view of apologies as discursive speech acts. This is in line with an analysis of politeness as a discursive verbal and non-verbal behavior and the rejection of a priori assumptions on the function and the evaluation of politeness/speech acts as inherently positive phenomena (Locher 2006).

As is discussed above, then, apologies and politeness are closely connected. Thus, in the next and final section of this chapter, I present some of the literature on politeness and speech acts in Arabic dialects, with the aim of showing that, despite an increase in volume, these studies are still largely couched in classical analyses of politeness.

### **3.7 Politeness and speech act studies on Arabic dialects**

Socio-pragmatic research in general and politeness research in particular remain fairly limited on Arabic dialects. The limitation is not only in the number of the dialects studied but also in the nature and the scope of these studies. As I will shortly show, speech act and politeness research on Arabic dialects can be classified into three main groups: the first is the group of studies that analyze speech acts only. The second group deals with speech acts with reference to the classical theories of politeness, and the third, and the most recent, mainly address politeness by analyzing a specific speech act or other pragmatic phenomena. In reviewing a selected sample of such studies, I follow a chronological order.

The first study is Al-Adaileh (2007), who investigates the politeness orientations of native speakers of Jordanian Arabic (JA) and native speakers of British English (BE) by taking the speech act of apology as an exemplary speech act. Al-Adaileh (2007) uses a DCT and open-ended interviews to collect the data, which are analyzed following the apology coding schemes in Cohen and Olshtain (1981), Olshtain and Cohen (1983), and the CCSARP coding scheme (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). The results show differences not in the way apologies are performed but also in the way the two groups assess the role of social factors in choosing the appropriate apology strategy. BE speakers use more IFIDs and intensified IFIDs than their Jordanian counterparts. Furthermore, whereas a combination of social status and the seriousness of the offense is the most important consideration for the British, for the Jordanian, it is the combination of social distance and the seriousness of the offense.



However, the major contribution of Al-Adaileh (2007) is his novel treatment of politeness from the perspective of relational work and proving with empirical evidence that B&L's (1987) theory cannot account for all politeness phenomena. Politeness and apologies do not fit into a restrictive positive/negative politeness dichotomy, and the view of speech acts and apologies as inherently polite or impoliteness is necessarily flawed. Apologies should be seen as tools for negotiating relationships through the concept of equity, which ties in well with the definition of politeness as a form of relational work. Politeness is based on the appropriateness of behavior, which in turn stems from the speakers' knowledge of their own and their interlocutors' social norms and expectations. Since notions of appropriateness are bound to norms, which are clearly variable inter-culturally, it would make little use to talk about speech acts as either impolite or polite. Rather, politeness and speech acts should be viewed as part of relational work (Watts 2003; Locher and Watts 2008).

Another research that takes a comparative perspective is Bataineh and Bataineh's (2008) work on apology strategies in Jordanian Arabic and American English (AE). In addition to examining apology realization patterns, Bataineh and Bataineh (2008) analyze gender differences in the performance of apologies in the two groups. The data for this research were collected using a written DCT. Bataineh and Bataineh (2008) report that both groups used explicit apologies (IFIDs), accounts, and reparations most frequently. However, the Jordanian group uses the strategy of proverbs, which are conventionalized in Jordanian Arabic, as non-apology strategies in order to "ease their responsibility and pacify the victim" (*ibid* 2008: 816). In this respect, the study also shows that the Jordanian group used more non-apology strategies than the American group. As far as gender-based differences are concerned, the study supports previous literature in that the results indicate that women apologize more than men: the female participants in both groups used more IFIDs than their male counterparts. However, the researchers note that this difference is sharper in the Jordanian group than in the American group, and they explain this in terms of the different ways in which men and women are brought up in Jordan (Bataineh and Bataineh 2008).

Similarly to Bataineh and Bataineh's (2008) study, Nureddeen's (2008) study aims to examine apology strategies in Sudanese Arabic in an attempt to outline the socio-cultural motivations for the use and frequency of different apology strategies. A corpus of a 1082-written responses to a DCT make up the bulk of the data for this study. The DCT is composed of ten situations, which are created with different combinations of the social factors of distance, power, and the degree of the imposition of the FTA. Overall, the results of the study support the universality claim of apology strategies in that the participants used all the strategies identified in previous literature (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984; Trosborg 1987; Holmes 1989). However, the researcher also provides evidence for the culture-specificity of apologies in the context of the Sudanese society. Nuredeen (2008) maintains that, contrary to other studies, which identify IFIDs and taking on responsibility as the most frequently used strategies, the Sudanese participants used IFIDs and explanations most frequently in her study.

Despite the fact that the analysis does not explicitly draw on politeness theories, Nureddeen (2008) nevertheless refers to B&L's (1987) theory in her attempt to explain the use of the strategies. She argues that the overall results indicate a general preference for positive politeness. This is evident in the participants effort to avoid inflicting face loss on themselves by using IFIDs and explanations most frequently, coupled with their much less reliance on strategies that are most damaging to S's face: taking on responsibility, intensification, and promises of forbearance. More specifically, Nureddeen (2008) claims that ritualistic IFIDs and explanations can be used as ways of avoiding self-blame. However, this explanation seems to be flawed on two levels: first, her claim that IFIDs are milder apology strategies that cause less face damage contradicts the literature, which classifies IFIDs as the most straightforward and explicit form of apology. Second, this claim is inconsistent with the core feature of apology-related IFIDs, which, in order to be registered as explicit apologies in the first place, must imply an admission of the offense for which the apology is made. Thus, unless Nureddeen (2008) equates ritualistic IFIDs with instances of IFID use in situations where the apologizer is clearly not directly related to the offense, such as delivering bad news, her claim that IFIDs are used by the participants to ease themselves out of the responsibility seems questionable. With this in mind,

however, Nureddeen's (2008) study still offers interesting insights into the function and language-specific features of apologies in Sudanese Arabic.

Another study that addresses the speech act of apology without reference to politeness theories is Jebahi (2011) in Tunisian Arabic. The aim of this study is to examine the participants' performance of this speech act and, thus, bridge a gap in the literature, which lacks studies on Tunisian Arabic. The data were collected from a hundred university students using a 10-item DCT. The overall findings show that the strategy of expressing remorse is the most frequently used apology strategy and is followed by accounts. Three main factors influenced the higher frequency of apology forms: the intimate relationship between the offender and the offended, the offended being of older age, and the vertical distance between the interlocutors where the offended has the power to influence the future of the offender. In addition to these strategies, Jebahi (2011) points out that a lot of participants denied responsibility for the offense and shifted the blame to the hearer by using accounts. The researcher concludes that the study attests to the universality of the apology speech act and at the same time, the results shed light on the language and culture-specific apology-related behaviors and linguistic strategies. One prominent aspect of this specificity is using God's name to index the belief in predestination. The apologizer's use of God's name serves to show that the offense was out of the offender's hands and that in a way s/he is not to blame for what happened since everything is predetermined.

Grainger et al.'s (2015) research is an exception to mainstream politeness research on Arabic dialects. Grainger et al. (2015) examine first-order politeness in offer rituals in Libyan Arabic and British English and reject the classical treatment of the Arabic and British cultures as directly opposed to each other, in terms of how they express and view politeness. Instead, they argue that the root of the difference in offer rituals in Arabic and British English should be considered with reference to the different underlying ideologies that motivate offer making. In Arabic, historically and linguistically, politeness and hospitality go hand in hand. Therefore, it is the right of the host to show hospitality and the duty of the guest to allow the host to such a show of hospitality. This is translated in real life situations to a series of offer-refusal turns, which is foregrounded in the Arab culture. In the British culture, where in British English no such association exists between

politeness and hospitality, offers are much shorter and more straightforward. The British can accept a round of offer-refusal turns but too much insistence from the host is considered an act of imposition, which is impolite and needs to be avoided. The ultimate conclusion that Grainger et al. (2015) highlight is the need to situate politeness within a complete picture that integrates elements from the immediate context and the larger social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Kerkam's (2015) study is similar in scope to Al-Adaileh (2007) in that it is also a comparative study that aims to examine politeness in Libyan Arabic and British English, taking a discursive approach, by establishing the participants' views on directness, indirectness, and their relation to politeness and impoliteness. The study employs three data collection methods: a questionnaire, focus groups, and naturalistic data. Perhaps not surprisingly, the results of the study point to differences between the Libyan and the British groups in almost every level of the analysis. More specifically, the two groups seem to have different conceptions of what it means to show consideration, which they identify as a core feature of politeness. As far as indirectness is concerned, both groups relate this phenomenon to implicit meanings and indirect ways of speaking. However, Kerkam (2015) reports that the two groups diverge in their view of the relation between indirectness and politeness. Whereas the Libyans associated indirectness with impoliteness, the British seemed to evaluate indirectness more positively and link it to politeness. Most importantly, Kerkam (2015) presents evidence that shows that indirectness may give rise to impoliteness evaluations, and conversely, that directness in the Libyan context is regarded as polite especially in offer making as it indexes important values such as hospitality and generosity.

Kerkam's (2015) research also looks at potential divergences between the participants' linguistic ideologies/views and their own behavior and offers interesting insights in this regard: the analysis indicates such a divergence in the way the British participants conceive of indirectness in relation to British English. Whereas most of the British participants reported that they think British English is characterized by indirectness, those participants reported that they prefer to use more direct forms than indirect ones. The researcher explains this in terms of the way ideologies influence how speakers feel they should speak and what they deem appropriate. At the same time, a clash between such

ideologies and real behaviors is indicative of the fact that ideologies are subject to change over time (Kerkam 2015). Kerkam's (2015) study, overall represents a change in politeness studies on Arabic dialects in as far as it takes a novel and discursive perspective to data analysis. Moreover, although implicitly, by asking the participants to define politeness and impoliteness, Kerkam (2015) provides a first-order view of politeness in Libyan Arabic, which had not been presented in politeness research on Arabic dialects before.

Ahmed (2017) is a comparative study of apology production and perception by native speakers of Iraqi Arabic and EFL learners, who are native speakers of Iraqi Arabic. The study aims to identify the range and function of apology strategies and to investigate the cultural values that underlie the production and perception of this speech act. The production data were collected using a DCT and oral role-plays, and the perception data were collected using rating scales and semi-structured interviews. As far as the production of apologies is concerned, the results show that the Iraqi Arabic Native speaker group (IAN) produced more diverse, more complex, and lengthier apologies than the learners group, whose apologies were simpler and more straightforward. Overall, the strategies used in Iraqi Arabic reflect the values of speakers, which center on themes of brotherhood and religious principles (Ahmed 2017: 260). Finally, Ahmed (2017) notes that the L2 learners were clearly influenced by the norms of L1 in their production of apologies in English, which Ahmed (2017) considers evidence for pragmatic transfer.

In examining the function of apologies in the two groups, Ahmed (2017) notes that in Iraqi Arabic, apologies function as strategies to assert and save friendships as well as to appeal to the positive face of the addressee. Thus, apologies can be said to have an interactional dimension that is consistent with the way apologies are analyzed in the discursive approach to politeness, as Ahmed (2017) maintains. As for perceptions of apologies, the results indicate a significant difference in the way the apologies were perceived between the two groups. For example, EFL rated the obligation for apologies higher than the Iraqi Arabic group. Ahmed (2017) ascribes this to the different status of apologies in English and Iraqi Arabic, where it is much more salient and regular in the former. Finally, Ahmed (2017) notes that apologies are evaluated as speech acts that are related to courage, politeness, and virtue.

Asswae's (2018) work is also a break from traditional politeness research on Arabic dialects in that it examines politeness in Libyan Arabic from a holistic, post-discursive perspective, adopting Kádár and Haugh's (2013) framework. The research is also novel in that it analyzes naturally-occurring data and uses post-interaction commentaries that shed light on the data from the perspective of the users. Asswae (2018) seeks to define the norms that underlie politeness in Libyan Arabic, in addition to investigating the role of religion and the interaction between ritual and politeness. The results show that hospitality, insistent offers, showing respect towards the elders, and using address terms are the most dominant normative manifestation of politeness in Libyan Arabic. Additionally, the research revealed a close connection between politeness, ritual, and religion; politeness is enacted through ritualistic interactions, and the most frequently used forms of rituals are those that are religious in nature. All in all, the study offers important insights into how politeness is produced, evaluated, and conceived of in various context such as family, friend, tribal, and work place contexts and also contributes novel findings to politeness scholarship on Arabic dialects.

The last study I will be reviewing is Hodeib's (2019) study, which aims to bridge a gap in the literature by analyzing apology production in Syrian Arabic, which has not been examined before. The study aims to establish how much of the universality of apology strategies is attested in the data and also to outline language and culture-specific strategies, drawing on Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) taxonomies. The data were collected using a DCT, which was administered to 45 native speakers of Syrian Arabic. The results of this experiment support apology strategy universality claims; all the strategies as identified in Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) taxonomy were used, with IFIDs being the most frequently used strategy. As far as the interaction between social factors and strategy choice is concerned, Hodeib (2019) notes that there is a positive correlation between IFIDs and the older age of the addressee and the higher status of the addressee. Moreover, the closer the relationship between the participants, the less used IFIDs were, which shows the influence of social distance. The participants' assessment of the role of social distance and status is also reflected on their linguistic style; in general, a more formal language was used in the situations in which the addressee was in a higher status.

Although the general aim of the research is to sketch out a preliminary taxonomy of apology strategies in Syrian Arabic (2019), Hodeib (2019) draws on the parallels between politeness and apologies in terms of B&L's (1987) negative and positive politeness. More specifically, she notes that the choice of positive and negative politeness strategies is mainly motivated by social distance. Positive politeness markers, such as familiar terms, banter, and sarcasm are used in the context of low distance relationships such as family and friends. On the other hand, in high distance relationships, such as that with the boss or with a stranger, formal address terms are indicative of negative politeness/deference. Such strategies, Hodeib (2019) concludes, are not in themselves apologies, but they support it by placating the hearer, showing deference, and highlighting common grounds.

In addition to corroborating the universality claims, this study shows that the participants used a range of language-specific strategies. One of those strategies is the use of God's name, which has also been noted in other apology studies on Arabic dialects (Ahmed 2017; Jebahi 2011). Other language-specific strategies include the use of proverbs and folk expressions to blame the addressee as in saying *?illi fi shooki btinkhazu* 'whoever has a thorn underneath will feel its prick.' Folk expression such as *zrafa bi da2ne* 'plant it in my beard' were also used as context-determined forms of IFIDs. The use of proverbs in this study is a reminder of Bataineh and Bataineh (2008)'s results in which the researchers reported the use of proverbs by their Jordanian participants, and also of Ahmed (2017), who notes the use of proverbs in apologizing in Iraqi Arabic.

As can be seen from this overview of speech act and politeness research on Arabic dialects, there are clear commonalities among dialects especially in apology realization patterns. Not only do the dialects reviewed attest to the universality of the production strategies of the speech act of apology, but they also exhibit similar apology-related behaviors, or language(s)-specific strategies. More specifically, Arabic speakers tend to incorporate religious expressions, proverbs, and verge towards in-groupness rather than individuality. However, as the review also shows, politeness studies are still limited in number and in scope; only three of the reviewed studies deal explicitly with first-order politeness, and none of the studies address perceptions of real-life instances of politeness.

Therefore, as I have already mentioned, by taking a first-order perspective to the analysis of the data, the aim of this work is to bridge this gap in the literature and try to come up with a more comprehensive view of politeness in Syrian Arabic.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter I present a brief overview of traditional Speech Act Theory and show that it gave rise to a number of critiques and attempts to go beyond its inadequacies. I then explore the details of Edmondson and House's (1981) interactional discourse model and speech act typology, showing that it lends itself particularly well to the analysis of various conversational data. However, I also point out some of the deficiencies that this typology suffers from and argue that, because of certain limitations to its application, a complementary, and more detailed, taxonomy, which addresses apologies in particular, needs to be adopted in the analysis of the data. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989)'s apology taxonomy, which is adopted, is highly productive and applicable in cross-cultural comparative research, but they also suffer from internal inconsistencies. By introducing some modifications, it is my position in this dissertation that these taxonomies can still be used in capturing and explaining the apology speech act in Syrian Arabic. The next section presents a more-refined view of the function of apologies, which go beyond the traditional version of the offense-remedy function. After that, I move on to explore the close connection between the apology speech act and politeness. The last section of this chapter is devoted to an exploration of some of the studies on politeness and speech acts in Arabic dialects.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the data collection methodology in this dissertation. It also provides an overview of the experiments conducted in this research, the participants, and the procedures for obtaining the data. Throughout the chapter, I aim to show that the choice of the most appropriate data collection method should be primarily based on the research questions and the advantages of each data collection tool relative to those research questions. I also aim to show throughout the discussion that in order to ensure the validity and the reliability of the data, on the one hand, and to gain a more in-depth understanding of the object of study, on the other hand, the research design should aim at a triangulation of different methods. Thus, different methods not only complement each other but also provide more insights into the object of study, which is the production, evaluation, and perception of politeness in Syrian Arabic in this dissertation.

This chapter is organized as follows: in the first section, I go through a detailed exploration of the most frequently used data collection methods in pragmatics, pointing out the advantages and disadvantages of each. Next, I outline the data collection methodologies chosen for this research and attempt to motivate my choice of those methods in light of the research objectives and the respective advantages and disadvantages of each method. After that in the final section, I present the details of the three experiments I conducted, along with the participants, and the procedures for obtaining the data.

#### **4.2 An overview of data collection methods in pragmatics**

The rapid development of the field of pragmatics and its interdisciplinary nature is matched by an equally rapid development in the range of data collection methods. Where questionnaires were once the dominant and the most popular research tools, the desirability of naturally-occurring data paved the way for the increasingly frequent use of observational and corpus data (Kasper 2008). However, the existence of a wide variety of research methods means that the research design needs to be carefully thought out. As Jucker (2009; 2018) argues, the ideal data collection method does not exist; rather, the research design

should be guided by the research objectives, which in turn tally with certain data collection methods. The best research design is one where multi-methods are used to obtain as comprehensive a picture of the object of study as possible (Jucker 2009).

Jucker (2009), borrowing Clark and Bangerter's (2004) trichotomy of research methods, divides data collection methods in pragmatics into three categories: armchair methods, laboratory methods, and field methods. These labels refer to the practices followed by researchers in source linguistics sub-disciplines from which these methods are borrowed. Armchair methods originate in descriptive and corpus linguistics, and they refer to using corpora for collecting data in computer-mediated settings (Fillmore 2011). Laboratory methods draw on methods from psycholinguistics and experimental linguistics and are used to collect data in controlled environments. Finally, field methods, borrowed from sociolinguistics, mean collecting naturally-occurring data, and researchers may use participant observation, questionnaires, interviews, etc. However, despite using these labels to talk about methods in pragmatics, Jucker (2009) has a different interpretation of what each category subsumes. For Jucker (2009), armchair methods refer to dealing with language data that may not be actual data but mere, intuition-based reflections like grammaticality judgements and interviews that tap into speakers' prototypical knowledge of language. Laboratory methods, on the other hand, refer to collecting data using methods in which the analyst has full control over the variables, and they include tools such as questionnaires and roleplays. Field methods include all types of language data that exist in isolation of research projects such as corpora and text messages. Jucker (2009: 1615) maintains, as already mentioned, that no single method has merits that others lack, but each of the different methods constitutes a sound research method that "can be used to increase our knowledge of language and language use as long as they are used judiciously with a clear understanding of their respective strengths and limitations."

In pragmatics, naturally-occurring data have an intuitive appeal, but they pose certain challenges. For example, although recording naturally-occurring data is beneficial for examining speech features that frequently appear in longer chunks of discourse such as turn-taking, overlaps, self-corrections, etc. (Kasper 2008), it is fraught with difficulties, not only because of the "observer's paradox" (Labov 1972) but particularly because recordings

are time consuming and are impossible to control for contextual social variables such as distance and power. Thus, they may not be effective for studies on speech act realization patterns (Cohen 2006).

With recent technological advancements, corpora have become especially popular in pragmatics research. Corpora have the major advantage of making quantitative research on speech acts possible (Flöck and Geluykens 2015) in addition to eliminating research biases in data collection (Leech 2014). However, as Jucker (2009: 1617) notes, corpora may be restrictive in speech act research as certain untagged corpora may only be consulted for specific form/function combination, which results in many non-canonical speech act realization patterns being overlooked.

The limitations of using authentic and naturally-occurring materials can be overcome by resorting to experimental/laboratory methods. One of the most popular experimental tools in pragmatics is the production questionnaire or the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) (Kasper 1999), which allows the research to obtain fast and large amount of comparable data sets that are controlled for various contextual factors. However, despite its practicality, reliability and validity issues have been pointed out in connection to DCT data, specifically, that questionnaire data do not accurately capture actual language use in that they are shorter, less versatile, and do not reflect actual speech organization and rules (Beebe and Cummings 1996; Golato 2003). Still, DCTs are effective in eliciting participants' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge of how norms and contextual factors influence linguistic choices (Kasper 1999: 84). Additionally, and most importantly in relation to the present study, as Barros Garcia and Terkourafi (2015) show self-report questionnaires, a sub-type of the written questionnaire, tap into speakers' past experiences, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors in relation to a specific phenomenon. According to Barros Gracia and Terkourafi (2015: 234), if self-report questionnaires are designed with care and attention, they constitute a good tool for validating observational data "by providing us with targeted access into the participants' internalized standards and understandings of politeness."

Whereas DCTs are typically used for eliciting production data, rating scales are used in pragmatics to elicit comprehension and perception data (Kasper and Dahl 1991).

In a way, then, rating scales are metapragmatic judgments that elicit participants' offline comprehension, since the rating is concerned with decontextualized utterances. Thus, the ratings represent participants' permanent pragmatic knowledge (*ibid*: 219). As Collins, Guitard, and Wood (2009) explain, the major advantage of rating scales is that they can be used to elicit the judgments of a large number of participants in a short period of time. Furthermore, Endresen and Janda (2016: 221) argue, following Dubois (2013), that rating scales are useful in giving quantitative values to essentially qualitative data in order to make them "amenable to statistical analysis."

One last data collection tool to be reviewed here is the roleplay, which has been fairly popular in examining production data in pragmatics. Kasper (1999) defines roleplays as a type of oral data elicitation method in which participants are presented with a description of a situation and are asked to act out a role. It has been pointed out that roleplays approximate authentic discourse on many levels (Kasper and Dahl 1991). For example, roleplays can show how the participants negotiate different speech acts that span multiple turns (Leech 2014). In addition to this, Kasper (1999) notes that roleplays exhibit many of the features that are characteristic of naturally-occurring discourse and facilitate the analysis of multiple turns, with special reference to the role of the interlocutor's uptake. Finally, in roleplays, the researcher has full control over the social variables that may be incorporated in the description of the roleplay situation, which not only allows the researcher to examine the influence of such factors over speech act production strategies but can also show how the values of such factors may be negotiated and reassessed by the participants. However, such is the case with all data collection tools, roleplays have certain disadvantages. As Rintell and Mitchell (1989) maintain, for instance, the researcher cannot know the extent to which the data obtained really represent what the participants would actually say in natural speech situations. Similarly, Kasper (1999) points out that the question of the validity of the data obtained by elicitation is always present.

All in all, this exploration of different data collection methods shows that each tool is appropriate for a specific research objective and that the researcher needs to bear in mind the merits and the downsides of each tool in choosing the optimal researcher design. In the next section, and based on the discussion in this section, I aim to present the data collection

methods chosen for this research, and I hope to show that the choice was motivated by the research questions, the multi-faceted nature of politeness, and the speech act under study, apologies.

### **4.3 Data collection methods in this research**

Following observations about the importance of triangulation (Márquez Reiter and Placencia 2005; Jucker 2009; 2018), I used a multi-method research design for the collection of data in this study; for each of the three experiments I conducted, I used a different research method. As advocated by the above-cited researchers, using multiple research tools can provide a more in-depth and more comprehensive understanding of the object of study. As politeness has many manifestations, metapragmatic, expressive and perceptual, the analysis of these different manifestations necessitates the use of different methods that best suit the elicitation and analysis of the relevant aspect. Another reason for choosing a multi-method approach is that multiple tools not only complement one another but also increase the validity and the reliability of the obtained data. As Márquez Reiter and Placencia (2005) maintain, this is especially desired in qualitative research in order for the researcher's bias to be reduced as much as possible.

The choice of each research method is, thus, chiefly based on the research questions and the respective advantages of data collection methods. From the above-discussion concerning different research methods, it becomes clear that authentic discourse has merits for longitudinal studies, the objective of which is to examine speech features/pragmatic phenomena that are salient and frequent in everyday speech. However, for the examination of specific speech acts, such as apologies, as is the case in this research, naturally-occurring data may not be the most appropriate choice. Apologies are not as frequent as other speech acts such as request and offers. In addition to these considerations, one of my research objectives is to analyze the production of politeness through the realization of the speech act of apology with reference to the social factors of distance and status. It is highly unlikely for such factors to appear in naturally-occurring discourse and in a large enough volume for me to draw any meaningful conclusions. Therefore, given limitations of time and the nature of the speech act under study, I have chosen to collect the data for the production of politeness using roleplay situations. As already noted above, roleplay data approximate

naturally-occurring data in as far as they yield data that contain multiple turns and negotiated speech acts. This is especially important for analyzing the data within an interactional typology in line with Grainger's (2018) framework. Moreover, the use of roleplay situations allows me to examine how the production of politeness is achieved with reference to specific, controlled for social factors: distance and status.

As far as metapragmatic politeness is concerned, I have collected the data using a self-report questionnaire, which is especially helpful in obtaining prototypical views, attitudes, and behaviors concerning language-related matters. Finally, for the perceptual study, I used rating scales in order to obtain the participants' perceptions of the politeness of four naturally-occurring apologies. Having outlined the details of the research design, in the next section, I aim to shed some light on the details of the experiments, in addition to introducing the participants and the procedures for obtaining the data.

#### **4.4 Experiments, participants, and procedures <sup>4</sup>**

##### **4.4.1 Experiment I: Metapragmatic politeness**

The aim of this experiment is to elicit the participants' first-order conceptions and prototypical views of politeness. Therefore, I used a self-report questionnaire to obtain the relevant data. The participants were 10 male and female university students (five male and five female participants), who are native speakers of Syrian Arabic. At the time of collecting the data, which was in the summer of 2019, all the participants were enrolled in the MA program for teaching English as a Foreign Language at the Higher Institute for Languages at Al-Baath University in Homs, Syria.

The self-report questionnaire was distributed to the participants, face to face, in a university classroom. I briefly explained to the participants the aim of the research and asked them to write down, using the Syrian Arabic dialect, whatever comes to their mind without overthinking it. The participants were assured that their names would remain anonymous and that I would only use their initials to avoid possible confusion in the analysis process.

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<sup>4</sup> Information about quantitative parameters in the experiments can be found in Appendix A.

The self-report questionnaire consists of three items, and each item is intended to elicit a relevant aspect of the participants' understanding of politeness (see Appendix B for the Syrian Arabic version and Appendix C for the English translation). In the first question, the participants are asked to define who they think is a polite person. The aim of this question is to elicit not only the participants' views on the definition of politeness but also to identify the range of linguistic descriptors they use in their metapragmatic commentaries about politeness (Kádár and Haugh 2013). In the second question, the participants are requested to talk about the first personal experience that comes to their minds when they were polite to someone else and how they showed politeness. By asking the participants to do this my aim is twofold: first, I wanted to examine the main concerns that underlie the participants' use of politeness (Spencer-Oatey 2002). Second, by talking about their personal experiences, the participants' responses would make it possible for me to link their prototypical views in the first question with their real-life experiences. The third item concerns the participants' rating of the importance of politeness in specific contexts; the participants are presented with a grid in which they had to rate politeness as important, not important, or very important, in the contexts of using politeness with different types of interlocutors: a classmate, a friend, a family member, a university professor, and a stranger. The aim of this question is to establish whether the participants relate politeness to formal or informal contexts.

#### **4.4.2 Experiment II: Expressive politeness**

I used roleplay situations to elicit the production of politeness data. To ensure the validity of the open roleplay situations and to examine the type of data that open roleplays yield, I had conducted a pilot study with four participants, who were second-year MA students at the University of Debrecen. The participants were three females and one male. Two of the participants were close friends and roommates; the other two were acquaintances. The results of this pilot study confirmed the validity of the roleplay situations. The analysis of the data showed that the participants used a wide range of apology strategies, as identified in the literature (Olshtain and Cohen 1983; Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). In addition to this, the apology strategies were long and stretched over multiple turns, which enabled me to examine the negotiability of the speech act. It was interesting to note that the recordings

obtained from the two friends were much more natural, relaxed, and significantly longer than the recordings, which were obtained from the other two participants.

Based on the results of the pilot study, the roleplay data were ready to be administered to the main participants. For this experiment, the same participants who filled in the evaluation questionnaire were invited to take part in the roleplay situations after completing the self-report questionnaire. Before the recording started, I asked the participants, who all knew each other very well, to choose their recording partner in the hope that if they chose someone that they were comfortable around, the quality of the recordings would be better. After the participants had chosen their partners, I ended up with the following pairs: two female-female pairs, two male-male pairs, and one male-female pair. In order to ease the recording process and make sure that the participants understood the task, I created a request situation as an exercise roleplay that each pair was asked to perform before we started recording the four apology roleplay situations.

After the mock roleplay was performed, each pair was handed a sheet that contained the description of the apology roleplay situations. Before proceeding with the recording process, I read out each situation at a time to the participants, asked them to choose the role they wanted to play, and I gave them one minute to prepare before we started recording. After recording the four situations with each pair in the first day, I asked the participants to come back the next day for a second session of recording. This time, however, they were told to exchange the roles they had recorded on the first day. The aim of this was for me to obtain a data set in which all the participants roleplayed all the roles. The result was 40 recordings on four roleplay situations obtained from ten participants, performing two roles.

In designing the roleplay situations (see Appendix D for the Syrian Arabic version of the roleplay situations and Appendix E for the English version), I made sure that the situations are relatable to the participants' experiences as university students, which would increase the quality of the recordings and ease that task for the participants, as the likelihood for the participants having been through such situations in real life is relatively high. The situations contain different combinations of social distance and social status and describe scenarios between different interlocutors including friends, classmates, and university professor/student dyads. Thus, each situation includes a different configuration



of distance and status. It is important to note that I had no prior assumptions about how the participants were going to perceive the values of these social factors when performing the roleplays.

#### **4.4.3 Experiment III: Perceptual politeness**

The aim of this experiment is to examine the participants' perceptions of the politeness of four naturally-occurring apologies, using rating scales. The four apologies are voice messages that I obtained from my friends, who had either sent or received those recordings on two chat platforms: WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. After obtaining the consent of both the sender(s) and the receiver(s) of the four recordings, I designed an online survey using Google Forms. In the first section of the survey the participants are asked to convey information about their age, gender, the degree they were pursuing at the time they participated, and the university at which they were studying. In the second section, the participants are provided with a brief description of the design of the survey, which is divided into four sections, each devoted to the assessment of one apology recording. In the individual sections, the participants are given a detailed description of the context of each apology and the relationship between the speakers, and then they are asked to listen to the apology by clicking on a Google Drive link, which contains the audio recorded apology. I use a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very impolite) to 5 (very polite), to examine the participants' perceptions of the (im)politeness of the apologies. In addition to this scale, the participants are asked to assess the severity of the offense in each situation on a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (very offensive) to 5 (very mild). The participants are also asked to assess the sincerity of each apology by choosing a value on a third 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very insincere) to 5 (very sincere). At the end of the survey, the participants are asked to indicate whether they are interested in doing follow-up interviews.

Before administering the survey to the main participants, I had conducted a mini-pilot study with two male and two female MA students at the University of Debrecen in Hungary. The aim of the mini-pilot was to make sure that the participants understood the tasks well and that they did not encounter any technical problems. For the main study, I posted the survey online to two Facebook groups; the members of one group are Syrian students in Hungary, and the members of the other group are Syrian teaching assistants,

studying in different countries around the world, including Syria. I gave the participants a short explanation of the aims of the experiment and assured them that their responses will be anonymous and would be used for research purposes only. Furthermore, they were told that they could opt out of participation at any point. In order to test the reliability and the internal consistency of the survey, Cronbach's alpha was run on the four apology situations. The values for the four situations ranged from 0.63 to 0.86, indicating the reliability and high reliability of the instrument (see Appendix F)

The participants were 77 Syrian students in different universities around the world, including universities in Syria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, India, Russia, and China. The participants' ages ranged between 22 and 35. There are 50 female participants (64.9%) and 27 male participants (35.1%). 31 of the participants are MA students, 25 are doctoral students, and the rest are BA students. Only 20 participants expressed interest in participating in follow-up interviews.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I introduced the methodological design of this study and showed that in order to obtain a full picture of politeness, a multi-method design is the optimal choice. I also outlined the advantages and disadvantages of the most frequently used data collection tools in pragmatics. It became obvious from this discussion that naturally-occurring data collection methods, despite being the most desired, are not the most appropriate for this research. Instead, a combination of armchair and experimental methods is the most suitable for analyzing the different aspects of politeness. Thus, roleplays were used for the production study and a self-report questionnaire was used to elicit the participants' evaluations of politeness. As for the perceptual study, rating scales were used. The last section of the chapter was devoted to an exploration of the details related to each experiment such as the design of the method, the participants, and the procedures for obtaining the data. Now that those details have been laid out in detail, in the next part of this dissertation, I analyze and discuss the data starting with the participants' metapragmatic views of politeness in Syrian Arabic.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SYRIAN NATIVE SPEAKERS' METAPRAGMATIC CONCEPTIONS OF POLITENESS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I examine the participants' conceptualizations of politeness in Syrian Arabic using a self-report questionnaire. This experiment, then, targets the participants' prototypical views of politeness, which are not related to any situation in particular, and which represent a first-order, user understanding of politeness. The main research question that I aim to address is what the participants' emic views of politeness are and what linguistic labels they use to articulate these views. In relation to this overarching objective, I aim to examine the following research questions:

Q 1: What are the core components that make up the participants' conceptualization of politeness as native speakers of Syrian Arabic?

Q 2: What is the nature of the moral order that underlies the participants' emic perspectives on politeness?

I will also be discussing the ways in which the participants conceive of politeness in certain formal and informal contexts and how that adds to their overall understanding of politeness. I first begin the chapter by analyzing and discussing the data obtained from each item of the questionnaire. Then I present a discussion of the overall results. The chapter ends with a summary of the main conclusions that can be drawn from the discussion throughout.

#### **5.2 Data analysis and discussion**

##### **5.2.1 Question 1: How do you define a polite person?**

In the first item of the self-report questionnaire, the participants are asked to define who they think is a polite person. The aim of this question is to elicit the participants' metalinguistic notions of politeness by identifying the range of linguistic evaluators they

use to talk about politeness (Kádár and Haugh 2013).<sup>5</sup> Since politeness boils down to an evaluation made by speakers about the behavior of others, analyzing the participants' metalinguistic descriptions of politeness offers an invaluable source for understanding the "conceptual underpinnings" of politeness and the moral order(s) that give rise to the participants' evaluations of politeness. Kádár and Haugh (2013) argue that the linguistic evaluators used by speakers may not be restricted to terms such as "polite" and "impolite" but that such evaluators form a web of interconnected lexemes that constitute the semantic field of "politeness" in the relevant language. For example, the semantic field of "politeness" in English includes such evaluators as "courteous," "considerate," "polite," and "friendly" (*ibid*: 191).

As can be expected, the participants used a wide range of linguistic descriptors in their responses. By analyzing these responses, I identified 20 labels that the participants seem to associate with a polite person. It should be noted that these adjectives are not used verbatim but can be inferred from the responses. I will explain the encoding procedure by using an example response from B, one of the male participants:

"A polite person doesn't necessarily say polite words. It is enough for him to be *humble* and *not take things too seriously* when dealing with me. *Flexibility* and *patience* are appreciated qualities."

In this response, four main labels can be extracted: humble, easy-going, flexible, and patient. Clearly, "easy-going" is not used verbatim but can be used to describe someone who is not sensitive about every word he/she hears, which is what B meant. All 20 descriptors are listed in Table 5.1 below in Syrian Arabic, with their English near-equivalents.

Politeness-related labels translated into English	Politeness-related labels in Syrian Arabic
Apologetic	بيعتذر
Balance	متزن
Calm	هدوء بالمواقف

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<sup>5</sup> Besides metalinguistic awareness of politeness, Kádár and Haugh (2013) talk about metacommunicative, metadiscursive, and metacognitive awareness of politeness. These are not within the scope of this dissertation.

Caring	بيهتم بالناس
Cool	برودة أعصابو
Considerate	ما بيتعمد إز عاج حدا\ ما بيسبب الإزعاج لحدا
Easy-going	ما بياخد الأمور بجدية
Flexible	مرونة
Helpful	بيساعد
Honest	صادق\ ما بيعطي وعود فاضية
Humble	متواضع
Non-judgmental	ما بيطلق أحام مسبقة
Patient	بالو طويل
Respectful	بيحترم الآخرين
Selfless	ما بيتعامل بأنانية
Self-respecting	بيحترم حالو
Tolerant	بيتقبل آراء الآخرين
Verbally-refined	ما بيستخدم ألفاظ سيئة\بيختار كلمات حلوة
Well-behaved	بيتعامل بشكل منيح
Well-intentioned	بياخد الأمور بنية حسنة

**Table 5.1 Politeness evaluators in Syrian Arabic**

In order to assess the diversity of the participants' range of descriptors, Type/Token Ratio (TTR) was calculated for each of the participants' responses. TTR, which “weights range of vocabulary for size of speech sample” (Richards 1987: 201), is a useful measure in assessing lexical diversity. A high TTR value (above 0.5) indicates lexical richness. Conversely, a low TTR value shows lack of diversity (*ibid* 1987). Thus, whereas high diversity in the participants' responses would point to lack of consensus over what the participants think politeness is, limited diversity would indicate a more precise conceptualization of politeness. In Table 5.2 below, I present TTR values for each participant<sup>6</sup>:

Participant	TTR value
B	$4/25 \times 100 = 16$
D	$4/13 \times 11 = 30$
DE	$3/19 \times 100 = 15.7$
H	$4/31 \times 100 = 12.9$

<sup>6</sup> The number of tokens and types in all ten responses in itme one is 231 and 34 respectively.

K	$3/33*100 = 9.09$
M	$2/8*100 = 25$
R	$4/27*100 = 14.8$
S(f)	$5/29*100 = 17.2$
S(m)	$2/20*100 = 10$
T	$3/26*100 = 11.5$

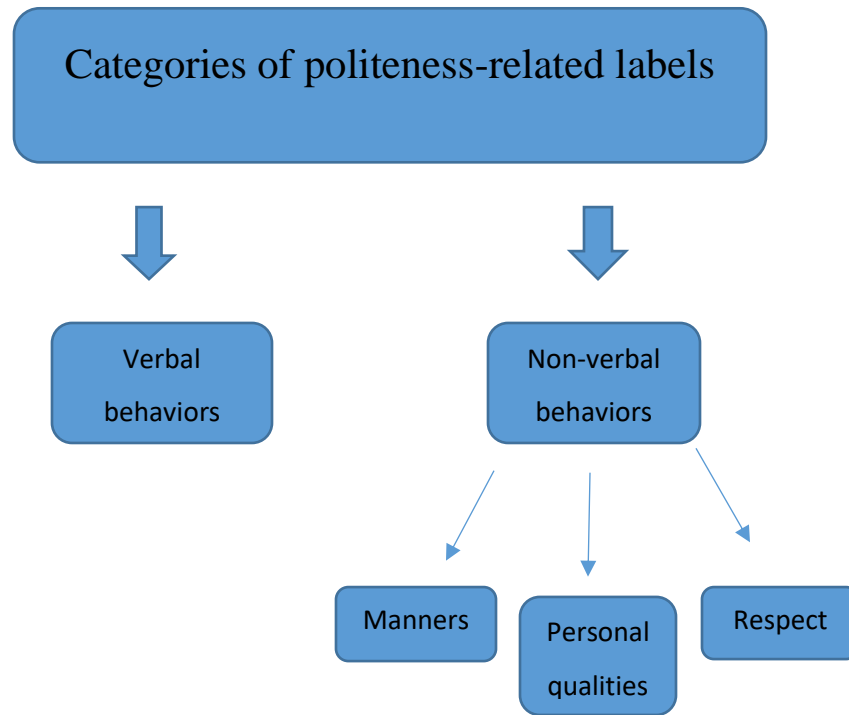
**Table 5.2 TTR values for individual responses**

The values in the table show that the participants' responses are not diverse, which suggests that the evaluators form a small number of core characteristics for politeness in this study. As can also be seen from the table, the frequency of use for the labels for all participants ranges from 3 to 5. The value for the median is 3.5.

In order to classify the evaluators in Table 5.1 into the core elements that constitute a first-order conceptualization of politeness, I applied conventional content analysis, which I briefly outline here. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1278), content analysis is a method of subjectively interpreting the content of a text "through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns." In the first step of conventional content analysis, the researcher goes through a deep and thorough reading of the text, deriving codes based on words found in the text itself. Thus, in this method, the researcher is not guided by any specific theory, but the categorization is text-driven. After initial identification of codes, the researcher applies his/her own analyses of the codes and labels them in key thoughts. These codes are then categorized based on commonalities of ideas. The researcher might then further narrow down the categories by grouping them together or come up with new categories based on new emerging patterns (*ibid*: 1279).

Following the procedures outlined above, I grouped the evaluators in Table 5.1 into two major categories: verbal and non-verbal behaviors, with non-verbal behaviors further divided into three sub-categories. The category of verbal behaviors constitutes a small fraction of the participants' descriptions. In fact, only three descriptions explicitly list instances of verbal behaviors as defining the characteristics of a polite person. Those verbal behaviors include apologizing, saying nice words, and avoiding bad language. The

majority of the participants' responses concern non-verbal behaviors, of which three sub-categories can be identified: manners, personal qualities, and respect. Figure 5.1 below shows the hierarchy of the categories of politeness-related labels.



**Figure 5.1 Categories of politeness-related evaluators**

Naturally, the categories in Figure 5.1 are ad hoc because the participants do not use adjectives proper, as I have already mentioned above. However, I tried to constrain categorization as much as possible in that I followed the following criteria in distinguishing the three sub-categories of non-verbal behaviors: every descriptive phrase that could be substituted for an adjective is counted as a personal quality. As for respect, parts of the responses that contain the lexical item *respect* are categorized under *respect*. Finally, every other response that does not subscribe to either of the above criteria is *manners*.

To illustrate the categories, I present some of the participants' responses in which they make explicit mentions of some of those categories, while in other instances they implicitly refer to the relevant category. The two following examples, for instance, refer to both verbal and non-verbal behaviors.

**(1) H:**

هوي الشخص اللي بيعتذر كل شوي والتاني وما يبطلق أحكام مسبقة عالعالـم- يعني بياخد الأمور بنية حسنة كرد فعل على أي موقف وما بيستخدم ألفاظ سيئة بغير محلا.
'He is the person who apologizes every now and then and doesn't prejudge others. He is well-intentioned as a reaction to any incident, and he doesn't use inappropriate and bad words.

**(2) DE:**

الشخص اللبق هوي الشخص اللي بيحكي مع الناس بطريقة لطيفة بيختار كلمات حلوة وما بيتعمد إزعاج الآخرين.
A polite person is one who speaks to people nicely and chooses nice words also. He doesn't intentionally hurt others.

It can be seen that H's response directly refers to apologizing and avoiding bad language as verbal manifestations of politeness, whereas DE cites using nice words as an aspect of politeness. Furthermore, H's definition refers to certain personal qualities as being well-intentioned, and DE invokes speaking *manners* in the form of addressing others nicely in addition to citing the personal quality of being considerate to others.

As far as *manners* is concerned, the participants refer to manners of speaking, comporting one's body language and facial expressions well, manners of greeting, treating well people in general and women in particular. The following examples show how the participants invoke the above-mentioned notions of manner:

**(3) K:**

ممکن تعرف الشخص المهذب ببساطة... من طريقة تعاملو مع البنات أو النساء بشكل عام. وكمأن الشخص اللبق ببسعى لمساعدة زملاءو وأصدقائه والناس يلي حولو.
You can recognize a polite person simply by the way he deals with girls or women in general. Also, a polite person seeks to help his colleagues, friends, and the people around him.

**(4) D:**

بتعرف الشخص المهذب من أسلوب حكيو واختيارو لألفاظو حتى من طريقة وقفو وتعابير وجهو.
You can identify a polite person through the way he speaks and his choice of words. You can even recognize him by the way he stands and controls his facial expressions.



In the examples above, it can be seen that K's description of politeness is underlain by the idea of behaving like a gentleman, which encompasses, among other things, treating women nicely and properly. In a similar vein, D's first-order description refers to another aspect of manners related to speaking and body language in general. It is interesting to note that in K's response, he refers to certain personal qualities that a polite person is presupposed to have, as he seems to think. Mainly, a polite person is supposed to be helpful and calm.

Personal qualities are a major category of politeness-related evaluators. In this respect, B's definition repeated below is interesting in that B explicitly notes that politeness may not necessarily be expressed verbally, and he connects politeness with non-verbal behaviors and possessing certain people-oriented qualities. Therefore, B seems to address a folk notion that politeness is mainly a verbal behavior by orienting to the importance of evaluating a person's actions not his/her words in the process of evaluation.

**(5) B:**

<p>الإنسان المهذب ما ضروري يقول كلمات مهذبة، بيكفي إنو يكون متواضع وما ياخذ الأمور جد لما بيتعامل معي. المرونة وطولة البال شي كثير حلو.</p>
<p>A polite person doesn't necessarily say polite words. It is enough for him to be humble and not take things too seriously when dealing with me. Flexibility and patience are appreciated qualities.</p>

Another definition also refers to a host of personal quality evaluators that a polite person is thought to have such as being honest, caring, and selfless. The definition is the following:

**(6) S(f):**

<p>هوي الشخص اللي بيتعامل باتزان وبيحترم خصوصية الأشخاص اللي حولو. اللي بيحكي بصدق وما بيعطي وعود فاضية ما فيه ينفذها. بيهتم بالناس اللي حولو وما بيتعامل بأنانية.</p>
<p>He is the person who treats others with balance and respects the privacy of those around him. He is the person who speaks truthfully and doesn't make promises he can't keep... cares about the people around him and is not led by selfishness.</p>

This description by S(f) not only involves personal qualities but also contains the notion of respect, which is the third category of non-verbal behaviors that make up the participants'

folk-theoretic notions of politeness. Another definition, offered by R, elaborates on the notion of respect and its association with politeness.

**(7) R:**

<p>هو الشخص الذي يحترم الناس الآخرين وبيتقبل جميع آراؤن ويحترم حالو كمان. الإنسان اللبق بيخلي أفكارو لحالو وبيتقبل أفكار الجميع, بيتعامل بشكل منيح مع الكل.</p>
<p>He is the person who respects others and accepts their opinions. He also respects himself. A polite person keeps his opinions to himself, accepts the ideas and opinions of others and treats everyone equally well.</p>

Although R does not elaborate on what she precisely means by respect and self-respect, in the Syrian context, respect refers, among other things, to acknowledging the status and dignity of others and not assuming over-familiarity by being aware of others' social space and privacy. Self-respect, however, stems from abiding by the codes of acceptable behavior and setting personal boundaries that a self-respecting person does not allow others to disregard or cross.

All in all, the participants' emic views of politeness as seen in the results of this questionnaire item are interesting in two ways. First, the participants' conception of politeness as mainly consisting of non-verbal behaviors contrasts with B&L's (1987) analysis of politeness as a predominantly linguistic/verbal phenomenon and offers support for the way politeness is theorized in the discursive approach as being made up of both verbal and non-verbal behaviors (Watts 2003; Mills 2005; Locher 2006). Second, the participants' folk-theoretic notions of politeness overlap with notions that have been reported in the literature by native speakers of other languages, which offers support for Haugh's (2004) argument that the basic components of politeness are universally shared but may have language-specific variations. For example, Blum-Kulka (2005) notes that her Israeli informants associate politeness with concepts such as tolerance, restraint, good manners, and showing deference and niceness to people. As shown earlier, tolerance, good manners, and niceness have been reported by the participants in this study to be components of politeness. In a similar vein, in Greek, Sifianou and Tzanne (2010) report that their informants seemed to associate politeness mainly with non-verbal behaviors. Moreover, kindness, selflessness, and generosity contribute to Greek participants'

conception of politeness in that study. Finally, the results reported above also overlap with the results discussed in Kerkam (2015), who compares definitions of politeness by native speakers of Libyan Arabic and native speakers of British English. Consideration for others is an important aspect of politeness for both groups. Moreover, both groups emphasize the importance of showing consideration through good manners, which for the British is comprised of respect, courtesy, patience and tolerance. For the Libyans, on the other hand, good manners also incorporate truthfulness and honesty.

However, Kádár and Haugh (2013) warn that surface equivalences of politeness evaluators among different languages should not be taken as conceptual equivalences but rather analogous notions. For example, the English concept of “politeness” and its equivalent in Japanese “reigi” have different connotations. Whereas in English politeness is often associated with courtesy, friendliness, respect, thoughtfulness, etc., the Japanese concept of “reigi” subsumes notions of status-sensitive respect, reverence, discretion, and social position (*ibid*: 190-191). Thus, in line with these observations, the cross-linguistic parallels in the notion of politeness between Syrian Arabic and other languages such as English and Hebrew cannot be taken at face value; insights into the participants’ emic understandings of the connotations of politeness-related evaluators are crucial before any conclusions concerning cross-linguistic conceptual equivalence in first-order notions of politeness can be drawn.

### **5.2.2 Question 2: Talk about the first personal experience that comes to your mind when you were polite to someone else. What was it? And how did you convey politeness?**

The aim of the second item of the self-report questionnaire is to elicit the participants’ thoughts about real-life contexts that call for politeness. As the question shows, the elicitation method is personal narratives, which are a common practice in politeness research, according to Spencer-Oatey (2002: 535). In addition to eliciting the participants’ views on politeness-related contexts, this question also attempts to identify a possible link between the participants’ views on politeness, as expressed in the first question, and their real-life experiences. In this way, I will be able to examine whether or not their prototypical views on politeness are different from their real-life practices. For example, if a participant

had mentioned respect in his/her definition of a polite person, a reported account of him/her behaving respectfully or citing respect as an instance of politeness would lend more support for his/her notions of politeness. Consequently, this would increase the validity of the self-report questionnaire used in this study.

Indeed, there seems to be a relationship between the participants' folk-theoretic notions of politeness and their reported personal narratives. As the results reveal, all the politeness-related categories that the participants mentioned in their definitions also form elements in their politeness-related stories.<sup>7</sup> Only two participants reported stories that refer to an aspect of politeness, which they did not invoke in their definitions. Still, those aspects have already been identified by other participants as part of their first-order conceptions of politeness as constituted of good manners, certain personal qualities, respect, and verbal niceness.

One of the participants, who mentioned verbal niceness and treating others well as components of politeness, discusses an occasion that involved her being nice and polite to her university professor by using overtly nice words, as can be seen in the following response:

**(8) DE:**

<p>بشكل عام بحاول كون دائما لطيفة مع الآخرين.. بس كموقف بتذكر كنت إلي فترة مو شايعة دكتورتي بالكلية ولما شفتها حسيت حالي مبالغة بالتهذيب يمكن لأنو كثير بعزها للدكتورة ما بعرف. كان واضح بكلامي دكتورتي الغالية الرائعة واستخدمت وقتا كثير صفات إيجابية إلها..</p>
<p>Generally, I always try to be nice to others... On a specific occasion, however, I remember it had been a long time since I last saw my university professor. When I saw her, I felt that I was very polite to the point where I might have exaggerated it, maybe because I hold this professor in such high esteem, I don't know. This was obvious in the way I chose my words, "my dear and wonderful professor." I used a lot of positive adjectives in addressing her back then...</p>

DE's example above raises two important points: the first point is related to the way university professors are viewed with much respect in the Syrian society, which is noted by the participants themselves in the third item. The second point relates to DE's

<sup>7</sup> This may have been a priming effect from the first item in the questionnaire (See, for example, Wagner and Koutstaal 2002).

commentary on the possibility of her verbally nice behavior being viewed as exaggerated or insincere. DE seems to relate explicit acts of politeness to potential negative evaluations. This observation is in line with Locher's (2006) stipulation that over-politeness may be a negatively evaluated behavior. The two points raised here have also been discussed in the literature. More specifically, it appears to be a tendency among Arab informants to hold university teachers or people with higher educational levels in high esteem. For example, Jebahi (2011), who examined apologies in Tunisian Arabic, notes that his participants produced more polite apologies when the addressee was a university professor. As far as the link between politeness and insincerity is concerned, Blum-Kulka (2005) reports that Israeli informants associated politeness with hypocrisy, especially in the public domain.

Another participant, who defined a polite person as someone who treats women nicely, talks about an experience that involved him acting nicely to one of his female classmates.

**(9) K:**

<p>كنت مرة بقاعة بالجامعة وزحمة كثير المقاعد كلها مشغولة وأنا قاعد ع كرسي جنب الباب. المهم فجأة بتفوت بنت ما بعرفها، زحلتها طريق حتى تفوت عالقاعة وإذ بتقعد عالكرسي يلي أنا كنت قاعد عليه ظنا منها إني قمت إليها. طبعاً كان لزاماً عليّ إني أنا أقعد عالارض أو ضل واقف لقريب الساعة. كان الأمر عادي بالنسبة إليّ وكنت مبسوط بهالشي يلي عملتو.</p>
<p>I was in a crowded classroom. All seats had been occupied and I was sitting in a chair next to the door when suddenly a girl I don't know comes in. I stand up to make way for her, but she sits in my chair thinking I left it for her to occupy. Of course, I was obligated to sit on the floor or remain standing for about an hour. It was normal for me, and I was glad about what I did.</p>

This response shows how K and his classmate orient to different but related sets of implicit norms, which gave rise to their respective evaluations of the situation and led K to act the way he did: politely. As evidenced by her interpretation of K's behavior as a polite gesture, the classmate appears to orient to what Spencer-Oatey and Kádár (2016: 6) refer to as injunctive norms, which refer to what individuals, as part of society, consider appropriate or inappropriate behavior and also extends to the types of behavior that they evaluate as approved or disapproved of. In this particular context, a man giving up his chair for a woman is approved of. At the same time, according to K, as he later told me, he was driven by two considerations, when he did not point out his classmate's erroneous interpretation

of his true intentions when he left the chair. The first consideration is that K thought that his classmate needed help, and secondly, he wanted to avoid letting her down by making it clear that he did not want to give up his seat for her. K understands that he would have been evaluated as impolite if he had violated the tacit social expectation of a man leaving his seat for a woman, which was at play in that incident. K's appeal to norms in assessing the situation is clear in the way he phrased his reasoning using 'I was obligated.'

Finally, in relation to this discussion, it is worth noting how some of the participants' narratives overtly referred to the positive impact of politeness on social relationships and how people react when they are treated with politeness. For example, M maintains that his polite behavior helped him bond with a female colleague.

**(10) M:**

مرة تعرفت على زميلة بالجامعة, شعرت وقتها إنني تصرفت بلباقة معها وباحترام وهذا الشيء خلق نوع من المودة والصدقة بيناتنا.
When I first met a classmate, I felt that I was tactful and respectful to her. This created a sort of feeling of cordiality and friendship between us.

Similarly, R explains that her polite behavior, in response to a person who acted impolitely to her, got him to finally apologize for his behavior and thank her for her respectful attitude. R gives the following narrative:

**(11) R:**

لما كنت عم أعطي بالمعهد, طالبة من طلابي ضربت رفيقها ضرب مبرح. أنا والإدارة اتصلنا بأهلها لنخبرن شو عملت, و بيا صار يرفع صوتو ويحكي كلام طالع نازل عني وعن المعهد. أنا قلتلو إني تصرف البنت غلط, و ما رح نزل مستوى المعهد أو مستواي بالرد ع هالكلام [...] وسكرت السماعة بعد ما شرحت الموقف بالتفصيل. هوي بعد نص ساعة, اتصل يعتذر مني واتشكرني و انتشكر الإدارة ع أخلاقنا العالية وردنا المحترم بهداك الموقف.
I used to teach at an institute. One of my students beat her classmate so severely. The administration and I called up her parents to tell them what she did. Her father started shouting and saying bad and inappropriate things about me and the institute. I told him that his daughter acted in a wrong way and that I wasn't about to stoop to this level and insult the institute by having this conversation. I hung up after I explained the situation in detail. After about half an hour, he called up to apologize to me, and he thanked both me and the institute for our high morals and for our respectful response to that incident.

M and R's comments seem to reveal the participants' understanding of politeness to be more than an "other-oriented" behavior, as might have been understood by examining their responses in the first question only. These comments also show that for the participants, politeness is not only an "other-oriented" behavior but has a "self-oriented" and rewarding function (Haugh 2004). Furthermore, these two aspects are interconnected: being polite to others obviously shows concern for them, but at the same time, shows that one is oriented to how others think of oneself. This is clear in R's attitude towards the incident she reported. She keeps behaving politely as a reflection of her own personality and her concern with being perceived as polite throughout.

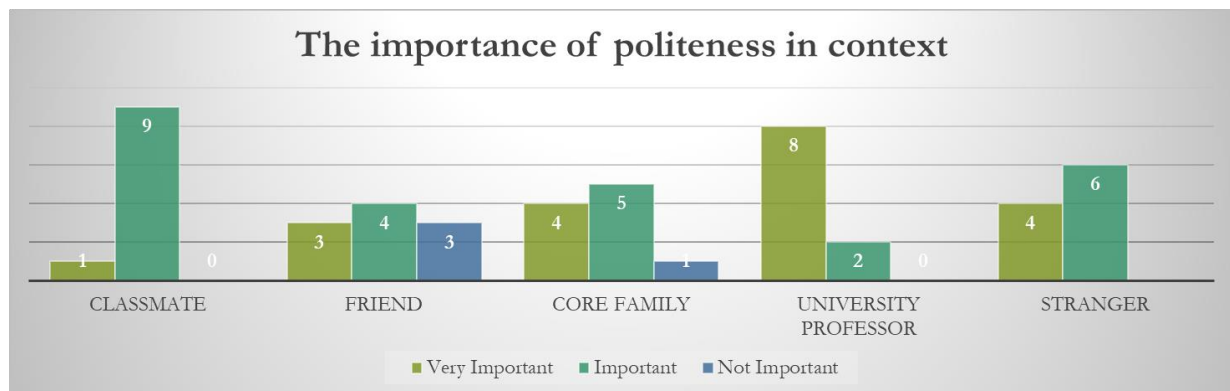
Such an understanding of self-oriented politeness resonates with Haugh's (2004) analysis of the underlying conceptions of politeness in English and Japanese as consisting of both other-oriented and self-oriented aspects. However, it should be noted that despite clear parallels between Syrian Arabic, on the one hand, and Japanese and English, on the other hand, the connotations of other- and self-orientation in politeness are different. Whereas in Japanese and English, other-oriented politeness and self-oriented politeness mean that one thinks highly of others but not too highly of oneself, respectively (Haugh 2004: 20), in Syrian Arabic, other-oriented politeness means being considerate and attentive to others, while self-oriented politeness implies that polite behavior is a reflection of oneself or one's personality, which is to be shown to others. In the next and final self-report item, the participants' views on the need for politeness in relation to specific contexts are presented and discussed.

### **5.2.3 Question 3: Rate the importance of being polite to the following people by checking the right option in the table below. Please explain your answer.**

In the last item of the self-report questionnaire, the participants are asked to assess the importance of politeness in different contexts. More specifically, they are asked to rate the need for politeness to people they have different relationships with such as a core family member, a classmate, a friend, a university professor, and a total stranger. The participants are presented with a grid, and they are asked to rate the importance of politeness as *important*, *not important*, and *very important*. After that, they are asked to justify and comment on their ratings. The aim of this question is to find out whether the participants,

prototypically, associate politeness with formal settings (university professor, classmate, and stranger) or with informal settings (family and friends), or whether there is something more to their ratings, as might be revealed by their comments on their own ratings.

The overall ratings show that the results are mixed; all the participants think politeness is important in all given settings but to different degrees. However, two observations are worth pointing out. First, the participants rated politeness as *not important* only in the context of the friend and family. Second, only in the context of the university professor did the majority of the participants rate politeness as *very important*. The results of the ratings across all settings are presented in Figure 5.2 below.



**Figure 5.2 The importance of politeness in context**

As can also be seen in Figure 5.2, the participants rated politeness as *very important* to family and to a stranger, but in the case of the friend, the ratings *very important* and *not important* were each chosen by three participants. The rating *important* was chosen by the majority in the case of the classmate. As far as being polite to a professor is concerned, most of the participants comment that politeness is important/very important to university professors because of their high social status and by virtue of them being people who possess higher-order knowledge. In addition to the status of the professor, some of the participants explained that, in dealing with a professor, the setting is usually very formal, and such formality requires politeness. In the following explanation, the participant justifies her rating by referring to the factor of knowledge.



**(12) S(f):**

كثير مهم نحترم الشخص المليء واللي عطانا من وقتو وعلمو ومعرفتو غير إنو إنسان واجب احترامو.
It is very important that we respect a knowledgeable person, who gave us his time and knowledge. Besides, as a human being, he must be respected.

Another participant, on the other hand, talks about politeness to a university professor in terms of social obligations, his/her status, and the overall formality of the setting, as can be seen in example (13) below:

**(13) R:**

طبعا الدكتور الجامعي هوي مركز مهم أنا مفروض عليي كون كثير لبقة واتبع بروتوكول معين معو، لأنو العلاقة رسمية جدا ومو شخصية.
Of course, a university professor is a high-ranking individual. I'm obliged to be very polite and follow a certain protocol in dealing with him because the relationship is very formal. It's not personal.

In her account above, R explicitly appeals to the role of social norms or “protocols,” in her own words, as the backdrop against which her reasoning, and, by extension her behavior, are formed in such situations. Another participant also refers to societal differences in the way university professors are approached around the world, but he also explains that he prefers to “follow” the Syrian style, as an overt reference to Syrian norms of behavior, as can be seen in the following example:

**(14) K:**

هلا كل بلد إلو عاداتو بهي القصة مثلا بكندا أحيانا بنادوا للدكتور بدون لقب وعادي. أنا بفضل الستايل السوري باللباقة والألقاب مع الدكاترة والمعيدين والمناصب.
Now, each country has its own customs when it comes to these things. For example, in Canada, sometimes they go on a first-name basis with a university professor, and it's normal. I prefer the Syrian style of politeness and using address terms with professors, TAs, and people of high status.

As I have already mentioned in the discussion of the second self-report item, the participants seem to orient to a self-oriented function of politeness. Further evidence in support of this observation comes from one participant, T, who maintains that respecting a university professor is important for establishing a good relationship inside the classroom.

Thus, politeness is not only important from the perspective of the professor but also as a means for making a student's life smoother and his/her learning experience more fruitful. This can be seen in T's commentary below:

**(15) T:**

احترام الدكتور/ة مهم لتكوين علاقة جيدة أثناء المحاضرات.
Respecting a university professor is important in forming good relationships during lectures.

This self-oriented aspect of politeness is further elaborated on in the participants' explanations of the importance of politeness to a classmate. Overall, the participants give two overarching reasons that makes politeness a strategic choice in the context of dealing with a classmate. The first reason has to do with the fact that a classmate is someone a person spends a lot of time with, so a relationship based on politeness is preferred. The following response shows this.

**(16) H:**

لأن حدا بتواجد معو فترات طويلة واللباقة بتزيد الاحترام وما نصيحة الواحد يتعلق مع العالم ويقلل زوء معون وهوي بدو يقضي معو نص نهارو.
...Because a classmate is someone you spend a lot of time with, and politeness increases respect. It isn't at all a pleasant situation for one to get into conflicts with others and be discourteous to them, as he is bound to spend half of his day around them.

It can be seen from H's explanation that, in addition to spending a lot of time with the classmate, part of the reason why politeness is important in such situations relates to speaker-oriented motives. Another participant also points out a self-oriented reason for the importance of politeness to a classmate. She argues that politeness creates a positive atmosphere and improves the quality of relationships.

**(17) S(f):**

بغض النظر عن الشخص اللي لازم كون لبقة معو، تصرفي بيدل على شخصيتي وأنا بعتر حالي لبقة مع الكل لأنني بقم الإنسان كقيمة عالية جدا والتصرف بلباقة بيخلق جو إيجابي ويحسن من العلاقات بين الناس.
Regardless of who the person is, the way I behave reflects my own personality, and I consider myself to be polite to all people. This is because I hold human beings in such

high esteem, and acting politely creates a positive atmosphere and improves the relationships among people.
---

On the other hand, M explains his rating based on his understanding of politeness as a reciprocal behavior, so that acting politely is a disarming measure and is expected to be returned.

**(18) M:**

لأنني أنتظر منه يكون مهذب وليق معي بالتصرفات.
Because I expect him to act politely and elegantly with me.

Finally, one participant comments that politeness is important only to a certain level.

**(19) S(m):**

مهم بس بحدود لأن الأدب الزائد ممكن يولد انطباع سلبي بيهيك حالة.
It's important but within boundaries because over-politeness might leave a negative impression in such a case.

S(m)'s explanation as to why he thinks politeness to a classmate is *important* but *not very important* is, again, reminiscent of the discussion concerning the link between over-politeness and negative evaluations, which has already been noted in the previous section, and which supports Locher's (2006) conception of over-politeness as a negatively evaluated behavior.

As for politeness with a stranger, the participants argue that it is *important* and/or *very important* because good impressions are crucial when meeting people for the first time. For example, the following participant, who rated politeness in this context as *very important*, explains his choice as follows:

**(20) B:**

لأنو الانطباع الأول بأي علاقة إلو دور مهم جدا.
Because the first impression in any relationship is very important.

Another participant shares B's view that politeness to a stranger is *very important* but adds the following account:

(21) K:

هلاً أنا بشوف إنو إذا بنيت جدار سميك من الاحترام بأول لقاء هذا شي رح يمهد لعلاقة أكثر وثوقية بالمستقبل.
I feel that if I established a strong basis of respect on the first meeting, this would pave the way for a more solid relationship in the future.

K's perspective is rooted in the possibility of future contact with a first-time stranger, which are better established on solid grounds that only politeness and respect can secure. Overall, the participants' explanations seem to indicate their view of politeness as a conscious behavior to impress people and possibly establish a relationship with them.

In the context of family, as I have already mentioned, the majority of the participants rated politeness either as *very important* or *important*. Taking into consideration individual variations in the explanations given for the ratings, the premise of the participants' motivation for their ratings seems to relate to the importance of family itself. For instance, some of the participants commented that politeness in family settings is part of politeness in general, so it is important. However, because of family ties, politeness is more spontaneous than pre-meditated, as in dealing with non-family. The following explanation by H refers to this point:

(22) H:

هوي مهم لأنن أهل ولأنو اللبق لبق مع الكل بس أغلب الأوقات التعامل مع أهل ببيكون فيو عفوية أكثر من التعامل مع غرباء اللي معون بتحسب كل كلمة بتقولا أما أهل فبيتعاملو مع الموضوع بعفوية أكثر بس طبعاً في اعتذار في حال صار هيك موقف.
It is important because they're family and because someone will be polite with all people. But most of the time, with family, it's more spontaneous than when you are around strangers, with whom you'd have to watch out for every word you say. Family members take it more spontaneously, but, of course, apologies are important in case a situation calls for it.

In line with H's remarks about spontaneity among family members, another participant maintains that flouting the rules of politeness can always happen, and implies that this is allowed because it is a family setting.

**(23) DE:**

كمان هون الاحترام واللباقة مهمة وكثير بس مو دائما الظروف بتسمح. أيام بنكون تعبانيين لدرجة بننسى فيها أو منتعب من إنو نقول حتلى شكرا أو بيسلمو.
Politeness and courtesy are also very important in this context, but circumstances may not always allow us to be polite. At times, we may be so tired that we forget or we become so tired to even say thanks.

As already established, the importance of family itself seems to motivate the participants' ratings of politeness in this setting. This stance is more explicitly articulated by the participants, who rated politeness as *very important*. For example, the following participant explains his choice in terms of family precedence for him.

**(24) B:**

العيلة بتاخذ الأولوية عندي.
Family is the topmost priority form me.

Finally, one participant makes a point that is worth mentioning in this discussion. She argues that politeness within family is very important because family is the place where people learn how to be polite. Thus, she implicitly refers to the central role of the family. She further adds that, overall, behaving politely to others is a reflection of how family members treat each other.

**(25) D:**

مهم إنو نحترم بعض ونتعامل بلباقة مع بعض خاصة إنو هالشى منتعلمو من العيلة نفسها وتعاملنا اللبق واحترامنا للناس الثانين بيبعكس تعاملنا ضمن عيلتنا.
It is important for us (family members) to be respectful and courteous to each other especially that we learn this from family itself. Our being courteous and respectful to others reflects how we treat each other as family.

To wrap up the discussion of the participants' ratings, I now present an account of the participants' opinions concerning politeness with friends. In this context, the participants gave almost equal ratings to each value for politeness, as is could be seen in Figure 5.2 above. Social distance seems to be the determining factor for all the ratings. On the one hand, the participants, who rated politeness to a friend as *not important*, explain that acting

casually and spontaneously with a friend is what matters because they know each other well and can feel relaxed in each other's company. Moreover, as one participant warns in the following example, being overly polite can make the relationship distant.

**(26) DE:**

لازم كون طبيعي مع الصديق ولهيك زيادة الأدب واللباقة بهيك حالة بتخفف العلاقة. طبعاً هاد ما بيعني إنو نقال أدب أبداً.
I'm supposed to act normally with a friend. Therefore, in this case, being overly polite and courteous may make the relationship distant. Of course, this doesn't at all mean that it's okay for us to be impolite.

On the other hand, those who think politeness to a friend is *important* and/or *very important* maintain that respect and politeness are necessary to maintain relationships and even fortify them. For instance, H in the explanation below, argues that despite closeness to a friend, politeness is needed to secure the future of the friendship in contrast with impoliteness that tends to build up and ruin friendships.

**(27) H:**

لأنو أد ما صرنا رفقات مقربين هاد مو يعني نقال من قيمة الشخص بتصرف غير لبق مننا. واللباقة بتقوي العلاقة على عكس قلة اللبابة اللي بتخرب العلاقة بسبب تراكم المواقف اللي فيها قلة تهذيب.
No matter how close we become with a friend, this doesn't mean that we can disrespect the other person by acting discourteously. Courtesy solidifies the relationship, unlike lack of courtesy, which ruins relationships as incidents that involve impoliteness tend to build up.

In addition to the role of politeness in sustaining friendships, the participants seem to orient to the status of politeness as a symmetrical behavior, especially in this context. In other words, they maintain that friendships are built on "mutual respect" and that there is always an expectation that polite behavior should be returned. The following explanation shows this idea clearly:

**(28) R:**

هاد أهم شي لأنو إذا هوي ما عاملني بلبابة ما رح ارضى وأنا بالمقابل بدي شاركو بهادا الشعور والاحترام المتبادل.
--

This (politeness to a friend) is the most important thing. I won't accept it if he's impolite to me. I, on the other hand, should make this feeling of respect mutual.

In the results of this question, the influence of the Syrian ethos on evaluations of politeness is most clear in the way the participants evaluate family relations and the status of university professors. The Syrian society is built on solid nuclear family relationships, and Syrians grow up learning that family ties are the most important relationships they have, as Syrians view such ties as a network of support. As Nydell (2006) explains, Syrians prioritize family bonds and seek to maintain such bonds at all costs.

Many participants regard the context of dealing with a university professor a formal one, so politeness is a normal and expected behavior given such a formality of situation. However, being polite and respectful to a university professor is not only limited to considerations of formality. These aspects are rather accounted for by considering the fact that university professors enjoy such respect because they are regarded as cultivated and knowledgeable individuals. However, it is worth noting that some of the participants orient to this Syrian norm of regarding university teachers as high-ranking people as a form of obligation, which they hardly have any choice in flouting. Therefore, abiding by such an obligation may not always reflect sincere feelings of respect towards professors. This opinion is clearly voiced by H and B, respectively, in their explanation of why politeness is important to university professors.

**(29) H:**

أوه. كثير كثير مهم لأنو ما منسترجي! لأن أشخاص تعبوا كثير لوصلو للي هني فيه ويبكون صعب عليون هني تقبل حدا تعامل معون بلا لباقة.

Oh, it's very, very important because we wouldn't dare not to (be polite)! These (university professors) are people who have struggled a lot to be where they are, and it is difficult for them accepting someone who isn't polite to them.

**(30) B:**

سواء بحبو أو لا, لازم كون مهذب معو لأنه أولا أكبر مني وثانيا لأنو صاحب علم.

Whether I like him or not, I must be polite to him. First, because he is older than me, and second, because he is a person of knowledge.

Overall, then, the results indicate that the participants seem to view politeness as a strategic tool that is instrumental in maintaining harmonious relationships with family and professors (Barros García and Terkourafi 2014). Furthermore, and based on the importance given to politeness in interacting with strangers, politeness also appears to have a superficial aspect. The idea that politeness serves as a social façade has also been reported in Blum-Kulka (2005).

### **5.3 Discussion of the results**

Based on the results of this experiment as seen in the participants' emic views of politeness, their descriptions, personal narratives, ratings, and explanations, a number of points can be made in characterizing politeness in Syrian Arabic. Politeness in Syrian Arabic seems to be viewed as mostly a non-verbal behavior, despite having verbal manifestations. The major categories that make up the participants' first-order view of politeness are manners, certain personal qualities, respect, and verbal niceness. The participants' comments also reveal a second aspect of politeness, which appears to be viewed as not only an "other-oriented" behavior but also a "self-oriented behavior." This characterization resonates with Haugh's (2004) analysis of politeness in Japanese and English, despite emic differences between the understandings of self-orientation in Syrian Arabic, on the one hand, and English and Japanese, on the other hand. However, the other- and self-oriented aspects of politeness have several connotations, as understood by the participants' various explanations in the second and third questionnaire items. The first dimension of self-oriented politeness centers on the notion that a person behaves politely as a reflection of his/her own personality, which s/he wants others to view positively. The second dimension of other-oriented politeness is that one behaves politely with the tacit understanding that his/her behavior will be reciprocated. This connects to another dimension of self-oriented politeness in Syrian Arabic, which lies in the view of politeness as a tool to maintain and ease current relationships and to advance potential ones. The idea of the utilitarian function of politeness has already been documented in first-order politeness literature such as Barros García and Terkourafi's (2014) work on politeness in American English and Peninsular Spanish. Finally, politeness is noted to be a self-oriented behavior in as far as the



participants comment on its rewarding effects not only for receivers but also for initiators of polite behaviors.

The participants' comments also show their orientation to other aspects of politeness, which have also been noted in the literature. The participants refer to the connection between politeness and hypocrisy, evident in the way they argue that polite behavior may stem out of mere social obligations and may not be motivated by sincere feelings. The connection between politeness and hypocrisy has been mentioned by Blum-Kulka (2005) in her examination of politeness in Israel. In addition to this, the results show that the participants evaluate exaggerated polite behavior as a behavior that may be negatively evaluated, which supports the way over-politeness has been theorized in relational work paradigm as a behavior that goes beyond what is expected but still might be open to negative evaluations (Locher and Watts 2008).

Another major aim of this experiment was to identify the nature of the moral order that underlies the participants' emic views of politeness. A closer examination of the categories that make up a first-order concept of politeness in Syrian Arabic, as outlined in the discussion, shows that the moral order is based on notions of respect, reciprocity, and consideration for others. Above all, and as is witnessed in the participants' evaluations of politeness in context, family relations and the role of social status seem to figure as prominent aspects of the cultural and moral norms that the participants fall back on in their evaluations.

Finally, as far as the participants' evaluations of the importance of politeness in contexts are concerned, the participants' ratings indicate that they consider politeness a salient and taken-for-granted aspect of everyday behavior. This treatment goes against Locher and Watts's (2008) characterization of politeness as a behavior that goes beyond what is normally expected in any given context. However, the fact that the participants consistently rate politeness as very important in contexts that are associated with formality and distance (the professor, the stranger, and the classmate) while results appear to be less conclusive in less formal contexts (the family and the friend contexts) suggests that the participants make a distinction between formal politeness and informal politeness. Whereas formal politeness is used in distant contexts and is manifested in respect,

deference, and the use of titles, informal politeness is at play with family members and friends. Informal politeness is still based on respect but is characterized as being more spontaneous, cordial, and casual.

Overall, except for the fact that politeness is treated as a normal and expected behavior, generally, the way the participants evaluate politeness mostly subscribes to second-wave theorization, thus, lending support for the discursive view of politeness. Furthermore, the results seem to contribute to cross-linguistic evidence for the sharedness of first-order notions of politeness. Specifically, as shown in Haugh (2004), Kádár and Haugh (2013), and Barros García and Terkourafi (2014), notions of respect, manners, verbal refinement and niceness, and consideration for others are associated with first-order conceptions of politeness in English, Spanish, and Japanese, among other languages. In addition to this, the parallels between the way politeness in Syrian Arabic is seen as a utilitarian, self-and other-oriented, and conscious behavior and the way it is viewed as such in Hebrew, Japanese, Peninsular Spanish, and American English, suggest that prototypical politeness notions, despite emic peculiarities in interpretations, can nevertheless be cross-linguistically valid notions (Haugh 2004).

## **5.4 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to examine Syrian native speakers' conceptualizations of politeness, the first of three targeted aspects of politeness in this research. Such evaluations involve native speakers' emic perspectives on various aspects of politeness including its definition, assessments of its importance, and the various contexts that call for it. The main objective of examining the participants' evaluations of politeness in Syrian Arabic was to characterize the nature of politeness in Syrian Arabic and the basic components that make up such a concept in the speakers' minds. Moreover, identifying those basic components allows me to understand the social and cultural norms that constitute the moral order, which forms the background against which evaluations of politeness are made. Another objective in this experiment was to analyze the participants' view of politeness in relation to context and whether the participants associate politeness mainly with formal and/or casual contexts.

In order to achieve this, I presented and discussed the results of each self-report item in light of the participants' first-order definitions, personal narratives, and assessments of the importance of politeness. The discussion of the results, then, allowed me to draw up a number of conclusions in relation to the way the participants view politeness in Syrian Arabic. The results showed that politeness is both a verbal and non-verbal behavior and that it has other- and self-oriented aspects. In addition to these evaluations, the participants referred to the negative aspect of politeness as being linked to hypocrisy and exaggeration, both of which are negatively evaluated. The results also shed light on the nature of the participants' moral order. Finally, the participants' assessment of politeness in relation to particular contexts showed that for them, politeness is a normal, but very important behavior. Moreover, the results show that no particular context requires politeness to the exclusion of other contexts but that the participants seem to orient to both formal and informal modes of expressing politeness. Overall, the results contribute to cross-linguistic evidence for the sharedness of core politeness conceptions, despite Syrian Arabic emic interpretations and understandings. Furthermore, and most importantly, the participants' folk-theoretic notions of politeness support the way politeness has been scientifically theorized in second-wave politeness research. In the next chapter, I aim to examine another aspect of politeness in Syrian Arabic, which is native speakers' linguistic expression of politeness through the performance of the apology speech act.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **THE LINGUISTIC EXPRESSION OF POLITENESS IN SYRIAN NATIVE SPEAKERS' APOLOGIES**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I aim to examine the second manifestation of politeness in Syrian Arabic. That is, this chapter deals with the linguistic expression of politeness in Syrian Arabic as seen in the production of the apology speech act in four roleplay situations. The main objective in this chapter is to explore how the participants express politeness in their production of the apology speech act. In other words, the main question is whether the participants will interpret and use apologies as being polite speech acts by default, in line with first-wave theorization, or the delivery of the apologies and the expression of politeness will be a discursive and co-constructed effort between the speaker and the addressee, as proposed by Kádár and Haugh (2013) and based on Grainger's (2018) neo-Brown and Levinson framework.

In order to examine the discursivity of politeness expression, it will be important to look at linguistic evidence in discourse that signals a discursive negotiation between the interlocutors. Thus, another aim of this chapter is to identify the linguistic means by which the participants index their evaluations of each other's input, which instigates a negotiation sequence. Thus, the analyses presented are mainly based on observing the interaction of the input of the speaker and the interpretation of the addressee as conversational junctures in which politeness may be discursively expressed and evaluated. This will be done by adopting Edmondson and House's (1981) interactional model of speech acts and discourse structure.

In addition to examining how politeness is expressed, another aim of the analysis will be to investigate how the social factors of status and distance figure in the expression of politeness. The main inquiry is whether such factors have a priori values that determine how politeness is expressed and how apologies are delivered, or whether such factors are by themselves discursive elements that help the speakers achieve a successful delivery of the apology.

I begin the chapter with an explanation of the roleplay situations in Section 6.2. In Section 6.3, I present and analyze the roleplay data. Then in Section 6.4, I discuss the overall results across the four situations with reference to how politeness is expressed and how the social factors of distance and status figure in the results. The chapter concludes with general remarks about the expression of politeness in Syrian Arabic and a summary of the overall conclusions.

## **6.2 The roleplay**

In this section, I describe the four roleplay situations. In the first situation, we have a combination of low social distance and equal social status;<sup>8</sup> the situation involves two friends, who agree to meet up, and when one of the friends is late, the other gets upset and calls him/her to ask what is taking her/him so long. The second situation is between two classmates. Thus, the combination of distance and status is different. Although the social status is equal, the relationship can be described as being somehow more distant than in the friend/friend situation, since classmates may not know each other very well. In this situation, during a classroom discussion, one student expresses disagreement with his/her classmate in a way that sounds too direct and personal. So, the classmate is perceived to be offended and an apology is in order.

The third and fourth situations shift the dynamics of both distance and status, as they both involve a student and a university professor. Thus, the social distance is high and the professor is of higher status than the student. The third situation involves a university professor asking his/her student to bring back a book the student had previously borrowed, but the student forgets to bring the book back and has to apologize. In the fourth and final situation, the direction of the apology is reversed; the university professor is supposed to correct the final chapter for the student before the deadline for dissertation submission is over. On the day the student is set to pick up the corrected chapter, the university professor announces that s/he has forgotten to correct it and apologizes for this.

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<sup>8</sup> A first-order analysis of the data is assumed throughout. In this respect, my analysis of the way social factors combine in prototypical relationships does constitute an emic perspective, being a native speaker of Syrian Arabic.

### 6.3 Data analysis

In the following analysis, I focus on the apology speech act as well as other speech acts and linguistic devices and analyze their function in the overall conversational structure, following Edmondson and House's (1981) typology and discourse analysis model. The most important objective is to show how politeness is discursively achieved by shedding light on the way the participants orient to each other's turns and construct their own turns in accordance with the way they interpret the meanings embedded in different speech acts/social actions (Kádár and Haugh 2013).

#### 6.3.1 Situation one: Apology to a friend<sup>9</sup>

In this situation, the apology revolves around one friend being late for an appointment with another friend. The analysis of the data shows that explicit apologies are used most frequently in this situation, along other interactional acts. The participants use a variety of forms such as "I apologize," بعذر, "sorry," آسف, and "I'm sorry," أنا آسف. With respect to their syntactic templates, the apologies appear in a number of formats. For instance, in the first example below, the apology appears "detached," as Deutschmann (2003) labels it, which means that the it is used alone without accompanying expressions, with the mention of the offense added to it with the conjunctive "but."

(1) د: أهلين د. بعذر منك بس اتأخرت شوي.

(1) H: Hi, D! I apologize to you, but I'm a bit late.

In example (2), however, there are three apologies, the first of which is used in a "complex structure," with a reference to the offense being made right after the Apologize<sup>10</sup> and followed by a Justify/Excuse. The second and third instances of the Apologize are used again as "detached expressions" (Deutschmann 2003) followed by a Willing and a Grounder, respectively.

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<sup>9</sup> See Hodeib (2020) for an analysis of other excerpts from the roleplay recordings couched in Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) taxonomy.

<sup>10</sup> I follow Edmondson and House's (1981) convention of using capitals whenever an interactional act and/or and interactional move are involved in the analysis. When they are not capitalized, they are being used in their normal sense.

(2) ص: لساتني عالطريق سوري اتأخرت السبب الترانسبورت لا تأخزيني خلص ربع ساعة بكون عندك أنا آسفة حاولت... حاولت ابعتلك مسج بس الظاهر ما انبعتت.

(2) S(f): I'm still on my way. Sorry I'm late because of the transportation. Pardon me. I'll be there in 15 minutes. I'm sorry... I tried to send you a message but it looks like it wasn't delivered.

According to Deutschmann (2003), a detached apology followed by the conjunctive “but,” as in the case of example (1), highlights a contrast between the apology itself and the reason for the apology. In other words, the apology followed by “but” functions as a dissociative device, which distances the apologizer from the offense itself in an attempt from him/her to disown it. In the following, I present an extended version of the interaction between H and D, in which I show that, indeed, D orients to H's attempt to distance herself from the responsibility, and which D does not evaluate positively. This starts off a sequence of turns in which H and D negotiate H's apology and subsequent account of the offense.

(3) د: شو وينك؟  
 ه: أهلين د. بعنذر منك بس تأخرت شوي.  
 : يعني معقول دايمًا متأخرة دايمًا متأخرة هبة!!  
 : اي طيب شو بعمل صرلي ظرف طارئ فاضطريت اتأخر.  
 : شو هالمواعيد هوي اسمو موعد أنو عالموعد لازم تجي بوقتك.  
 : بعنذر منك.  
 : ولك صرلي نص ساعة عم انظر يا هبة!

- (3) 1- D: Where are you? → Request for information (Initiate)  
 2- H: I apologize to you, but I'm a bit late. → Apologize, Tell (Satisfy)  
 3- D: Is that reasonable? → Request for information  
 You're always late! Always Late H! → Complain (Initiate)  
 4- H: So what should I do? → Request for information (Counter)  
 Something came up and I had to be late. → Grounder  
 5- D: This is an appointment! → Complain (Counter)  
 It's called an appointment so that you make it on time!  
 6- H: I apologize to you. → Apologize (Satisfy)  
 7- D: I've been waiting for an hour H! → Complain (Re-initiate)

In turn 2, H issues a rather formal apology “I apologize,” followed by Tell, which Satisfies D's Initiate. In turn 3, however, D sounds a Complain in response to H's previous turn, which indexes her displeasure with H's mere statement of the fact that she was late and indicates that she has not registered her apology as a proper one. According to Kádár and Haugh (2013: 69), a complaint is a social action that indicates a person's evaluation of

the object of complaint as a behavior in breach of a social norm, namely, that being late is undesirable. D, however, is only tacitly invoking such a norm. In response, in turn 4, H continues to dissociate herself from the offense by Countering D's complaint, further supporting her Counter by a Grounder that contains a vague expression "something came up." H's continued attempts to distance herself from the offense implies either her failure to pick up the implied meaning of D's complaint, that her behavior is seen as not polite, or that she is ignoring that interpretation and instead sticking to the stance she has assumed at the beginning of the interaction.

In turn 5, D Counters H's Counter by continuing to complain about her behavior. This time, however, her complaint is phrased in the form of a definition of what an appointment is like. In resorting to this style of speech, D is presenting her complaint as one that is not idiosyncratic, as in line 3, but as one couched in a wider normative rule, which is known to everyone, not just herself (*ibid*: 67). Thus, her negative evaluation is to be understood as invoking an overarching moral order that values punctuality. This time, H Satisfies D's Complaint by apologizing "I apologize to you," which shows her orientation to D's discontent and her own attempt to placate D. But this is also another failed apology, witnessed by D's sticking to her original Complaint, which she Re-initiates "I've been waiting for half an hour H!"

In turn 8, however, another course of action seems to be instigated by D's continued complaints. As is seen in the continued interaction below, H Contrasts D's complaint by an impatient "that's enough," followed by a Tell, indicating her desire to end this sequence and move on. The attempt to close off the sequence is successful, as in the following turn, D Satisfies the Contra and allows H just five more minutes to arrive.

: ولك خلص يالله ليكني جاية.  
: يعني شو 5 دقائق و لا بدني امشي ها!  
: لا لا لا.  
: من هون لخمس عشر دقائق اذا ما نزلتي..  
: لك اي يالله نزلت نزلت ليكني ليكني عندك.  
: او كي يالله ناظرتك يالله.  
: سلام باي.

**8- H: That's enough, I'm on my way.** → Tell (Contra)

**9- D: So, what now?** → Request for information (Satisfy)

**You'll be here in five minutes or I'll just take off!** → Request-to-do-X (Initiate)



**10- H: No, no, no. → Resolve (Counter)**

**11- D: If you don't show up in ten minutes, I'll... → Request-to-do-X (Counter)**

**12- H: Okay, I'm coming down already. I'll be there. → Willing/promise (Satisfy)**

It is worth noting that, despite D's understanding of H's desire to stop the complaint in turn 9, D still frames her response in an impatient tone, as she Initiates another sequence in which she threatens to leave H alone if she does not show up within a time limit. This indexes D's continued dissatisfaction with H' previous stance, which spanned multiple turns. The closing of the sequence starts at turn 10 when H Counters D's threat, which is Countered by D's Request in turn 11. Finally, the conversation comes to its communicative resolve in H's Willing in turn 12, which Satisfies the previous Counter.

It can be seen from the above example that the apology itself does not have an inherent politeness value. Rather, it seems to be labelled as inappropriate by D, which leads to a series of turns in which both speakers negotiate the successful achievement of what starts out as an apology but turns into a multi-layered interaction about the acceptance of H's account of being late. Most importantly, it can be seen that none of the participants used any overtly polite expression, but that the eventually-reached understanding is secured not by the initial apology but by H's successful attempt to block further complaints from D in turn 8, which shifted the topic from the offense itself to a new arrangement.

In the following interaction between B and K, the conversation starts with the aim of addressing the offense, B being late for the appointment. However, what is interesting is that B, who issues an explicit apology does not use it to apologize for being late but for not being able to show up at all. This can be seen in the following:

(4) ك: شو وين أراضيك؟  
ب: والله بين الأواعي ههههههه.  
: أنا واقفلك عند دوار البطاط.  
: والله أنا آسف ما بقدر اجي.  
: إلي ربع ساعة ناظرك وينك يا رجل؟  
: والله ما خرج صار معي ظرف اليوم رجلي انفكشت و صار في تمزق اربطة يبدو وبدي روح صور لبعد شوي.  
شغلة مانا متوقعة. يعني انتي بتعذرني أنا بتعرفني كنت اتأخر بشغلات عنك عن المواعيد و كذا..

**(4) 1- K: Hey, where are you? → Request for information (Initiate)**

**2- B: hhhh I'm just here (literally I'm in between clothes) → Tell (Satisfy)**

**3- K: I'm at the Ducks Turnaround. → Tell (Initiate)**

**4- B: By God, I'm sorry I can't make it.** → Apologize (Disarmer)/ excuse/justify (Counter)

**5- K: I've been waiting for 15 minutes.** → Complain (Counter)

**Where are you man?** → Request for information

**6- B: I'm unable to come. Something came up today.** → Excuse/justify (Grounder)

**My leg got sprained, there seems to be a rupture.**

**I'm going to have it x-rayed. It's unexpected.**

**I mean you'd excuse me, you know me,**

**I'm usually late for other reasons and stuff...**

K's Request for information in turn 1 is an Initiate, which is Satisfied by B's Tell, using a stock phrase in Syrian Arabic in turn 2. By using this phrase, B wants to set the tone of the upcoming conversation as one that is friendly and casual. In turn 3, K does not pick up on B's implied humor, or rather ignores it, and instead shifts the focus back to the main topic; that he has been waiting at the place in which they agreed to meet, which Initiates another sequence. At this point in the interaction, B issues an Apologize "I'm sorry," in turn 4. However, the apology does not target the offense itself, but functions as a Disarmer to B's ensuing Tell that he is not going to come at all. When K Counters B's previous turn by complaining further and thus, indexing a negative evaluation of B's behavior, B provides a health-related Excuse in turn 6, which is a Grounder for why he cannot come. This Grounder has an important function of changing the trajectory of the Complaint-Grounder sequence, and ushers the beginning of a stretch of talk in which B is no longer seen as an offender but one who needs to be shown sympathy. This sequence starts at turn 9 below:

ك: ... ليه ما قللتلي كنت ساعدتك  
ب: لاء وين بدك تساعدني بيتك بعيد انتي. انشالله بس تطيب وعد مني أحلى طلعة و عحسابي.

[...]

.. يالله عالعاافي عالعاافية.

: انشالله انشالله انشالله ما تزعل مني.

: أكيد أكيد.

: خلص يعني بتعرفني من زمان الي هالعوايد بس يعني مو بارادتي هلا.

: أكيد أكيد.

**7- K: ...But why haven't you told me? I would've helped you.** → Willing/promise

**8- B: No way. You live far away.** → Tell (Contra)

**Once it gets better, I promise to it make up to you,  
and I'll be paying.** → Willing (Initiate)

[...]

**9- K: Get well soon.** → Wishwell (Satisfy)

**10- B: Inshallah (God willing). Don't be upset about this.** → Request-to-do-X (post-exchange)

**11- K: of course, of course.** → Okay (Satisfy)

**12- B: You know me. I've long been in the habit of being late, but this time it's out of my hand.** → Excuse

**13- K: Sure, sure.** → Okay (Satisfy)

In the rest of the exchange, after B's explanation, K changes his tone and instead of Re-initiating the original Complain, he orients to the need to show B due concern over his accident, and Initiates a proclaimed readiness to help in turn 7. B's response is a Contra in turn 8, followed by a Willing. This Willing marks the beginning of a closing exchange, and is indeed Satisfied by a ritual Wish-well in turn 9. K's quick Contra in turn 8 indicates B's interpretation of K's offer of help as merely a ritual act of politeness and not a real offer, which is further evidenced by K's Satisfy in turn 9. Thus, in Initiating the offer for help, K seems to comply by the social expectation of showing concern for someone in B's condition. At the same time, B's Contra appears to be expected, also in abiding by the expected behavior in such contexts. At turn 10, B goes back to addressing the original offense and asks K not to be upset, ascribing the situation to outer circumstances. This might be interactionally interpreted as a post-exchange, the function of which is to secure the outcome of the previous negotiation (Edmondson 1981). At turn 12, B further solidifies the post-exchange by a Grounder and an Excuse. This move is positively registered by K (turn 11), who issues an Okay, bringing the interaction to a closure.

This interaction between K and B is a prime example of the discursivity of politeness. What starts as an apology-seeking interaction turns into a sequence where the offended is attending to the offender's face needs. The interaction begins with a Complain, which indexes K's negative evaluation of B's behavior. However, B's account of the offense, involving health issues, function as a disarming device for K's complaint. K, in turn, responds in accordance with social expectations and instead of emphasizing his being stood up, shows concern for B's condition. This is the beginning of a joint effort at showing politeness in which B and K are using positive politeness devices to attend to each other's different face needs: B offers a Willing in an attempt to resolve of the issue by promising to make up for missing the appointment (turn 8), and K is showing concern by offering to help K in his trouble (turn 7). This mutual face attendance leads to a peaceful resolution of

conflict at the end of the sequence. Moreover, it is interesting to note how B appeals to their knowledge of each other as friends towards the end of the conversation. The structural position of the Grounder at the end of the conversation (turn 12) shows that this conversational strategy is not used as a device based on which K is expected to accept B's account by default. Rather, their mutual background is invoked by B in order to further placate K and as a positive politeness strategy. Thus, social distance is negotiated and redefined as a tool for advancing politeness rather than being conceived of as an a priori construct that defines and dictates how politeness is to be expressed (Grainger 2018).

### 6.3.2 Situation two: Apology to a classmate

In this situation, where the apology is extended from one classmate to another on account of a perceived offensive comment during a classroom discussion, the participants mainly use explicit apologies, with "I apologize" being used most frequently. The apologies in this situation are syntactically complex, which according to Deutschmann (2003), are the most frequently found form of apologies in the BNC. In complex apologies, the offense is referenced within the syntactic frame of the apology expression, which is composed of the explicit apology followed by a prepositional phrase and an NP or a sentence. The example below shows the apology used in a complex format, followed by the participants' admission of having made a mistake.

(5) ص: أنا بعذر عن انفعالي و عن ال...

#### (5) S(f): I apologize for my anger and about ...

A pattern seems to emerge with respect to the participants' responses to the apologies; the participants, who roleplayed the offended, initially responded negatively to the apology. The negative response is in the form of challenging and criticizing the offender's behavior. For example, the following interaction between R and S(f) shows this pattern:

(6) ر: أبيي عنجد ماني عم بعرف كيف بدي بلش الحديث معك. إي بس لما كنا جوا أنا كل كلامي كان إنو ما فينا نحنا جماعة السفر نسافر أربع تيام والله و خمس تيام كرمال انتوا عايشين بحمص أأا يعني ما تحضروا محاضرتين ورا بعض يعني أنا بس كلامي أذا منعمل كل نهار محاضرتين بيكون أسهل عليي.  
ص: كان فيكي تحكي هالكلام هادا بأسلوب أكثر من هيك يعني بدون ما تعصبي بدون ما لأنو بالاخير نحنا بدنا نتفق كلياتنا سوا...

: أكيد  
 : يعني ما كان في داعي إنو مثلاً تعصبي وتعيطي علينا هيك شي  
 : عن جد حقت علي وأنا عن جد يعني بالعادة ما بيطلع معي هيك نبرة أبداً فالحكي ما كان إلك كان لكل العالم يعني  
 إنو طلع الكلام من قلبي.  
 : يا الله بسيطة مو مشكلة هلاء أنا حظيت حالي محلك وفعلاً الشي الموقف مزعج يعني بس إنو...

- (6) 1- R: I really don't know how to start, → Opine  
 but all I meant back then is that we, commuters, → Justify (Initiate)  
 can't travel four or five times a week  
 just because you guys, who live in Homs,  
 won't attend two classes in a row.  
 What I wanted to say is that if we can attend two classes a day, it'd be easier for me.  
 2- S(f): You could've said this in a more elegant way, → Opine (Counter)  
 without going mad. At the end of the day,  
 we all want to figure this out... → (Expander)  
 3- R: Of course. → Okay (Satisfy)  
 4- S(f): You didn't have to go mad and shout at us. → Opine (Re-initiate)  
 5- R: You're right. I owe you. → Okay/ Apologize (Satisfy)  
 I really don't normally use that tone.  
 It wasn't directed at you but at everyone...  
 it was just spontaneous. → Excuse  
 6- S(f): It's okay. No problem. → Okay  
 I put myself in your shoes, and it's really annoying, but... → Opine (Satisfy)

In turn 1, R Initiates the conversation with an expression of embarrassment over the incident and Justifies her own stance, which is Countered in turn 2 by S(f)'s open criticism of her mannerism, which is put across in an Opine. Similarly to the function of complaints in situation one, criticizing someone, whether directly or indirectly, implies a negative evaluation of his/her behavior. Such an evaluation is made with reference to a norm that is at least functional in the local context of the speakers. Thus, in criticizing R's behavior, S(f) is implying that R's behavior contrasts with her own expectations and, thus, is not polite (Kádár and Haugh 2013). In turn 3, R Satisfies S(f)'s Counter with an Okay. However, S(f) continues to sound discontent with R's previous conduct by Re-initiating her Opine to which R further concedes in turn 4, by apologizing and justifying what happened as a deviant behavior on her part. At this point, and after this attempt, S(f) not only accepts R's apology but also appears to engage in facework herself by admitting that R was right to be upset. However, R interprets S(f)'s facework not as a polite gesture but as a sign of concession, which motivates her to further justify herself and Initiate a

Complain of her own, which, though not directed at S(f) in particular, is still interpreted as including her.

: ...وشوفتي يعني كلياتكون صرتو تقولو نحنا ما فينا نحضر محاضرتين ومندوخ طيب نحنا بدنا نسافر كل نهار  
عم ناخذ معنا ساعتين راحة وساعتين رجعة كل نهار يعني كمان حطو حالكون محلنا شوي يعني.  
: إي ماشي طيب منتفق بال..... منشوف مين ال..... مين أكثر الأشخاص اللي بيوافقو على هالشئ وبعدين منخب  
الميس  
: إمام وهلق  
: وهلق خلص....  
: عن جد لاتواخذيني أنا بحترمك وبقدرك من البداية من أولة الفصل ياصبا  
: تسلمي  
: عنجد ماني حابة يكون أيا في إشكال بيناتنا....  
: تسلمي خلص نحنا زملاء ورفقات ما في مشكلة يعني

**7- R: And you've seen it yourself. You guys started saying that we can't attend two classes in a row, it'll be too much.**

**Okay, we have to travel every day.**

**It takes two hours to get here and two hours on the way back.**

**You have to put yourself in our shoes... → Complain (Initiate)**

**8- S(f): Alright, we'll discuss this. We'll see how many of us agree to this and we'll tell the instructor. → Suggest (Satisfy)**

**9- R: mm, and now? → Request for information (Initiate)**

**10- S(f): And now it's over. → Forgive (Satisfy)**

**11- R: I'm really sorry. → Apologize (Post-exchange)**

**I respect and value you since the beginning of the semester. → Opine**

**12- S(f): Thanks. → Thank (Satisfy)**

**13- R: I don't any trouble between us... → Expander**

**14- S(f): Thanks. It's okay. → Thank/ Okay**

**We're classmates and friends. No problem. → Opine/Okay (Satisfy)**

R's indirect criticism marks the beginning of the conflict resolution. In turn 8, S(f) acknowledges the validity of R's perspective. This implicit agreement is then made explicit in turn 10, giving rise to another round of facework. In turn 11, R's apology initiates a post-exchange sequence in which R's Apologize is not only an apology but also functions as further reassurance of the conflict resolution. Furthermore, R goes on to assert her respect and appreciation for S(f), which are positive politeness strategies. In the last turn, S(f) repays R's facework and updates their relationship status from classmates to friends, thus, issuing a Satisfy to R's initiation of the apology.

Using Grainger's (2018) framework, it can be seen how the development of R and S(f)'s interaction is built around a series of interconnected turns-at-talk, in which both

participants' contributions are made with reference to the meaning of the previous turn and, in turn, set the scene for the production of the next relevant turn. At various junctures in the interaction, one participant's interpretation and evaluation of the other's turn opened the way for a new trajectory of negotiation. This was seen in turns 6 and 7 and also in turn 8 in which S(f) moves from being an initiator of a criticism to a receiver and acceptor of one. This co-constructed effort culminates in a successful achievement of politeness, which is expressed in an exchange of positive politeness at the end of the conversation.

Another example interaction, which shows how the participants' discursive effort to reach a mutual understanding about the addressed offense, is triggered by the use of a recurring strategy throughout: an account of the offense that is based on an appeal to the speaker's personality. The basic tenet of this appeal/justification is that the offense is neither personal nor intended, and so, needs to be let go. As Deutschmann (2003) argues, the function of such accounts is often to rectify the apologizer's image and to give the impression that whatever transgression has been made is an out-of-character behavior (*ibid*: 41). Thus, such personality-based justifications serve to address not only the addressee's but also the speaker's face.

However, in the following example, we see again that the appeal based on personality is not accepted at face value but is challenged by the other participant, leading to another discursive struggle over the apology. When B approaches K and asks him whether he is still upset about the incident, K replies that he is because B had been too direct in his criticism. B's response to this is an account based on his personality, as follows:

(7) ب: هلا أنا هيك طبيعتي أحيانا بكون مع أهلي حتى بكون مباشر و صريح و أحيانا بتطلع معي كلمات وقحة بس ماني قاصد يعني بتعرفني طيوب.  
ك: صح بس بس صارت قدام العالم يعني صارت مشكلة كبيرة كتير.

**(7) 1-B: It's how I am. Sometimes, I'm too direct even with my parents and I say rude things.**

**But I don't mean it, you know me. I'm kind-hearted. → Justify (Counter)<sup>11</sup>**

**2-K: That's right. → Okay (Satisfy)**

**But it happened with the others'**

---

<sup>11</sup> This is a Counter because, as I have introduced the interaction, I mention that it is in response to previous turns, which would be the Initiate and the Satisfy turns.

**watching and a big problem happened.** → Tell (Counter)

As can be seen in turn 2, despite acknowledging his knowledge of B's nature, in his response K indicates that he does not align with this justification, mainly because the offense was in the presence of others. In other words, K blames B for his public face loss, which seems to be the root of the offense. However, B Counters K's turn and dismisses his argument as something which has happened before among a group of friends, and therefore, is part of routine way of behaving. This obvious clash in points of view between B and K is interesting as it constitutes the essence of the misunderstanding. While both appeal to norms, they seem to be invoking different and conflicting moral norms. Whereas K invokes the norm that no one individual should suffer public face loss, B appeals to in-group norms that dismiss such incidents as a form of friendly sparring. The underlying moral norms are, then, different. K's appeal is to a wider and more societal norm, which is in contrast with B's appeal to a local, group norm.

In turn 3, B forces an abrupt change of topic and follows a more aggressive path in achieving a successful negotiation of the past offense. He warns K that if he does not let it go, then he will be the one to get upset.

: يعني هني ماتن غربا ما ائو حدا غريب يعني صايرة هيك مناكفات بين بعضنا فشو؟ إذا بتض آخذ موقف مني هيك  
بدي ازل انا. ما... شو بدنا نطلع من الكافيه رضياتين.  
: طيب أوكي ما انتي بلشت.  
: أي شو المطلوب مني أنا جاهز مسامح ولا شو ما بدك؟  
: طيب أوكي إنتي ب و غالي علينا.  
: إنتي كفو والله إنك كفو... يعني سماح هالمرة ما عاد نعيدا.

**3- B: They're not strangers.** → Justify

**We've had such arguments before,** → Grounder

**so what's the matter?** → Request for information

**Look, if you're going to continue being angry,**

**I will be the one who is upset...** → Request-to-do-X (Counter)

**we're leaving the café happy.**

**4- K: Okay, you're the one who started this.** → Tell (Counter)

**5- B: What do you want from me?** → Request for information (Counter)

**I'll do whatever you want.** → Willing

**Am I forgiven, or not?** → Request for information

**6- K: Fine.** → Forgive (Satisfy)

**You're B and you're precious (to us).** → Opine



K's response to B's warning is a Counter in turn 4 in which he implies that he B has no right to being upset, being the one who started the argument. B orients to this interpretation, which is evident in the way he recycles his warning and Counters K's objection, mainly in his Willing, in turn 5. This Counter is Satisfied in K's Forgive in the following turn. It is worth noting that in turn 6, K uses the plural marker *Li* which in this context translates into "to us." This is a typical Syrian Arabic usage in which a singular speaker uses a plural pronoun to signify that s/he is talking on behalf of a group. In this context, this use may be interpreted as the positive politeness strategy of counting B as an in-group member.

A simple look at the data, in which various instances of positive politeness are attested, might lead to the conclusion that the use of positive politeness in this way is prototypical and is based on the participants' assessment of social distance in this situation as low. However, things are more complex than that. As is already established, in Grainger's (2018) neo- Brown and Levinson framework, social factors such as distance and status do not have a fixed value. Rather, they are elements of the context that are discursively defined and re-constructed by means of different linguistic devices to achieve various communicative goals. Indeed, a closer look at the data and the distribution of positive politeness strategies suggests that the participants manipulate their construal of the value of social distance in this situation in two ways. First, there is the use of positive politeness at the beginning of the conversation. Many participants used justifications based on personality and mutual background as classmates in order to justify the offense. However, at this point in the conversation the participants focus on the relationship as based on classmate-solidarity as the basis for their appeal. In other words, there is no assumption of low social distance based on friendship-like solidarity and closeness. Therefore, the main function of using positive politeness in conversation-initial position is to broker a successful account of the offense. The second way in which the participants use positive politeness is at the end of the conversation. Positive politeness is used in this position with a different function. In contrast with the participants' previous focus on the status of their relationship as classmates, the participants seem to take a step forward on the scale of intimacy/closeness by updating the status of the relationship to the level of friendship. This is symbolic of the mutual achievement of both the speaker's and the addressee's goals: the restoration of equilibrium. All in all, then, the data present evidence in support of

Grainger's (2018) argument that social factors are also discursive elements in the interaction. The first two situations involved two roles of people having equal social status. I now present the results of the last two situations, which involve what is prototypically treated as a relationship with marked social status differences; a university professor and a student.

### **6.3.3 Situation three: Apology from a student to a professor**

In situation three, a student forgets to bring back a book, which s/he has borrowed from his professor. Thus, this situation is different from the first two not only in terms of social distance but also in the fact that this situation type is canonically associated with marked status differences in the Syrian society. Compared to the first two situations, the data show a much higher frequency of explicit apologies used by the participants.

I have already mentioned that the discussion of the expression of politeness in this chapter is based on the view that politeness is not an inherent property of linguistic expressions but is an evaluative phenomenon that can only be analyzed in the context in which it arises and by reference to the speakers' interpretations of it. In spite of this, it is worth noting the participants' shifted style in the performance of this situation, their choice of words, and the way they phrase their apologies overall. These stylistic differences might on their own be evidence for politeness, but may indicate the participants' prototypical conceptions of how courteous and polite interactions are supposed to be carried out in such formal situations. Describing this situation as formal is based on the participants' first-order conceptions, which were discussed in the previous chapter, and in which the majority of the participants considered a context involving a university professor to be highly formal.

Overall, the apology turns are lengthy as a result of intensification and the use of other accompanying interactional acts. Although the literature offers inconclusive results as to whether more elaborate apologies are correlated with more severe offenses, Vollmer and Olshtain (1989) propose a link between sincerity and intensification of apologies (see Chapter Three). Intensification devices include repeating the apologetic expression more than once and/or using adverbials such as "really," and "very" with the apology. The

following is an example of an intensified apology, both by repetition and by the use of an adverbial.

(8) م: حقك علي دكتور أنا كثير بعنذر دكتور كثير بعنذر منك.

**M: It's my fault Professor. I really apologize to you Professor. I really apologize to you.**

As for the structure of the apologies, although detached apologies are also used in this situation, most of the time, the detached apologies are followed by other supporting strategies. In the following turn, for example, S(m) prefaces the apology with an expression of embarrassment, and then uses the apologetic expression, which is followed by an announcement of having forgotten the book.

(9) س: بعرف إني الموقف كثير بشع بس بترجاك تسامحني نسيت الكتاب تبع الأصوات.

**S(m): I know it's really bad of me, but I beg you to forgive me. I forgot the phonology book.**

S(m)'s phrasing of the apology is peculiar. Instead of using the typical imperative "forgive me," he uses the performative "I beg you to forgive me," which makes the apology sound more urgent. Another participant, T, puts his apology in a more elaborate frame by saying 'I want you to excuse me.' In the English translation, the 'I want you' clause is used as a directive and may not be appropriate in addressing a professor. However, the Syrian Arabic expression, literally 'I want from you,' has the connotation of pleading and wishing for the plea to be accepted. T makes another intensified apology, and the intensification device is using God's name. T says 'الله يخليك ما تواخزني' 'May God keep you, excuse me,' which is a powerful form of pleading since it invokes the name of God. Using God's name is not a rare practice in the Arab world as previous research on apologies has shown that speakers of different Arabic dialects resort to using God's name in making apologies (Ahmed, 2017 on Iraqi Arabic; Hodeib, 2019 on Syrian Arabic; Jebahi, 2011 on Tunisian Arabic).

As far as the development of the interaction between the students and the professor is concerned, most of the conversations seem to be organized around a pattern. The participants who roleplay the professor respond to the expression of apology in what is essentially an expression of discontent, most often in the form of a reproach (Opine). This

reproach elicits more apologies, to which the professor responds either by explaining his/her need for the book or accepts the apology. The sequence ends with the student offering a solution, the interlocutors agreeing on a way for the professor to get the book back, and the student thanking the professor for understanding.

In the following I would like to discuss one interaction in particular, which in my opinion, shows how both interlocutors draw on different linguistic strategies to construct and highlight their role relationships. In particular, I aim to show how reproaching the student is a device that allows the professor to use her status to keep the negotiation going on her own terms as a superior. The student, in turn, picks up on this attempt and not only reacts positively but adds to this attempt by using a positive politeness strategy that enhances the professor's positive face as a person in charge and is, thus, worthy of respect.

The conversation below, between R and S(f), starts with ritual greetings, which are followed by R's expression of embarrassment and apology. S(f)'s response to R's turn starts off a sequence of negotiation in which S(f), who is roleplaying the professor, repeatedly attempts to highlight her position. The sequence starts at turn 3.

(10) ر: بس ما بعرف كيف بدى افتح الموضوع معك دكتورة. كنا آخذين منك موعد إنو اليوم اجي لعندك عالمكتب و رجعلك الكتاب.  
ص: إي صحيح.  
ر: بس الموضوع راح جدا عن بالي يعني عنجد لا تأخزيني في كذا وضع بالبيت واجيت ع حمصو تذكرت إنني نسيت جيب الكتاب فجيت اعتذر منك بعذر منك كتير دكتورة.  
ص: هلا المشكلة إنو إنتي كطالبة لازم تكوني ملتزمة بالمواعيد ويكون عندك برنامج لهالأشياء هاي مشان ما تنسي أو ما تغلطي هيك غلط ما ببصير هالشي.

(9) 1- R: I don't know how to start Doctor, → Opine (Disarmer)

but we had an appointment today

I was supposed to bring you back the book. → Tell (Initiate)

2- S(f): That's right. → Okay (Satisfy)

3- R: It had completely slipped through my mind. → Tell (Initiate)

I apologize. → Apologize

There are issues at home, and then I came to Homs. → Excuse

I had forgotten to bring it back,

so I'm here to apologize. → Apologize

I deeply apologize Professor. → Apologize

4- S(f): The problem is that as a student, → Opine (Counter)

you need to be committed to deadlines

and set up a note system

**so that you won't forget or make such a mistake.  
That's unacceptable.**

The interaction starts with the student's expression of embarrassment and a Tell. In turn 3, the student's Tell initiates the core exchange in that it contains an admission of having forgotten the book, followed by an Apologize, and an Excuse. The Professor (S(f)) Counters the Initiate in turn 4 with an Opine in the form of a reproach, a sub-category of criticism, which is made with reference to the norms of professor/student relationships and the responsibility that each member has to take. Again, it indexes S(f)'s dissatisfaction with R's Apologize and account of the situation. Moreover, the reproach is framed in an instructional manner, symbolic of the professor's role as a teacher and mentor. Despite S(f)'s Counter, R's response is one that attempts to further placate S(f) by acknowledging her right to be upset. Furthermore, R appears to interpret the reproach as S(f)'s attempt to foreground her authority, and R collaborates with S(f)'s effort by, herself, giving a supportive turn. In turn 5 below, R Satisfies S(f)'s Counter, but again Re-initiates the apology and asserts that she wants to continue to be viewed favorably by the professor, which is a positive politeness strategy meant to show the addressee that she is concerned about her opinion of the speaker, R.

: والله حقك علي يا دكتورة عنجد لا تأخزيني بدي ياكي تضلي آخدة فكرة صح عني لا تأخزيني..  
: هلا أنا أكيد آخدة فكرة صح بس لازم تنتبهي أكثر على أبحاثك وتنتبهي أكثر على مواعيدك العملية أكثر من الظروف العائلية... بكل الأحوال آآ فيكي تجيبي بأي وقت كان.

**5- R: You're right, it's my fault, Professor.** → Okay / Opine (Satisfy)

**I really apologize.** → Apologize (Re-initiate)

**I don't want you to change your opinion of me.** → Request-to-do-X

**I apologize...** → Apologize

**6- S(f): Of course, my opinion of you hasn't changed,** → Tell

**but you should pay more attention to your research** → Opine

**and your deadlines than to your family issues.**

**Anyway, you can bring it back whenever you want.** → Resolve (Satisfy)

In turn 6, S(f) seems to interpret R's previous turn as a veiled compliment, which she evaluates positively. This is evident in her reassurance to R that she will of course not change her opinion of her. S(f)'s turn achieves two functions: first, she repays the facework R has given her earlier, and, second, it is a device for her to continue banking on her social

status to be the one who brings the interaction to an end in her Resolve as the final interactional act making up this turn, and which Satisfies R's request in turn 5.

This interaction shows how both participants draw on the status differentials to achieve a successful resolution of the offense. The exchange, though characterized by the professor's drawing on her status to remain in the leading position, is yet marked by an exchange of politeness and facework; each of the speakers orients to the other's face needs, the student by showing concern for the professor's opinion, and the professor by assuring the student that the incident has not changed her positive evaluation of her.

Now that I have discussed how politeness has emerged in this particular context and have shown how the participants' style is overall different in this situation, a caveat is in order. As mentioned in Section 6.2, in the design of the roleplay situations, I have made sure that the situations are relatable to the participants' lives as university students. However, assuming the role of the professor, as in this situation, is not a situation the participants have encountered in real life, which is not the case for the first two situations. Still, the situation must be part of their accumulated experiences as university students. Therefore, the results cannot be taken to be an accurate reflection of how politeness is negotiated and co-constructed in such institutionalized settings. Rather, the results offer invaluable insights into the way the participants conceive of interactions in such situations and how politeness is ought to be expressed. In other words, the results of this situation offer a first-order perspective on how politeness is prototypically deployed and linguistically expressed in professor/student settings as seen through native speakers' performances in this situation.

#### **6.3.4 Situation four: Apology from a professor to a student**

In the fourth and final situation, it is the professor who is supposed to apologize for having forgotten to correct a dissertation chapter for his/her student, causing the student to risk missing a deadline. As the data reveal, despite the relatively high frequency of apologies, they are not used in all responses. Furthermore, although apologies are used in this situation considerably less frequently than in Situation 3, their syntactic forms are more complex in this situation. Only one apology is used in a detached format, and one is intensified by the adverbial 'really.' All the rest of the apology tokens are used in complex syntactic forms

(Deutschamann 2003). For example, some of the complex formats involve the apologetic form ‘I apologize’ as a complement to an ‘I want to’ clause, or ‘excuse me’ preceded by the semi-auxiliary ‘would have to,’ as in the two following examples.

(11) د: بدّي اعتذر فعلا فعلا معاكّي حق بدّي عتذر منك أنا صراحة.

(12) ط: بدك ما تأخّرني اليوم (...) بكرا أكيد بتكون جاهزة.

**(10) D: I want to apologize to you. Really, really, you’re right. I want to apologize to you, honestly.**

**(11) T: You’d have to excuse me today [...]. It will be ready tomorrow for sure.**

Similar to the previous situation, a note on language should be made as this seems to be related to the participants’ evaluation of the situation as formal. The language the participants used, whether they were roleplaying the professor or the student, is characterized by elaboration and formality. This formality is a result of lexical choices that are much more frequent in Standard Arabic, as well as their use of specific syntactic structures in making, among other things, requests and offers. For instance, one of the participants, K, uses a standard-variety verb *أمهلني*, which means “give me more time,” in a turn in which he asks the student for more time to correct the chapter, as in the following.

(13) ك: طيب امهلني بس هالاربعة خمس تيام بس اللي جايات...

**(12) K: Okay, would just me more time for the next four or five days...**

Another participant, B, phrases two of his apologies in the form of a plea *بتمنى تقبل عتذارى*, which means “I wish you’d accept my apology.” Moreover, some of the participants tone down their request for more time in that they put the directive in the form of a request for an extension, as in the following request phrased by H, and which has the effect of appealing for the understanding of the addressee:

(14) ه: بتعطّيني كمان فرصة يومين لأرجع شفلك ياه؟

**(13) H: Will you give me a period of two more days so that I can check it for you?**

Again, if we relate this shift of style, which set apart the participants’ performance in situations three and four from their performance in situations one and two, to their prototypical views of associating this setting to formality, then the results here support

Holmes's (2013) argument that the more formal the setting is, the more formal the language will be. Moreover, the more elaborate nature of the apologies, in addition to the formal style, may reflect the participants' perception of the offense as severe, which supports Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) claim that a more severe offense elicits more polite and more elaborate apologies.

In the previous situation, I have also discussed the prototypicality of the participants' expression of politeness, suggesting that the results are best viewed as the sum of the participants' prototypical conceptions about interactions in student/professor settings. In this situation, the results appear to be prototypical as well. Going through all the recordings obtained for this situation, I noticed a pattern for the development of the interaction. The pattern is organized as followed: the professor first announces the offense, in a turn, which also contains the initial apologetic expression. This elicits an expression of concern or a complaint from the student in relation to the pressing deadline. Finally, the student's complaint elicits a repair sequence or an assurance from the professor that everything is under control. The fact that this is a unified pattern supports the analysis that the results are prototypical, as they reflect the participants' shared, underlying knowledge of how such conversations are typically structured.

In addition to the participants' prototypical knowledge of such conversations, their performances also reflect their orientation to aspects of role-related identity and how different linguistic strategies may be employed in shaping and constructing social factors such as status and distance. The conversation between DE and M, which I will discuss below, is an example. I start with the turn in which DE, who roleplays the professor, tells M about having forgotten to correct the chapter, after his own enquiry.

(15) دي: بتعرف م والله يعني ما بعرف شو بدى قلك أنا بعرف إنك إنتي مضغوط بالوقت كتير بس عنجد عنجد كان عندي شغل كتير وكان عندي تصحيح وهيكت نسيت راح عن بالي أبدا يعني كنت حاطتو ببداية الأسبوع ما بعرف ليش هيكت إنو خلص ولا كأنو إنو في شي انمحي ماني متذكرة أبدا أبدا عن الموضوع يعني ممكن هلا هلا شو نعمل إنو تعال تعال ارتاح شوي لحتى نشغل فيه شوي هلا مبدنيا وبركي بكرا مثلا مثلا منخلص هادا الموضوع... م:.... دكتورة عفوا طيب دكتورة منلحق اليوم نصلح الفصل؟ يعني بدو شغل وبدو دقة... : لا أكيد أكيد ما في هيكي بس إنو منشوف إنتي باخد هيكي فكرة سريعة منك ومنحدد.

(15) 1- DE: You know M, I don't know what to tell you. → Opine (Disarmer)  
I know you're very pressed for time,  
but I really had a lot of work. → Excuse (Grounder)



**I had to grade tests and stuff, so I forgot.** → Tell (Satisfy)  
**It totally slipped through my mind.** → Excuse  
**I had intended to work on this at the beginning of the week.** → Excuse  
**I don't know why this happened,**  
**but it's as if it was totally wiped off my head.**  
**I totally forgot about this.** → Excuse  
**Now, we can.. we could probably...come on. Take a seat.** → Request-to-do-X  
**We can start working initially now,** → Suggest (Initiate)  
**and maybe tomorrow, we could finish this...**  
**2- M:... Pardon me, Professor,** → Apologize (Disarmer)  
**but can we finish it today?** → Request for information (Counter)  
**It requires a lot of work and precision...** → Grounder  
**3- DE: No, no definitely not like this.** → Tell (Satisfy)  
**But you can give me a quick idea now,** → Suggest (Re-initiate)  
**and then we can set up a ...**

As we can see, DE's first turn, which is prefaced with an Opine that functions as a Disarmer, is elaborate and contains no apology, but is rather composed of a series of repetitive Excuses that appeal to her busy schedule and acknowledging self-deficiency in having forgotten to correct the chapter. At the end of this lengthy turn, DE Initiates a Willing and suggests that they can start going through the chapter. M's Counter in turn 2 is hedged by an Apologize, which functions as a Disarming supporting move (Edmondson and House 1981) for the subsequent Counter. In this case, M's Request for information is not a real information-seeking request but rather implies M's skepticism about the suggestion, and ultimately his disapproval of it. Indeed, DE's response in turn 3 shows that she orients to M's concern about her suggestion (in her Satisfy move), but does not take offense by his Counter. Rather, she Re-initiates her Suggest, but this time she reassures him that this is just a preliminary step. However, M's response in turn 4 overlaps with the DE's turn. This interruption further indexes his discontent with the situation, as he complains about the lack of time and the pressing deadline.

...: طبيب دكتور أنا هل شو بدي أعمل؟ ما معي وقت الوقت خلص يعني لازم تكون العفو منك لازم تكوني مخلصه  
 تصحيح الفصل(...) هلا يعني هلا كيف بدنا نلحق؟ كيف بدنا نعمل يعني؟  
 : خلص أنا رح فرغ حالي خلص من اليوم لهالكم يوم الجاينين أعطيون كل الشغل و بشوفك خلص أكيدي رح شوفك  
 بكرا انشالله...  
 : طبيب دكتور بتمنى إنو الموضوع جدا حساس بتمنى إنو خلال...

**4- M: ...What am I to do now?** → Request for information  
**I don't have time. It's over..**

**I mean it should be, I beg your pardon,** → Apologize (Disarmer)  
**you should have finished correcting the chapter already [...].** → Complaint (Counter)  
**Now, how are we supposed to finish by time?** → Request for information  
**How are we to proceed?**  
**5- DE: It's okay. Starting from today,**  
**I'll be devoting my whole time to it.** → Willing (Satisfy)  
**I'll work exclusively on it, and then I'll see you.**  
**I'll see you tomorrow, God willing.**  
**6- M: Okay Professor. I wish..**  
**This is a very sensitive issue, I wish that in the next..** → Request-to-do-X (Initiate)

In turn 4, M again Counters the professor's suggestion with an explicit complaint about her behavior, which can be interpreted as too direct, given that it comes from a subordinate to a superior. However, in turn 5, DE's response shows that she does not interpret M's turn as an offense but as an expression of concern, which is evidenced by her attempt to reassure him that she will devote her entire time for correcting the chapter. Through this reassurance, DE is both asserting her professional ability to handle the situation, and, at the same time, her sympathy with the student. However, in turn 6, M continues to express concern, requesting that the professor stick to the new timeline. At this point, DE interrupts him, which shows, unlike in turn 5, her negative evaluation of M's Request as overstepping his rights and obligations as a student. Thus, her negative evaluation, evidenced by her Counter interruption and remark, 'you don't need to remind me of this,' is tied to her perception of M's behavior as inappropriate, given their role relationships.

... ما في ما في داعي محمد تذكرني عنجد بس لو ما يكون عندي ضغط كثير أكيد أنا ما بنسى هاد الموضوع...  
... طيب...  
: ما تخاف أهم شي...  
... طيب.

**7- DE: You don't need to remind me of this, M, seriously.** → Opine (Counter)  
**Had it not been for the work pressure,**  
**I wouldn't have forgotten about this..** → Excuse  
**8- M: ... Okay..** → Okay (Satisfy)  
**9- DE: Don't be scared that's the most important thing...** → Request-to-do-X (Initiate)  
**10- M: ...Okay.** → Okay (Satisfy)

In turn 7, then, DE appears to evaluate M's reminder as an FTA, and she uses her turn to save her own face by reinstating her institutional power. But, despite reclaiming her challenged authority, DE expresses sympathy M and her concern for his wellbeing by

saying ‘don’t be scared’ again balancing the professional and the personal in her approach to handling the situation.

Overall, then, throughout this interaction, it becomes clear how both speakers index their evaluation of the other’s turn, not explicitly, but implicitly through interruption. Furthermore, negative evaluations of the meanings embedded in each turn are made clear in the way the content of each turn Counters or questions the content of the previous one, which was shown in turns 6 and 7, where both speakers express negative evaluations of the other’s meanings in context. However, as can also be seen, the different face redressive strategies are used mainly by DE to both assert her status and highlight her concern for the addressee, with the overall effect of expressing authority and politeness.

#### **6.4 Discussion of the results**

Based on the discussion of the expression of politeness as outlined in the previous section, some major aspects in which such an expression is manifested can be captured, with reference to two major frameworks: Kádár and Haugh (2013) and Grainger (2018). The two frameworks converge on an analysis of politeness as an emergent and co-constructed phenomenon. In other words, politeness arises in context as a form of social practice, which boils down to evaluations of the actions of others as carrying certain meanings, which are accessible to all speakers in a community. This shared inventory of the meanings of social actions gives politeness its co-constructed nature: the expression of politeness is bound by the others’ understandings of the meanings of different social actions embedded in our talk (Kádár and Haugh 2013). At the same time, expressing and evaluating politeness, despite being tied to the immediate linguistic context, still draws on the larger context in which both speakers operate. Kádár and Haugh (2013) refer to this larger context in terms of normative frames of reference that form a moral order, which people appeal to in their evaluations of behaviors as (im)polite. Grainger (2018), on the other hand, refers to the larger context as being formed of the participants’ past encounters and their knowledge of their respective role-relationships, which are also discursively constructed. In the discussion of the data in this chapter, I have shown that, indeed, the expression of politeness

in Syrian Arabic subscribes to the theorization outlined above in that it is discursive, appeals to norms, and is achieved using various linguistic and social, contextual factors.

As far as the discursivity of politeness is concerned, there were several examples in the data in which evaluations of politeness emerged as a result of the participants' interpretations of the shared meanings of specific speech acts that appeared in the interactions. Particularly, apologies were always the object of a discursive negotiation and were not taken at face value as being inherently polite or even sufficient for the offense to be considered properly addressed. This is especially seen in situations one and two in which apologies were challenged by the speech act of complaining. Complaints, which imply a criticism of the behavior of others, were shown to be a juncture in the interaction in which negative politeness evaluations emerged. The function of complaints and criticism in indexing negative evaluations, or misalignment with a previous turn, was shown in all four situations. Similarly, and specific to situation four, the speech act of reproach was evidence for emergent negative evaluations of the addressee's behavior. The analysis of the functions of these speech acts as indexing evaluations of politeness is chiefly based on the participants' responses to them. That the participants interpreted the negative evaluations embedded in complaints, criticisms, and reproaches, was evidenced in their attempts to either Counter them and further justify themselves as in situations one and two, or to rectify their own image by different facework strategies, as in situations three and four.

The expression of politeness through speech acts that index a negative evaluation is in turn related to the participants' appeal to different sets of moral orders. In each of the situations, I have tried to show that the speakers' complaints, criticisms, and reproaches imply an evaluation, which is made with reference to a moral order that is functional relative to the local context of the participants, and even to the wider context as in situation two. In situation two, for example, both participants invoked different sets of norms that led them to make incongruent evaluations of their own and each other's behaviors, and which sparked a clash of opinions at the beginning of the interaction. Whereas one participant appealed to the wider and more societal norm that public and open confrontations should be avoided, the other participant invoked a more local norm that is based on classmate norms and routine behaviors. The latter norms apparently contradict

the wider societal norm in as far as the way in which open confrontations are viewed as permissible. Similarly, in situations three and four, the speakers invoked norms related to student/professor relationships as a background against which the students' behaviors were evaluated.

I have also demonstrated in each situation that social factors, such as distance and status, were used discursively rather than being viewed by the participants as static contextual factors. There were many instances in which the participants attempted to redefine role-relationships in accordance with the context to achieve various communicative goals. For example, in situation two, a move along the scale of social distance was correlated with different discursive functions. The speakers' initial approach to the relationship as based on classmate solidarity was used in order to negotiate a successful apology. On the other hand, after the apology has been accepted, the participants would recycle the relationship dynamics and elevate it to "friendship." This was a device to mark the success of the negotiation and to further assert the overall peaceful outcome of the interaction. In addition to this situation, in situation four, social status has been discursively used by the speakers in two ways. First, social status was defined as constituting part of the moral order that dictates an expected behavior that superiors are entitled to receive. Thus, against the background of her status, the professor in that situation expresses her negative evaluation of the student's implied criticism of her. Second, social status has been used as a way to broker a negotiation of the interaction in which the professor would show herself as a knowledgeable and caring authority figure through her expressions of concern for the student.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to examine the expression of politeness in Syrian Arabic, based on insights from Kádár and Haugh (2013) and Grainger (2018) and deploying Edmonson and House's (1981) interactional typology. A first-order analysis of the data showed that the expression of politeness in all four situations is discursive, emergent, and co-constructed among the speakers based on context and an appeal to specific moral norms. Moreover, such an expression is based on the interpretation of the shared meanings of

different speech acts such as complaints and criticisms. The data also revealed the discursivity of social factors and their role in politeness evaluations throughout. Finally, I have also suggested that some aspects of the participants' expression of politeness are prototypical and reveal the participants' underlying knowledge about politeness in such interactions in real-life situations. In the next and final data analysis chapter, I aim to analyze the third facet of politeness in Syrian Arabic. Specifically, the main objective of the next chapter is to examine whether there is variability in the perceptions of (im)politeness among native speaker of Syrian Arabic.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SYRIAN NATIVE SPEAKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF POLITENESS

#### 7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the perceptions of politeness in Syrian Arabic in four naturally-occurring apologies, following Haugh and Chang's (2019) study.<sup>12</sup> As has already been established throughout the preceding chapters, a thorough examination of politeness focuses not only on the production and conceptualizations of politeness but also on the perceptions/evaluations of politeness. Therefore, this chapter not only sheds light on the third facet of politeness in Syrian Arabic, but also aims to address a gap in the literature, which is characterized by a heavy focus on the production of politeness at the expense of exploring perceptual politeness (Eelen 2001; Haugh and Chang 2019). The general lack of attention to perceptions of politeness in favor of examining politeness production is a consequence of a speaker-oriented approach to politeness. This approach, which assumes that speakers can produce different utterances, with variable degrees of politeness, fails to take into account that hearers can also assign different politeness ratings to those same utterances, each according to his/her individual perceptions (Eelen 2001).

In addition to the fact that perceptual studies have received considerably less attention, as Eelen (2001) explains, studies have scarcely addressed obvious variability in politeness, whether in dealing with the production or the perceptions of politeness. In this respect, Haugh and Chang (2019) maintain that researchers have taken people, who share a language, as forming homogenous groups. Consequently, the few studies that have addressed variability in perceptions of politeness were made in a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural settings, mainly with the aim of examining non-native speaker perceptions in comparison to native speaker norms (see Bergman and Kasper (1993) on perceptions of politeness in Thai and American English; Suh (1999) for an analysis of perceptions in Korean ESL learners and native speakers of English). However, according to Eelen (2001), variability in politeness perceptions (and production) is a fact of politeness that needs to be accounted for in a proper theory of politeness. Furthermore, Chang and Haugh (2011) and

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<sup>12</sup> This chapter is a slightly modified version of Hodeib (2021)

Haugh and Chang (2019), present empirical evidence in support of the observation that there is intra-linguistic and intra-cultural variability in the perceptions of politeness. Thus, one of the main aims of this chapter is to investigate whether native speakers of Syrian Arabic will have different perceptions of the politeness of four naturally-occurring apologies.

Finally, as Haugh and Chang (2019) observe, analyses of politeness variability have typically been explained in terms of gender, age, and/or social background differences among participants. They further argue, in relation to perceptions of politeness in apologies, that it would be interesting to investigate the link between perceptions of politeness and more context-internal factors such as the sincerity of the apology and the severity of the offense for which the apology is made. The relationship between sincerity and apologies is long-standing, as Culpeper and Haugh (2014) explain that in classical speech act theory, sincerity is considered a defining feature in the felicitous performance of apologies. Furthermore, studies have linked perceived insincerity to poor politeness ratings (Blum-Kulka 2005; Pinto 2011). As for the severity of the offense, in classical theories of politeness (B&L 1987), the overall ranking of the imposition, or the ranking of the offense in the case of apologies, is considered a determining factor in the production of politeness. Similarly, in apology speech act taxonomies, the severity of the offense has been identified as one of three key factors in choosing the appropriate form of the apology (Blum-Kulak et al. 1989). As severity plays a central role in the production of politeness and apologies, it would be worth investigating whether it would figure as prominently in the perceptions of politeness and the apologies in this study. All in all, then, following Chang and Haugh's (2019) study and the observations mentioned in that study, this chapter tackles the following questions:

1. Is there variability in the perceptions of politeness in naturally-occurring apologies by native speakers of Syrian Arabic?
2. What correlation, if any, is there between the participants' perceptions of the (im)politeness of the apologies, their perceptions of the (in)sincerity of those apologies, and their perceptions of the severity of the offense?



In connection with these research questions, two hypotheses are formulated:

Hypothesis A: there is a correlation between the severity of the offense and (in)sincerity of the apology.

Hypothesis B: there is a correlation between the perceived (in)sincerity of the apology and its perceived (im)politeness.

The chapter is organized as follows: the next section describes the four apologies. After that, I present the results of the statistical data analysis in each apology recording, followed by a discussion of the results and the limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main points.

## **7.2 The apologies**

Perceptual studies have often relied on “artificial contextual cues” (Baxter 2015: 190). This poses a problem in studying perceptions of politeness in that, without a naturally-occurring context and contextual factors, perceptions may not show any variability. In order to avoid this problem, I have used four naturally-occurring recordings, each containing an apology. The four apologies, as already mentioned in Chapter Four, were voice messages sent or received by my friends on two chat platforms: WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. I obtained and used those recordings with the permission of my friends and the people involved in the recordings. As each of the apologies was issued in a friend/friend context, social distance and social status are fixed. However, the severity of the offense, which is one of the targeted contextual variables, was left for the participants to assess on a Likert scale (See Appendices G and H for the Syrian Arabic version and the English translation of the survey respectively).

In the first recording, the apology was issued from a female speaker to a group of male and female friends on Messenger. The group had agreed to go on a trip and bought tickets. One week before the planned trip, the apologizer decides not to go and tries to sell the ticket to someone that the group members do not know. She apologizes for the inconvenience and explains the situation. In the second recording, the apology is related to money-issues. The speakers are one female and one male friends. The male friend asks

whether the female friend's family can lend money to his friend's family in Syria. The person who wants to borrow the money is not a mutual friend and the one who is asked to lend the money does not know the borrower either. The friend who was asked, having proposed her aunt can help, replies to her friend and apologizes for not being able to help.

The third recording involves two male friends. The occasion is that one of them had recently graduated and sent the voice message as an invitation for the other to attend his graduation ceremony. The inviter and invitee live in different cities in Hungary, so the invitation was rejected, accompanied by an apology. In the fourth and final recording, the occasion of the apology, between two female friends, is a very late response to a voice message. When one sends the other a voice message, the other one unwittingly views the messages but neither listens to them nor replies. A couple of days later, she realizes that she had not responded, and she apologizes for that.

Whereas in Chang and Haugh (2011) and Haugh and Chang (2019) the researchers used one recorded phone conversation with rich contextual details, the recordings in this study only contain the apology itself, with no prior talk to set the background of the offense/context for the apology. However, I have made sure to include a detailed description of the context, the speakers, and the offense for which the apology is made in order to provide the participants with enough contextual information to base their ratings of the scales on.

### **7.3 Data analysis**

In this section, I present the results of the statistical data analysis of the four naturally-occurring apologies.<sup>13</sup> In each of the following sub-sections, I start by analyzing the apologies that the participants rated and categorizing the apology strategies used following Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). Then, I outline the participants' ratings, and the results of the correlation tests that were conducted to test the hypotheses.

#### **7.3.1 Apology One**

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<sup>13</sup> Special thanks go to my friend, Allam Yousuf, PhD in Business and Management, for doing the statistical analyses on SPSS.

The offense, as explained earlier, concerns a friend who is unable to join the group on a trip at the last moment. The apologizer addresses the group as follows: <sup>14</sup>

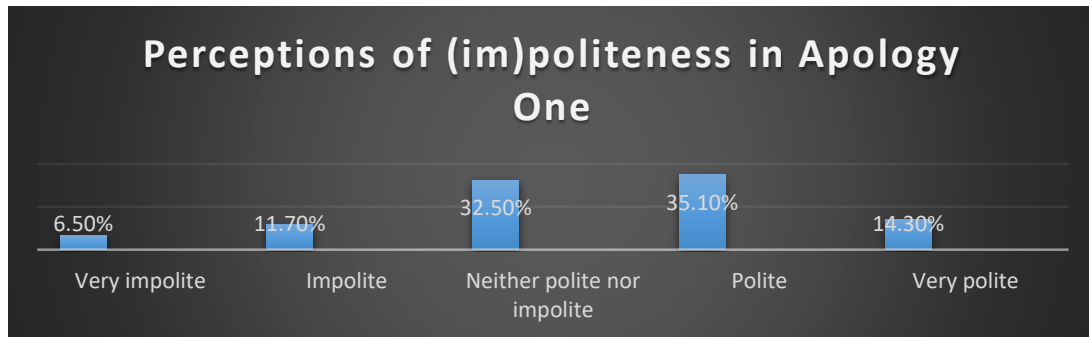
القصة بدا تصوير ليكة مشان تجديد جواز السفر بعدين.. بحكيلكن بعدين.. ففضلت إنو.. قالولي أهلي إنو بعتيه خلص.. بحكيلكن بعدين إنو هيك شوي أموري مكركة هالفترة عنجد بعذر ما كنت متوقعة هيك يصير أبدا. كل الأمور صارت عكس توقعاتي. أنا كثير كنت حابة كون معكون... أنا اليوم الضهر شافنتي رفيقتي في احتمال تاخذ التيكت مني. إذا ما قدرت, إذا ما اشترتا بركي بخيركن إذا بتخبروا حدا من رفاتكن. عنجد أنا كثير أسفة ويعرف إنو الفصل ناقص وما حلو يعني بس إنو هيك صار شو بدني أعمل.

I'm gonna have a lot of trouble with renewing my passport later... I'll tell you the details later... I preferred to... my parents told me to just send it... I'll tell you about it later. I've been a bit confused. I really apologize. I wasn't expecting this to happen at all. I really wanted to be with you guys. Anyway, today at noon, I met a friend of mine, and she might use my ticket. If she didn't, if she didn't buy it, I'll perhaps tell you and you might offer it to your friends. I'm really so sorry, and I know that's awful, but that's what happened. There's nothing I can do.

The recording starts with an account of the situation in which the speaker explains that she cannot go on the trip because of issues related to her passport in that she does not want to take the risk of travelling with an almost expired passport. This is combined with multiple reassurances, which might also be interpreted as deferrals, that she would explain the issue in more details later. After the account, she offers an intensified IFID 'I really apologize,' followed by an expression of lack of intent. The function of this strategy is to shift responsibility from herself to external circumstances, ultimately, dissociating herself from the offense and invoking the group's understanding. Then, her insistence that 'she wanted to be with them,' is an expression of concern to further intensify the apology. The recording ends with another instance of an intensified IFID 'I'm really so sorry,' an expression of embarrassment 'I know that's awful,' and, finally, ascribing the offense to external circumstances/expressing lack of intent. However, it should be noted that the expressions of apology are interrupted by the speaker's announcement that there might be another person who would join them. This is then hedged by what appears to be an indirect request for the group to find someone who can travel with them and, so, buy her ticket, in case she did not manage to sell the ticket to her own friend.

<sup>14</sup> Prior to issuing the apology in a voice message, the apologizer had sent a text message to the group informing them that she decided not to join them after giving the issue some thought. Hence, the beginning of the recording does count as an account proper, not as an explicit withdrawal from the agreement, which had already been established in writing.

As is already established, the participants' perceptions are elicited in relation to three aspects of the apology; (im)politeness, the severity of the offense, and the (in)sincerity of the apology. The participants' perceptions of (im)politeness are presented in Figure 7.1 below.



**Figure 7.1 Perceptions of (im)politeness in Apology One**

Figure 7.1 shows that despite the fact that 32.5% rated the apology as 'neither polite or impolite,' the participants overall seem to perceive the apology as 'polite,' and 'very polite.' Thus, combined, 49.4% of the participants rated the apology as '(very) polite,' as opposed to 18.2%, who rated it as '(very) (im)polite.'<sup>15</sup>

As for the participants' perceptions of the severity of the offense, Table 7.1 below, which also presents the ratings of (in)sincerity, shows a similar trend. Generally, the assessments, which mostly oscillated between 'neither severe nor mild' and 'mild,' indicate that the participants evaluate the situation as rather 'mild.' and, as can be seen, a nearly equal percentage of the participants rated the severity of the offense as severe. Only one participant rated the offense as very severe (1.3%). Thus, combined, half of the participants perceived the offense as '(very) mild.' Finally, the results of the participants' perceptions of the (in)sincerity of the apology show that the majority of the participants rated the apology as 'neither sincere nor insincere,' revealing lack of precision on the part of the

<sup>15</sup> Following Haugh and Chang's (2019) methodology, and based on observations made by Eelen (2001), I do not report mean and standard deviation values, as I believe mean values skew the results.

participants, which is further confirmed by the fact that 22.1% rated the apology ‘insincere’ and ‘sincere,’ respectively for each.

Scales	1	2	3	4	5
Severity	1.3%	14.3%	33.8%	37.7%	13%
(In)sincerity	9.1%	22.1%	40.3%	22.1%	6.5%

**Table 7.1 Perceptions of severity and (in)sincerity in Apology One**

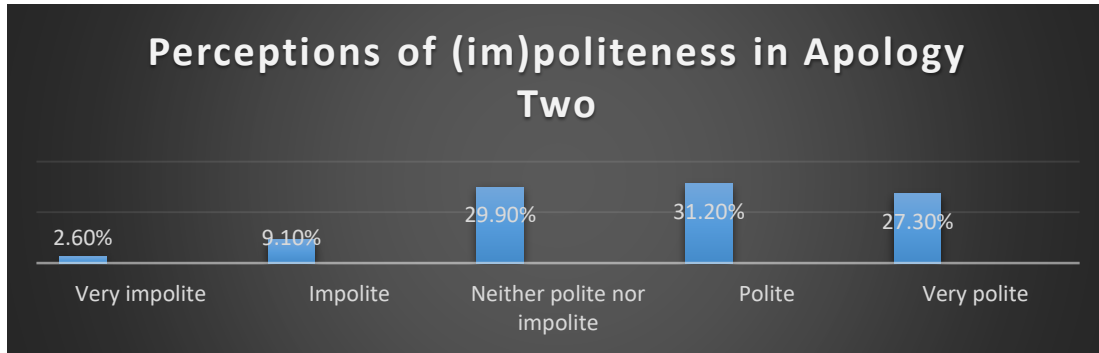
Spearman correlation test (see Appendix I) was run in order to examine the hypotheses. The results do not support hypothesis (a), as there is no correlation between the severity of the offense and the (in)sincerity of the apology. However, the test shows that there is a strong positive correlation ( $p > 0.05$ ) between the perceived (in)sincerity of the apology and its perceived (im)politeness, supporting hypothesis (b).

### 7.3.2 Apology Two

In this recording, the apology concerns failure to lend money to the addressee’s friend. It is important to take two things into consideration with regards to this apology, which may have influenced the participants’ perceptions. First, it is a money-related context, and requesting money is considered a high imposition. Moreover, in addition to being a request about money, the request involves a stranger, even if he is a friend of a friend. Second, the apologizer is not apologizing for an offense that was brought about by herself. Rather, she is apologizing on behalf of her father and then her aunt, which may have caused her to issue a “less passionate” apology. The apology goes as follows:

<p>هلا حكيه أهلي.. البابا مانو عم يطلع. حكيه خالتي بعدين وبدا تعتذر منك وأنا بعنذر منك لأنو هبي عندا شبين واحد بجامعة خاصة وواحد بلبنان فمانا مستفضاية كتير عليون بس هلا قريرت رسالتك. هلا بسألا إذا جوزا في الو معارف هنكيكي أو حسب شغلو لشوف إذا إلو حدا بطرطوس نفسا المحافظة. هلا هوي قلتي وين الشب بالدريكيش؟ بشفلك أنا شو الموضوع وبردلك خبر.</p>
<p>I just talked to my parents... Dad is not going there (to another city). I also spoke with my aunt later. She apologizes to you and I apologize too. It’s because she has two sons; one is in a private university and the other is in Lebanon, so money’s tight, but I just read your message. I’ll ask her if her husband has people there... depends on his job. I’ll see whether he knows people in Tartus, the governorate. Where did you say the guy lives, Draykish? I’ll see what I can do and let you know.</p>

The speaker first gives an account of why her father cannot help, and then reports her aunt's IFID 'she apologizes,' followed by her own IFID 'I apologize too.' She, then, gives another account, concerning her aunt's inability to lend the sum to his friend. Finally, the speaker resorts to an offer of repair/compensation by explaining that she will try to find other ways to sort things out. In Figure 7.2 below, the distribution of the participants' perceptions of (im)politeness in this apology is presented.



**Figure 7.2 Perceptions of (im)politeness in Apology Two**

As can be seen, most of the participants rated the apology as either 'polite,' 'neither polite nor impolite,' or 'very polite.' Only 11.8% of the participants rated the apology as 'impolite' and 'very impolite.' Thus, again, there does not seem to be a lot of variability in perceptions for this apology, similarly to Apology One. Also, in terms of the severity of the offense, only a number of participants, making up 9.1% of the overall ratings, evaluated the offense as 'very severe' and 'severe.' On the other hand, just under half of the participants rated it as 'very mild.' An equal percentage of participants rated the offense as 'mild' and 'neither severe nor mild.' As for the scale of (in)sincerity, ratings also converge on a perception of 'sincere' (45.5%) and 'very sincere' (23.4%), as can be seen in Table 7.2 below.

Scales	1	2	3	4	5
Severity	1.3%	7.8%	20.8%	20.8%	49.4%
(In)sincerity	5.2%	1.4%	15.6%	45.5%	23.4%

**Table 7.2 Perceptions of severity and (in)sincerity in Apology Two**

The results of Spearman correlation test support both hypotheses (a) and (b); there is a strong correlation between the severity of the offense and the (in)sincerity of the apology ( $p < 0.01$ ). The correlation between the (in)sincerity of the apology and its perceived (im)politeness is also statistically significant at 0.01.

### 7.3.3 Apology Three

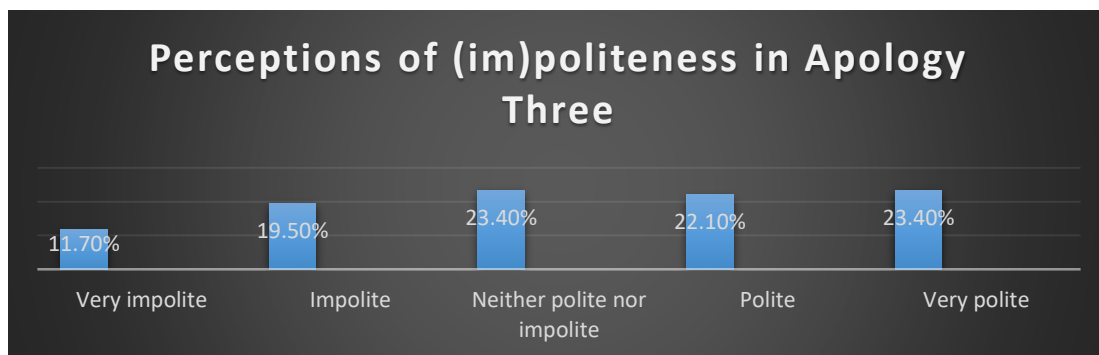
The occasion for the apology in this recording is that the speaker declines an invitation to attend the graduation ceremony of the addressee, which involves going to another city. The speaker apologizes as follows:

<p>حبيب القلب والله عراسي ما تأخزني حبيبي الله يعطيك ألف عافية. حبيبي والله العظيم أنا ما... يعني ما فاضي والله و إلا كنت بتشرف. على كل حال. خليني أنا كنت بدي بس رد عليك المسا. خليني احكي مع أبو الميس شوف شو الوضع عندو. إذا أبو الميس بيقرر يجي يعني منطلقنا هيك رحلة قصيرة منباركلك فيا ومنرجع بس خليني شوف شو وضعو أبو الميس.</p>
<p>Thanks dear, I appreciate it! Pardon me, but I swear to God I... I'm busy. Otherwise, I would be honored (to attend). Anyway, let me just... I've been meaning to respond to you in the evening. Let me just speak to Abu Elmees and see what he has in mind. If Abu Elmees can make it, maybe we can make a short trip to congratulate you and then go back. Let me just check with Abu Elmees.</p>

Before going into the details of the multi-strategy apology above, it is worth noting that the apology in this recording appears in the vicinity of another speech act, a refusal/declination. In other words, following Robinson's (2004: 298) analysis, the apology prefaces the refusal and is subordinate to it, so it is not the main speech act to be responded to in this recording. Davies et al. (2007), Deutschmann (2003), and Robinson 2004 argue that function of apologies depends on their sequential position in the interaction and whether they appear as the only speech act or in addition to another primary speech act. Most importantly in relation to this research, however, is that their analyses converge on the idea that regardless of their status as primary or subordinate, any apology is an apology proper and is worthy of analysis of its own. This is also the position adopted in this research. The fact that the recordings contain explicit apologies (IFIDs), despite performing different functions, is the criterion by which the recordings were chosen, in addition to their availability as naturally-occurring data at the time this experiment was conducted.

As far as the strategies employed in this apology are concerned, it can be seen that the apology is interspersed with the speaker's use of endearment terms and invoking God's name to strength his account of being busy, which is the first apology strategy. This account is counterbalanced by an appeal to the addressee's positive face, that it would be an honor for the speaker to attend the ceremony. Then the speaker attempts to hedge the refusal of the invitation by making a contingent promise to attend the ceremony. Overall, this strategy seems to signal the speaker's attempt to avoid a direct refusal of the invitation.

The results of the participants' perceptions of (im)politeness in this recording, unlike the first two apologies, show clear variability. In Figure 7.3 below, it can be seen that there is a near-equal distribution of ratings, from 'impolite' through to 'very polite.' On closer examination, the perceptions are mostly divided between 'impolite' with 19.5% of the participants choosing it, and 'polite' with 22.1% of the overall ratings.



**Figure 7.3 Perceptions of (im)politeness in Apology Three**

On the scale of severity, as shown in Table 7.3, it can also be seen that the participants' ratings vary between 'neither severe nor mild' and 'very mild,' and a total of 20.8% of the participants perceived the offense as 'very severe' and 'severe.' In addition to variability of (im)politeness and severity perceptions, the ratings on the scale of (in)sincerity show the most variability; most of the ratings verge towards the negative end of the scale. Around 45% of the participants the apology as '(very) insincere.' The rest of the participants were nearly equally divided between values 3 and 4, and value 5 was chosen by a slightly less percentage of the participants.



Scales	1	2	3	4	5
Severity	7.8%	13%	24.7%	26%	28.6%
(In)sincerity	20.8%	22.1%	24.7%	18.2%	14.3%

**Table 7.3 Perceptions of severity and (in)sincerity in Apology Three**

The ratings point to a variability of perceptions on the three scales, which invites the question of whether variability on one scale is linked to variability on the other. As for the results of Spearman correlation test, they lend support for both hypotheses as it shows that a very strong, positive correlation holds between the severity of the offense and the (in)sincerity of the apology ( $p < 0.01$ ), on one hand, and a strong correlation ( $p < 0.01$ ) exists between the perceived (in)sincerity of the apology and its perceived (im)politeness, on the other hand.

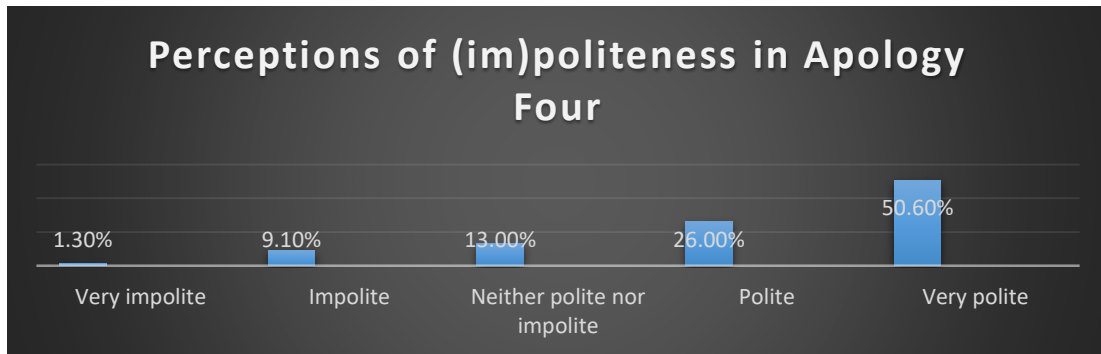
#### 7.3.4 Apology Four

In the last apology recording, the speaker apologizes to the addressee for having forgotten to respond to the latter's voice message for a long time. She gives the following, rather lengthy apology, which is prefaced by conventional greetings:

يسعدلي صباحك كيفك حبوب شو أخبارك؟ لك أنا أسفة كثير كثير كثير بتعرفي هلا عم افتح بدي اكتبلك إني بدي اطمئن عنك ولا شفت التسجيلات ما يعرف إيمتي فاتحتن ولا بعرف ليش ماني رادة عليون عنجد ما بعرف أبدا حتى ولاني منتبهة عليون. اطلعت هيك العمى من خمس تيام فأنا أسفة كثير كثير شكلي فاتحتون أنا يعني أنا وعم بعمل شي أو حدا عم يحكييني ونسيانة ارجع اسمعون أو شي. كيفك طمنييني عنك أمورك كلا تمام؟
Good morning, sweetie, what's up? I'm so, so, so, so sorry. You know, I was going to text you, and just now I saw the voice messages. I don't know when I received them or why I didn't reply. I really don't know... I'm not even aware they are there. I just saw them, and I was like wow! Five days... so, I'm so very sorry. It looks like I viewed them while doing something else, or talking to someone else, and I have forgotten to listen to them, or something. How are you? everything's okay?

The apology is composed of three main strategies, two of which are repeated throughout the recording. The speaker first uses the IFID 'I'm sorry,' intensified by four repetitions of the adverb 'so.' This is followed by an account of the offense, prefaced by an appeal to understanding 'you know,' which involves speaker-internal justifications ascribing the offense to lack of awareness. Then the speaker repeats the IFID 'I'm so, so sorry,' and offers another explanation of the offense, based on forgetfulness and getting caught up in another business. The speaker concludes the apology by checking on the addressee.

The participants' perceptions of the three targeted aspects of the apology are characterized by a general preference for the positive end of the scale(s). As far as the perceptions of (im)politeness are concerned, as presented in Figure 4.7, the ratings suggest that the majority of the participants evaluate the apology as '(very) polite,' and only 10% think it is '(very) impolite.'



**Figure 7.4 Perceptions of (im)politeness in Apology Four**

In addition to a visible lack of variation in perceptions of (im)politeness, the participants' ratings of the severity of the offense reveal that they also seem to perceive the situation as rather mild. Only 3.9% rated the offense as 'very severe,' as opposed to 31.2%, who rated it as 'very mild.' Finally, on the scale of sincerity, the distribution of the ratings resembles that on the scale of severity. Again the majority of the participants rated the apology as '(very) sincere.' These ratings are presented in Table 7.4 below.

Scales	1	2	3	4	5
Severity	3.9%	14.3%	24.7%	26%	31.2%
(In)sincerity	5.2%	7.8%	24.7%	27.3%	35.1%

**Table 7.4 Perceptions of severity and (in)sincerity in Apology Four**

Finally, the correlation test shows that there is a strong positive correlation between the scales of severity and (in)sincerity, and the correlation is statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, for the scales of (in)sincerity and (im)politeness, the test indicates a statistically significant strong, positive correlation ( $p < 0.01$ ). Having presented the results of each apology recording, in the next section, I discuss these results with respect to the question

of variability in perceptions, the hypotheses, and the implications of these results on the perceptions of politeness in Syrian Arabic in this study.

#### **7.4 Discussion**

As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the main objective is to examine whether there will be variability in the participants' perceptions of (im)politeness in four apologies. Additionally, two main hypotheses were tested about whether there is a correlation between the participants' perceptions of (im)politeness and (in)sincerity, on the one hand, and a correlation between their perceptions of (in)sincerity and their assessment of the severity of the offense, on the other hand.

In terms of variability in (im)politeness perceptions, the results of this experiment show that there is visible variability of perceptions only in Apology Three. The results in this apology recording, thus, are similar to the results of Haugh and Chang (2019) and support Eelen's (2001) argument that variability is an empirical and statistical fact about politeness. Despite the fact that perceptions of (im)politeness are varied only in one recording, this result is interesting in two respects. First, the variability of (im)politeness perceptions in Apology three is clearly paralleled by an equal variability on the scale of (in)sincerity. Second, this parallel variability in perceptions of (im)politeness and (in)sincerity is only found in Apology Three. In the rest of the apology recordings, in which no variability in (im)politeness perceptions is attested, there was no parallel variability on the (in)sincerity scale.

Overall, the above-noted correlations and parallels support previous research which documents a link between evaluations of politeness and perceptions of (in)sincerity (Blum-Kulka 2005). However, the exact nature of the correlation is unknown, and it is still open to question whether the participants indeed perceive potential (in)sincerity as a factor that gives rise to perceptions of (im)politeness. Such questions can only be examined in follow-up interviews in which the participants can justify their ratings of the three scales and discuss their opinions concerning the relationship between (im)politeness and (in)sincerity.

However, despite the correlation between perceptions of (im)politeness and (in)sincerity in Apology Three, the results of Apology One invite further investigation as to whether this correlation invariably holds in perceptions of politeness. Although there is no variability in the participants' perceptions of (im)politeness in Apology One, their evaluations of (in)sincerity show a lack of agreement; aggregate ratings are almost equally distributed between '(very) insincere' and '(very) sincere.' The result of Apology One contradicts views that associate politeness with sincerity (Mills 2003) and in fact support Xie, He, and Lin's (2005) argument that politeness does not necessarily entail sincerity. The variability of (in)sincerity perceptions, combined with overall perceptions of the apology as polite, also support Pinto's (2011) remarks that some seemingly insincere communicative acts such as routine exchanges and small talk can still be perceived as polite from a rapport-based point of view. In other words, even if some utterances are made out of social obligation and lack sincerity, they may still be evaluated as polite because they are produced with the aim of maintaining rapport and ensuring smooth communication (Pinto 2011: 228-229).

As shown, the results of this experiment support both hypotheses; there is a statistically significant correlation between perceptions of the severity of the offense and evaluations of (in)sincerity (hypothesis (a)). There is also a statistically significant correlation between the perceived (in)sincerity of the apology and its perceived (im)politeness. Overall, such correlations resonate with Haugh and Chang's (2019) suggestion that there might be a relationship between evaluations of (im)politeness and evaluations of (in)sincerity.

Although the results support the hypotheses, they do not reveal the exact nature of the positive correlation between the above-mentioned variables. As we have seen, the participants' perceptions of (im)politeness and (in)sincerity reveal two opposing perspectives on the relationship. The first is that perceptions of (im)politeness are related to perceptions of (in)sincerity. The second is that perceptions of (im)politeness may be separate from perceptions of (in)sincerity. In addition to this, it is not clear whether the positive correlation between the severity of the offense and the sincerity of the apology holds between the positive or negative ends of the scales. This clearly applies to perceptions

of sincerity and assessments of the degree of offense in Apologies Three and Four. On the one hand, in apology Three, the overwhelming perceptual agreement is that the offense is ‘(very) mild,’ but on (in)sincerity scale, the results are mixed at best, with just under half of the participants evaluating the apology as ‘(very) (in)sincere.’ On the other hand, in Apology Four, the overwhelming majority perceives the apology situation to be ‘very mild’ and the apology to be ‘very sincere.’

The participants’ ratings of severity and (in)sincerity in Apology Four might be explained in terms of Goffman’s (1971) proportionality principle. In brief, the principle states that participants’ assessment of the gravity of the offense dictates the format and structure of apologies. Heritage et al. (2019) argue that the principle is best thought of as a constitutive principle by which speakers assess the severity of the offense and, following this assessment, design a proportional, or contextually-proper, apology. As the apologies in this study are rather lengthy and incorporate a diverse range of apology strategy, it is reasonable to argue that the design of the apologies as such points out to the speakers’ assessment of the offenses as more than just ‘mild,’ which contradicts the participants’ evaluations. In light of the proportionality principle, the participants/observers appear to rate the apology as sincere because it is disproportionate to the mildness of the offense. Given the mildness of the offense, as seen by the participants, the apology might have been deemed sincere as it shows that the speaker invests more in its design than is required for the apology to be accepted.

The apparent discrepancy between the participants’ perceptions, on the one hand, and the apologizer’s own evaluations of the severity of the offense, can be accounted for with reference to Kádár and Haugh’s (2013) multi-loci approach to politeness. More specifically, following this framework, differences in understanding politeness may be understood in terms of different participation statuses. This proposal suggests that, as lay observers, the participants have different perceptions of the severity of the offense from the speaker who is a ratified participant. The two perspectives represent second-order and first-order understandings of the apology situation, respectively.

In addition to the uncertainty regarding the nature of the correlation between the three variables, the results of this study only offer a sketchy view of the perceptions of politeness in Syrian Arabic, which does not make a characterization possible of the underlying norms that motivate the participants' perceptions of (im)politeness, (in)sincerity, and the severity of the offense. The variability of evaluations of all three scales might be ascribed a variety of contextual and sociolinguistic factors. For instance, the nature of the offense and the situation itself may be grounds for the participants' perceptions of the (im)politeness of each apology. As Chang and Haugh (2011) mention, their participants' perceptions of the sincerity of the apology is partially based on the extent to which the offense is beyond the control of the apologizer. Thus, this point might be worthy of further examination, in addition to other features of the situation such as what occasions the apology. The topic of the apology might be especially relevant for evaluations in Apology Two, which is a money-related request that is ranked high in terms of imposition by many Syrians and, thus, warrants a refusal. Seen in this light, the apology might be felt to be polite, given the sensitivity of the request.

In a similar vein, the lexical and structural design of the apology might be one of the factors that influenced the participants' perceptions. As argued in Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, the production of apologies is influenced by power, distance, and the severity of the offense. The overall insight is that more weighty offenses elicit more elaborate apologies, which correspond to Goffman's (1971) proportionality principle. Moreover, Bergman and Kasper (1993) note that certain apologetic forms are more ritual than other forms that are typically associated with substantive/real apologies. For instance, in American English, "excuse me" is used as a ritual apology, but "I'm sorry" is much more frequent in real, post-offense apologies. The association between lexical choice and social factors has also been addressed in East Asian languages; in a study on apologies and politeness in Korean, Hatfield and Hahn (2010) note that the severity of the offense can be evaluated based on the speakers' lexical choices. They add that corpus data show that "stronger" lexical items are more likely to be used with weightier offenses. Thus, in Korean, *coysong*, a strong apologetic form, is more likely to be used in highly offensive situations than *mian*, the milder form. Based on observations outlined above, the

participants' perceptions in this study might have been influenced by the speakers' lexical choices.

In addition to the influence of contextual factors over apology format, research on apologies has dealt with the question of what constitutes an apology. The main concern of such line of research is the identification of apology strategies that are most canonically associated with this speech act for apologies to be regarded proper by both speakers and hearers. Wolfson, Marmor, and Jones (1989) explain that variations in the linguistic realization of apologies cross-culturally pose a challenge for such a strand of research. For example, accounts on their own constitute proper apologies for native speakers of American English, without them being combined with IFIDs (*ibid*: 180). Olshtain and Cohen (1983), however, maintain that, although any strategy in the apology speech act strategy set counts as an apology proper, IFIDs and taking on responsibility can be used for any apologetic situation, while repairs, accounts, and promises of forbearance only fit certain situations. The upshot of this discussion is that the participants might have rated the apologies with reference to what qualifies as a proper apology in their opinion, both in terms of strategy choice and in relation to the offenses in each recording.

Finally, research on impoliteness can explain the results. Culpeper (2011a) argues that perceptions of impoliteness are related not only to what is said but how it is said. For instance, according to Culpeper (2011b), a mismatch between the meaning of the word and the prosody of speech, may be interpreted as impolite. If an utterance has the surface meaning of expressing excitement, a delivery of that utterance in a bored tone will be evaluated as impolite. More generally, perceptions of (im)politeness arise in the case of mock politeness, banter, and insincere/manipulative politeness, as Culpeper, Haugh, and Sinkeviciute (2015: 324) explain. Clearly, a mismatch between content and prosody involves insincerity, which may explain the correlation between the participants' perceptions of (in)sincerity and (im)politeness.

Other paralinguistic cues such as the local accent of the apologizers that may have motivated the participants' perceptions. In this respect, the speakers on the recordings use four different local accents, one of which is the accent used in the Syrian capital, Damascus.

Sociolinguistic studies on attitudes towards regional varieties of languages, dialects, and accents show that people are aware of social differences in what they hear, which influences their attitudes (Meyerhoff 2011). Furthermore, Preston (1999) suggests that people rate their own dialects more favorably than other dialects in terms of correctness and pleasantness. Other aspects that people orient to in the speech of others' is sincerity. Thus, it is worth investigating whether the participants, who come from all cities in Syria, were influenced by the diversity of accents they heard in their perceptions of the (in)sincerity, and, overall, of the (im)politeness of the apologizers.<sup>16</sup>

However, it should be noted that the discussion of the results presented above remains tentative at best, and the results can only be validated by follow-up interviews, which are invaluable for drawing meaningful conclusions about perceptual variability. The interviews will not only elicit the participants' insights into their ratings, but they will also confirm the analyst's/my own observations, as presented in the discussion above (Kádár and Haugh 2013; Haugh and Chang 2019). Interview questions should elicit the participants' rationale for their ratings, how they think (im)politeness, (in)sincerity, and the severity of offense are related, and whether they conceive of these variables as collectively influencing their overall perceptions of politeness, or whether they are more autonomous variables. Most importantly, the follow-up interviews would confirm whether the participants view (im)politeness and (in)sincerity separately, to what extent, and in what contexts. Additionally, it would be interesting to know whether the format of the apologies and the speaker's choice of apologetic terms influenced the participants' evaluation of (im)politeness. Finally, the interview is expected to shed light on what the participants think are the elements of a polite apology.

To conclude this discussion, I will touch on some of the limitations in this study. The first limitation is that the study does not take into consideration two important first-order loci for understanding; the user perspectives of the speakers and the addressees in the recordings, as ratified participants. The study examines variability in perceptions from a

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<sup>16</sup> In a personal communication, one of the participants mentioned to me that he thought his local accent, used by one of the apologizers, added to overall authenticity and congeniality of the survey.



second-order, observers' perspective. As explained earlier, Kádár and Haugh (2013) argue that different participation/observation statuses represent different levels of understanding and perceiving politeness. Thus, further light might be shed on the results by consulting the users and tapping into their perceptions and understandings of the apology situations. The second limitation is that the recordings are not interactional. As apologies and politeness are interactional and co-constructed phenomena, it follows that their production and evaluation are subject to constant change in accordance with the input of the speakers and the responses of the addressees. Obviously, in an interactional situation, the evaluations of the participants as observers are bound to be influenced by how the interaction unfolds, by how the addressees receive the apologies, and by how both speakers and addressees negotiate the apologies. Finally, because apologies are especially tricky to come by in everyday speech, the choice of the recordings in this experiment was based on the fact that they were the only naturally-occurring data I could obtain. The consequences of this is that a number of factors such as the gender of the apologizers and the severity of the offense remain uncontrolled for. Ideally, they should have been constant.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to examine the perceptions of politeness in Syrian Arabic. The main objective was to investigate whether there is intra-language variability in the participants' perceptions of the (im)politeness of four naturally-occurring apologies. Another aim of the chapter was to examine whether there is a correlation between perceptions of (im)politeness and perceptions of other contextual factors such as the (in)sincerity of the apology and the severity of the offense. The results of the statistical analysis of the data show that there was variability in the perceptions of (im)politeness in only one of the four recordings. As for the correlation between perceptions of (im)politeness, (in)sincerity, and the degree of offense, the results show that a positive correlation holds across the four recordings. Following the discussion of the results, I noted that the results can be complemented by follow-up interviews, which can further clarify how the variables in this study are linked, in addition to shedding more light on the participants' rationales for their ratings. This is important in order to identify the norms that underlie the participants' perceptions of (im)politeness and to verify my own analyses.

Finally, I argued that the results can be further enriched if the perceptions of the speakers who perform the naturally-occurring apologies in the recordings are taken into account.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the findings drawn from the results of this study. I start the chapter with an overview of the aim of this work and a summary of the main conclusions in each chapter. I then address the limitations of the study and conclude by outlining venues of future research based on these limitations and other interesting perspectives that may shed more light on politeness in Syrian Arabic.

#### **8.2 Overall summary and main conclusions**

The aim of this study was to explore the nature of politeness in Syrian Arabic, mainly in its metapragmatic, expressive, and perceptual dimensions. In Chapter Five, which addressed the metapragmatics of politeness, the main objective was to classify the linguistic evaluators that reveal the participants' emic views of politeness. These evaluators highlight the prototypical nature of politeness in Syrian Arabic and reveal the underlying moral norms that motivate the participants' prototypical conceptions of politeness, which was another important aim of that chapter. In examining the metapragmatics of politeness, I also aimed to identify the contexts which the participants, prototypically, associate with politeness. As far as the prototypical nature of politeness in Syrian Arabic is concerned, the main conclusion that can be drawn is that it subscribes to the way politeness has been theorized in second-wave research. Politeness in Syrian Arabic is mostly a non-verbal behavior made up of such concepts that invoke good manners, personal qualities, and respect. Politeness also has a verbal manifestation as seen in speech acts such as apologies and refraining from using bad language. This inventory of prototypical components fit neatly within what seems to be universal core notions of politeness already noted and classified in the literature, which draws on diverse languages such as English, Spanish, Japanese, and Hebrew, among many others (Haugh 2004; Kádár and Haugh 2013). Another way in which the results show that politeness subscribes to the discursive scheme of analysis is in the way it can be negatively evaluated as implying insincere or even hypocritical behaviors.

However, despite largely lending itself to second-wave theorization, politeness in Syrian Arabic also exhibits features that are reminiscent of B&L's (1987) basic insight of politeness as an intentional, goal-oriented, and strategic behavior. Politeness is more than just an "other-oriented" phenomenon; it is also a "self-oriented" behavior that is based on the expectation that being polite to others will be reciprocated and that it serves to present oneself in a better light. This last observation resonates with Deustchmann's (2003) analysis of apologies in British English as strategies that enhance the apologizer's self-image. In addition to this, politeness appears to be a default and expected behavior, again in line with how first-wave research analyzes politeness.

The participants' metapragmatic comments on what constitutes politeness in Syrian Arabic and their personal narratives about politeness-related incidents gave insights into the moral order(s) that underlie their prototypical views of politeness. The core moral values that the participants invoked include respect, reciprocity, and consideration for others. Finally, the results in Chapter Five showed that as far as context is concerned, politeness is not associated with formal contexts to the exclusion of informal ones, but that politeness has both formal and informal manifestations, each characterized by specific modes of expression and behavior.

In Chapter Six, I aimed to explore the linguistic expression of politeness in the speech act of apology, and I also examined how the expression of politeness and apologies is influenced by social factors such as distance and status. The findings indicated that the expression of politeness subscribes to Kádár and Haugh's (2013) and Grainger's (2018) characterization that it is a co-constructed effort, which means that it is discursive and is not inherent in isolated utterances, contra first-wave assumptions. However, the findings also showed that the co-constructed nature is itself principled and conventional, ruling out the idiosyncrasy and the unpredictability, assumed by second-wave researchers. The expression of politeness was tied to the hearer's evaluation of the behavior of the speaker, and such evaluations were indexed through specific speech acts such as complaints and criticisms. Most importantly, the analysis of the data showed evidence that in order for such evaluations to be successfully carried out, the interlocutors both banked on their mutual recognition and shared understanding of the linguistic meaning of these speech acts.

In other words, part of the way in which politeness was evaluated and, thus, expressed, was tied to the conventionality of meanings that are shared by speakers of Syrian Arabic. In addition to drawing on these conventional meanings, in the recurrent cycles of evaluations/expressions of politeness, the participants again appealed explicitly to wider social and moral norms that revolved around notions of respect and consideration for others in the form of mutual face saving in public contexts. This is in line with the components of the moral order, which were identified in Chapter Five as encapsulating respect and consideration for others.

As for the role of social factors, the results showed that distance and status are not fixed values, as argued in Grainger (2018). The participants used those factors as flexible devices that aided the accomplishment of their co-constructed effort in achieving politeness. Furthermore, it was concluded that such factors were used for different functions and to highlight various aspects of the speakers' identities. More specifically, the participants would highlight their social closeness as a symbol of the successful delivery of the apology and conflict resolution. Most importantly, in the professor situations, social status was used to highlight the symbolic power of the professor and present him/her as a knowledgeable and sympathetic person at the same time. However, there was at least some evidence that social status did have a role in shaping the participants' expression of politeness in the professor situations. I have noted that the participants' orientation to the status differentials in the professor situations gave rise to a shift of style towards the formal. Such a shift, I argued, reflected the participants' knowledge of the prototypical performance of apologies and politeness in such an institutionalized setting.

In Chapter Seven, I examined the variability of (im)politeness perceptions in Syrian Arabic in four naturally-occurring apologies. The main aim was to examine whether the participants' perceptions will diverge or converge with respect to how they perceived the (im)politeness of the apologies. In addition to this, I sought to investigate the relationship between perceptions of (im)politeness and perceptions of other contextual factors such as the (in)sincerity of the apology and the perceived severity of the offense. The statistical analysis showed that in one situation only, there was variability in (im)politeness perceptions. The most important observation concerning this variability was that it was

closely connected to variability in the perceptions of (in)sincerity. This suggested that perceptions of (im)politeness are closely connected to perceptions of (in)sincerity (Chang and Haugh 2011).

### **8.3 Discussion of main conclusions**

Based on the observations made above and the findings in each chapter, a picture of politeness in Syrian Arabic emerges and can be summarized in three main points. Firstly, the full complexity of politeness in Syrian Arabic cannot be entirely captured by either first-wave theories or second-wave, discursive approaches. Some aspects of politeness such as its non-verbal manifestations, its co-constructed, negotiated, and contested nature, as seen in both production and perceptions, lend themselves entirely to second-wave conceptualizations. Furthermore, it is clear that the participants' evaluations of the role of family relations and social status in assessing the need for politeness in context is language- and culture-specific, thus, idiosyncratic. However, other aspects can only be accounted for with reference to the classical theories. For example, politeness has verbal manifestations and it is a goal-oriented and strategic behavior, which links it to B&L's (1987) view of politeness as an intentional behavior.

Secondly, despite the discursivity of politeness expression and the variability in its perceptions, there is evidence that politeness expression and perceptions are not entirely idiosyncratic, nor can they be reduced to analysis on the micro-level (Kádár 2017). As far as perceptions are concerned, I have already noted that perceptions of (im)politeness seem to be systematically correlated to perceptions of (in)sincerity, which suggests that such perceptions are motivated by a collective orientation to the role of (in)sincerity in evaluating (im)politeness, at least as far as the participating sample is concerned. In terms of expression, the analysis showed that expressing politeness is tied to evaluations, which arise with reference to a set of shared understandings of the meanings of certain speech acts. Thus, part of evaluating and expressing politeness depends on the conventionalized meanings of certain linguistic units.

The third and final point relates to the linguistic evaluators and core components that make up the concept of politeness in Syrian Arabic. These evaluators, in addition to other aspects of politeness such as it being self- and other-oriented (Haugh 2004), have

also been identified as being politeness-related evaluators in other languages such as Japanese and English (Kádár and Haugh 2013), Spanish and American English (Barros-Garica and Terkourafi 2014), Hebrew (Blum-Kulka 2005), and Libyan Arabic and British English (Kerkam 2015), just to name a few. Thus, the results in this regard support the view that the core components of politeness may be universally shared (Haugh 2004) but that politeness has language- and culture-specific manifestations (Haugh 2004; Kádár and Haugh 2013).

Since politeness in Syrian Arabic has both language- and culture-specific properties and features that are identified cross-linguistically and cross-culturally as making up the concept of politeness in various languages, I argue that the nuances of politeness in Syrian Arabic can only be disentangled using a third-wave approach. This conclusion is afforded by the fact that the models I have used for analyzing politeness, Kádár and Haugh (2013) and Grainger (2018), are themselves third-wave approaches. By adopting the multi-perspective design of Kádár and Haugh's (2013) model, I was able to capture the micro-level specificity of politeness in Syrian Arabic, which boils down to the sum of how the participants orient to various meanings in context and to the way they appeal to various contextual moral order(s) to frame their evaluations, as I have shown in Chapter Six. At the same time, the conceptual tools in this model such as the concept of the moral order, linguistic evaluators, and the co-constructed nature of politeness, have proved to be valuable notions that allow me to situate politeness in Syrian Arabic within a macro level of analysis, making cross-cultural and cross-linguistic comparisons of politeness possible. Thus, I further argue that politeness facts in Syrian Arabic support the view that the analysis of politeness on the macro-level should not be abandoned, as has been suggested by Terkourafi (2005) and Kádár (2017), among others.

#### **8.4 Contributions**

This dissertation contributes to the field of politeness in pragmatics generally and to politeness studies on Arabic dialects, more specifically, as it sheds light on this phenomenon in a language variety that has not been addressed before. It is also one of the few studies that presents a holistic view of politeness by analyzing all of its manifestations. Moreover, the study follows a multi-perspective approach that takes into consideration

different participation roles in the conceptualizations, expression, and perceptions of politeness. Thus, the findings in this study help deepen our understanding of the interconnectedness of each aspect of politeness, so that, for example, the expression of politeness is bound by in-context evaluations. Overall, then, the results show the importance of studying politeness in its totality in order to fully understand the mechanisms of expression and evaluation.

In addition to addressing the above-mentioned gaps in the literature, this study adopts two frameworks, which has not been rigorously tested in the analysis of politeness, at least in all of its manifestations. In this regard, the study offers empirical support for the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural applicability of both Kádár and Haugh's (2013) model and Grainger's (2018) neo-Brown and Levinson approach to politeness. Furthermore, the findings support the theoretical standing of these third-wave approaches, which emphasize the importance of describing and accounting for politeness on the micro- and the macro-levels.

In addition to the theoretical implications of this dissertation, the findings also shed light on the Syrian society, and, thus, have a cultural import. The findings offer a fresh perspective on the Syrian society, which is by and large a patriarchal society (Nydell 2006). The results indeed show that social status and family relations are important in politeness evaluations and expression. However, the core components of politeness as described by the participants, suggest that values of individuality, autonomy, and mutual respect based on cordiality, also play an important role in the evaluation and expression of politeness.

## **8.5 Limitations**

Naturally, the study suffers from a number of limitations that need to be taken into consideration, especially in relation to how they might have biased the results. The first limitation relates to the participants, both in terms of the sample size(s) and the population. The small number of participants in the metapragmatic and the expression studies severely limits any generalizations of the findings, and although the number of participants in the perception study is acceptable, the findings should still be taken with caution. In addition to limitations in number, selecting the participants is based on convenience, the availability of the participants at the time of collecting the data, and their willingness to respond online.



Therefore, since the participants are a homogeneous group of university students, with relatively similar ages and social backgrounds, the results may have been influenced by these sociolinguistic factors. This may be particularly true for the way politeness is conceived of as encompassing values of equality, mutual respect, and self-orientation. Also in relation to the participants in the perceptual study, given that they are university students who have lived and studied in different countries around the world, it is possible that their ratings might have been, at least to some extent, influenced by L2 and L3 transfer, whether this is a transfer of linguistic or socio-cultural norms.

The roleplay data also pose a limitation on the interpretability of the results. As I have already mentioned, roleplays elicit data sets that resemble real-life interactions quite closely, but the data cannot be considered an accurate reflection of the way politeness is expressed in Syrian Arabic. Rather, the findings in the politeness expression experiment should be regarded as reflecting the participants' prototypical knowledge about how interaction is supposed to be carried out in institutional and everyday settings alike.

On the issue of data analysis and interpretation, it should be pointed out that the strictly qualitative analysis of the data in chapters five and six, which is motivated by the small data set available, is bound to reduce the objectivity of the analysis. The objectivity and the reliability of the results would benefit from incorporating quantitative measures of analysis. For example, in Chapter five, a semantic analysis of the components of politeness based on strong and weak correspondence between each core component and politeness would render a more concrete and principled view of what the concept of politeness in Syrian Arabic incorporates. Similarly, data analysis in Chapter six can also be more quantitatively oriented if apology strategies were coded and frequencies of occurrence calculated.

Finally, although I have tried to integrate multiple user and observer perspectives in the analysis of politeness, I did not consult the speakers as direct participants in the perceptual study. Taking the speakers' views into account will deepen our understanding of why variability of perceptions has occurred and shed light on the underlying values that motivate their own understandings of what makes a polite apology, how that relates to sincerity, and how it interacts with their assessment of the severity of the offense. Most

importantly, their views will offer invaluable insights that can verify my initial observations, or foreground other considerations that further clarify variability in this study.

## **8.6 Suggestions for further research**

The findings and the limitations in this study not only inspire further research for a more nuanced understanding of politeness in Syrian Arabic but also open up venues for more interdisciplinary research. For example, it would be interesting to investigate politeness among senior adult Syrians especially in terms of their prototypical conceptions of politeness. It would be interesting to examine whether some of the individualistic tendencies identified in this study are a consequence of the participants' age and educational background and whether senior adults would have more conservative conceptions about politeness in context, and in the way they express and perceive it.

Contrastive studies of politeness in Syrian Arabic and other varieties of Arabic, especially Levantine Arabic, might be interesting in order to examine whether and to what extent politeness phenomena in such geographically and historically related varieties of Arabic are different. It would be interesting to tease out the various linguistic evaluators used by native speakers of Lebanese, Jordanian, and Palestinian Arabic and compare their connotations for the native speakers of each dialect. Investigating this would highlight the extent to which understandings of politeness are idiosyncratic.

Further research might also examine the interaction between politeness and paralinguistic cues such as prosody and facial expressions (Brown and Prieto 2015; Caballero et al. 2018; Vergis and Pell 2020). Politeness is a multi-modal phenomenon; thus, it would be interesting to examine the role of prosody in the perception of politeness both in naturally occurring data and in experimental settings in which the prosodic features of speech may be manipulated and recorded by trained speakers. This is to test the influence of pitch, intonation, and voice quality, among other factors, on the perceptions of politeness.

Finally, politeness theories have always addressed, in lesser or greater detail, the relationship between politeness and the closely related phenomenon of impoliteness. In the

classical theories, impoliteness was relegated to a secondary status in relation to politeness. However, more recently impoliteness has become an area of investigation on its own. It would be worth investigating the relationship between politeness and impoliteness in Syrian Arabic. Such a study might address questions related to the characterization of impoliteness in terms of whether it can be described as “lack of politeness,” or whether it is a stand-alone phenomenon worthy of a separate analysis. A related research venue in the latter case might be the investigation of the mechanism by which impoliteness is expressed, evaluated, and talked about in particular contexts as well as more generally, as an everyday phenomenon.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### *Quantitative parameters*

##### **1. Self-report data**

Number of words in item 1: 231

Number of words in item 2: 504

##### **2. Roleplay data**

Overall number of words in situation 1: 1240

Overall number of words in situation 2: 1845

Overall number of words in situation 3: 2153

Overall number of words in situation 4: 2168

##### **Minimal and maximal duration of each roleplay recording**

Recordings of situation 1: 00:11-01:37

Recordings of situation 2: 00:19-02:30

Recordings of situation 3: 00:25-02:22

Recordings of situation 4: 00:28-02:00

##### **3. Online survey data**

Duration of apology 1 recording: 00:41

Duration of apology 2 recording: 00:32

Duration of apology 3 recording: 00:33

Duration of apology 4 recording: 00:33

Number of words in recording 1: 86

Number of words in recording 2: 63

Number of words in recording 3: 64

Number of words in recording 4: 77



## Appendix B

### The self-report questionnaire in Syrian Arabic

#### ما هو هدف البحث؟

يهدف البحث الحالي إلى معرفة أنماط التواصل اللغوي والاجتماعي لدى متحدثي اللهجة العربية السورية الأصليين. تكمن أهمية البحث ليس فقط في مساهمته في إلقاء المزيد من الضوء على سلوكيات التواصل الإنساني بل أيضا في دوره في زيادة الوعي تجاه الآخر وتقبله مما يؤدي إلى تواصل خال من سوء الفهم والصعوبات. يمكن الاستفادة أيضا من نتائج البحث في المجال البيداغوجي فمن المتوقع أن النتائج سوف تزيد من معرفتنا بالاختلافات الثقافية مما يؤدي إلى تحسين سوية تعليم اللغة الأجنبية عبر تصميم كتب تعتمد على تعليم اللغة الأجنبية بالإشارة إلى القواعد اللغوية والمبادئ البراغمية في استخدام اللغة.

أعزائي المشاركون، يعتمد نجاح هذا البحث بالكامل على مشاركتكم. فأنتم مؤهلون تماما للإجابة عن أسئلة الاستبيان بما أنكم متحدثون أصلاء للهجة العربية السورية. إن استخدامكم لهذه اللهجة في حياتكم اليومية يجعلكم قادرين على إظهار تأثير الثقافة والعادات والعلاقات الاجتماعية في المجتمع السوري على استخدام اللغة المحكية وكيف أن اللهجة السورية تعكس العوامل المذكورة أعلاه. لذلك يرجى الإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية بصدق وعفوية لما لذلك من أهمية قصوى في رفع سوية البيانات. أخيرا وليس آخرا، هذا الاستبيان ليس بامتحان تجيب عن أسئلته. الهدف من الأسئلة هو الوصول إلى آرائكم فيما يتعلق بأهداف البحث. لذلك كل ما تكتبونه صحيح ومقبول. الرجاء التواصل معي على البريد الإلكتروني المكتوب أدناه في حال أردتم أن تعرفوا المزيد عن طبيعة البحث أو الحصول على نسخة من النتائج فور الانتهاء من كتابتها.

[christinahodeib@gmail.com](mailto:christinahodeib@gmail.com)

#### ملاحظة مهمة جدا:

باعتبار هاد البحث ببسعى للحصول على داتا باللهجة السورية كثير ضروري انكن تستخدموا العامية بكتابة أجوبتكن مثل ما عم ساوي بهالمقطع. يعني استخدموا اللغة اللي بتستخدموها بكتابة رسائل الواتس والرسائل النصية والمانسجر وجميع وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.

#### الأسئلة:

1. كيف بتعرف الشخص اللبق أو المهذب؟
2. احكي عن أول حادثة أو تجربة شخصية بتخطر على بالك كنت خلالها لبق ومهذب تجاه شخص ثاني. شو كان الموقف أو التجربة؟ كيف اظهرت تهذيبك تجاه الشخص الآخر؟
3. رتب أهمية إنك تكون لبق/مهذب تجاه الأشخاص التاليين بوضع إشارة صح تحت الخيار المناسب في المربع. بليز اشراح ليش اخترت هالاختيار.

مهم	ما مهم	مهم كثير	ليش اخترت هالاختيار؟
			زميل بالصف
			صديق

				فرد من أفراد العائلة الصغيرة (أب/أم/أخ/أخت)
				دكتور/ة جامعة
				شخص غريب أول مرة بتلتقي فيه بحياتك

شكرا للمشاركة في هذا الاستبيان

## Appendix C

### *The self-report questionnaire in English*

#### **What is this research about?**

The present research aims to identify Syrian Arabic native speakers' patterns of linguistic and social communication. This research is important not only because it sheds more light on human communicative behavior but because it raises awareness and acceptance of the other, which leads to smooth and misunderstanding-free communication. The results of this research are also expected to have pedagogic implications as they will add to our understanding of cultural differences. Such increased understanding may enhance the quality of EFL curricula if textbooks that refer to both grammatical as well as pragmatic rules of language use are designed.

Dear participants, the success of this research depends on your participation. You are qualified to answer the questionnaire items as you are native speakers of Syrian Arabic. Using this dialect in your everyday life enables you to express how cultural and societal norms influence language use in the Syrian community and how this is well reflected in the Syrian Arabic dialect. Thus, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions as spontaneously and honestly as possible as this will improve the quality of the obtained data. Please remember that this is not a test; the aim of the questionnaire items is to elicit your opinions in relation to the research questions. No answer is right or wrong.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for more information on the research or to get a copy of the results once I finish writing the paper.

[christinahodeib@gmail.com](mailto:christinahodeib@gmail.com)

#### **Important:**

As the of this research is to obtain Syrian Arabic data, it is very important that you use the Syrian Arabic dialect in writing down your responses, in the same way that I am using it in this paragraph. This means that you are expected to use the language which you use for everyday communication over WhatsApp, in sending text messages, on Messenger, and all social media platforms.

#### **Questions:**

**Question 1:** How do you define a polite person?

**Question 2:** Talk about the first personal experience that comes to your mind when you were polite to someone else. What was it? And how did you convey politeness?

**Question 3:** Rate the importance of being polite to the following people by checking the right option in the table below. Please explain your answer.

	Important	Not Important	Very Important	Explanation
A classmate				
A friend				
A core family member				
A university professor				
A stranger you have never met before				

**Thanks for participating in this questionnaire**

## Appendix D

### Roleplay situations in Syrian Arabic

#### تعليمات:

يرجى قراءة المواقف الأربعة التالية واختيار الدور الذي ترغب بتنفيذه. لا يوجد سيناريو معين لما يجب أن تقوله لكن يرجى التفكير في الموقف لمدة دقيقة والتحضير لما ترغب بقوله. الرجاء التذكر أنه من المهم أن تتحدث بعفوية وصدق وأنه لا يوجد إجابة خاطئة. كل ما سوف تقوله مهم ومفيد.

#### المواقف:

##### 1. الموقف الأول:

اتفق صديقين قراب من بعض إنو يطلعوا سوا. واحد من الأصدقاء معروف بإنو عطول متأخر وما بيلتزم بموعد وهالمرّة كمان متأخر عن الموعد.

##### الدور الأول:

عم تستنى رفيقك اللي متأخر عن الموعد مثل العادة. بتتصل فيه لتشوف وينو وليش تأخر كل هالقد.

##### الدور الثاني:

أنت متأخر عن الموعد مع رفيقك اللي بيتصل فيك عم يسأل شو صار معك وعم يتأفف من تأخيرك. شو بتقول لرفيقك؟ كيف بترد عليه؟

##### 2. الموقف الثاني:

بالصف انتوا مجموعة طلاب بالمحاضرة عم تتناقشوا بموضوع طلب الدكتور منكن تحضيرو. واحد من زملاءك بالصف بتعرفو معرفة سطحية فقط بيقول شغلة ما بتتفق فيا معو أبدا. وقت بتعبر عن رأيك بوجهة نظرو بصراحة زيادة شوي بتحس إنو زميلك انزعج منك. بعد ما تخلص الحصة بتروح لتحكي مع زميلك لتوضح الموقف.

##### الدور الأول:

بتحس إنك أسأت لزميلك خلال المناقشة رغم أنك ما بتقصد هالشي وحابب توضح الأمور لترطب الجو، شو بتقول؟

##### الدور الثاني:

بعد انتهاء المحاضرة زميلك اللي خالف وجهة نظرك بيجي ليحككي بالموضوع لأنو حس إنو أساء إليك وزعجك. شو بتقلو؟

##### 3. الموقف الثالث:

بتستعير كتاب من عند مشرفك/مشرفتك بالجامعة اللي بيتصل فيك بيطلب منك ترجع الكتاب وقت تلتقوا هالأسبوع. بتنسى تجيب الكتاب معك وقت تجي تشوفو.

##### الدور الأول:

دكتورك بيسألك عن الكتاب اللي طلب منك ترجعو. الموضوع راح عن بالك تماما و نسيت تجيب الكتاب. شو بتقول لدكتورك؟

### الدور الثاني:

طالبك عم يخبرك إنو نسي يجيب الكتاب. الكتاب لازم لك كثير شو بترد عطالك؟

### 4. الموقف الرابع:

قرب الموعد النهائي لتسليم الأطروحة تبع طالبك وبقي فصل واحد من الرسالة ما صححتلو ياه. بتعطيه موعد يجي ياخذ التصحيح بعد أربع أيام. بتنشغل كثير خلال هالأربع أيام فبتنسى تصحح الفصل وما بتتذكر هالشي غير وقت يجي طالبك عالموعد.

### الدور الأول:

بيجي طالبك عالموعد مشان ياخذ الفصل اللي وعدتو تصحطلو ياه. أنت نسيان تصحح الفصل و جبت الطالب عالفاضي. بدك تخبرو بهالشي. شو بتقلو؟

### الدور الثاني:

بيخبرك دكتورك إنو ما صحح الفصل اللي جاي تاخذو وأنت عندك ديدلاين لتسليم الأطروحة ول لازم تاخذ التصحيح بأقرب وقت. شو بتقول للدكتور وقت ببيخبرك إنو ما صححو؟

شكرا جزيلاً

## **Appendix E**

### ***Roleplay situations in English***

#### **Instructions:**

Please read the following situations and choose the role you want to play. There is not a pre-defined scenario for what you need to say. You have one minute to think about what you want to say. Please remember to speak spontaneously and honestly and that nothing you say is wrong. Everything you say is important and beneficial.

#### **The situations:**

##### **Situation one:**

Two close friends arrange to go out together. One of the friends is always late and never makes it on time. This time, s/he is also late.

##### **Role one:**

You are waiting for your friend, who is late as usual. You call to ask him/her where she is and what took him/her so long.

##### **Role two:**

You're late for an appointment with your friend who calls you complaining about what took you so long. What would you say to your friend? How would you respond?

##### **Situation two:**

You are in the classroom discussing a topic that the professor has assigned to you. One of your classmates, whom you only know superficially, says something that you completely disagree with. When you express your opinion in a direct manner, you get the feeling that your classmate was upset. After the class is over, you go over to your classmate to explain the incident.

##### **Role one:**

You feel that you have offended your classmate during the discussion although you don't mean it. You would like to explain things and set things right. What would you say?

##### **Role two:**

After the class is over, the classmate who disagreed with you comes over to talk to you as s/he felt that you were upset and offended. What would you say to him/her?

##### **Situation three:**

You borrow a book from your supervisor, who calls you and asks you to bring it back when you meet this week. When you come to the meeting, you forget to bring the book.

##### **Role one:**

Your professor asks you about the book he has told you to bring back. You completely forgot about it and you didn't bring the book back. What would you say to your professor?

**Role two:**

Your student tells you that s/he has forgotten to bring back the book. You need the book badly. What would you say to your student?

**Situation four:**

The deadline for the final submission of your student's dissertation is fast approaching. There is still one chapter you haven't corrected. You tell the student to stop by the office in four days to get the corrections. You get very busy in the meantime and you forget to correct the chapter. You only remember about it when the student shows up in the office.

**Role one:**

Your student comes to the appointment to take the correct chapter. You have forgotten to correct the chapter, and the student has come in vain. What would you say to him/her?

**Role two:**

Your professor tells you that he hasn't corrected the chapter you came for. You have a deadline for the submission of the thesis, and you need the corrections as soon as possible. What would you say to the professor when s/he tells you the chapter is not corrected?

**Thank you very much**



## Appendix F

### *Reliability test*

#### Reliability test for Recording 1:

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	77	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	77	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.631	3

#### Reliability test for Recording 2:

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	77	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	77	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.706	3

#### Reliability test for Recording 3:

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	77	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	77	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.864	3

#### Reliability test for Recording 4:

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	77	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	77	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.864	3

#### Reliability test across the four recordings:

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	77	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	77	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.689	3

## Appendix G

### Perceptions of (im)politeness survey in Arabic

أعزائي المشاركون:  
يهدف هذا البحث إلى تقصي مدى التباين في تقييم درجة اللباقة في أربعة اعتذارات, حيث سوف تستخدم البيانات في إطار مشروع بحثي لنيل درجة الدكتوراه. إن المشاركة في هذا البحث طوعية بالكامل ويمكنكم أيضا التوقف عن الإجابة على الأسئلة متى شئتم ولن يتم في هذه الحالة تسجيل أي من إجاباتكم السابقة أو البيانات الشخصية المتعلقة بكم. لكن إن أردتم المشاركة أرجو الإجابة على جميع الأسئلة الواردة في الاستبيان والتي لن تستغرق أكثر من عشر دقائق. سوف يتم التعامل مع الإجابات والبيانات الشخصية الواردة في هذا الاستبيان بسرية تامة ولأغراض بحثية فقط. من أجل الحصول على بيانات متجانسة, يرجى المشاركة فقط إن كنت طالبا\طالبة في أي مرحلة جامعية.

#### بيانات شخصية

الجنس:

1. ذكر.

2. أنثى.

العمر: \_\_\_\_\_

الدرجة العلمية (يشير هذا السؤال إلى الدرجة العلمية التي يسعى المشارك إلى نيلها حاليا):

1. إجازة.

2. ماستر.

3. دكتوراه.

الجامعة التي يدرس فيها المشارك/المشاركة:

#### الاستبيان

يحتوي الاستبيان الآتي على أربعة أقسام, كل منها يحتوي على شرح مكتوب لواقعة حصل فيها اعتذار. الشرح مرفق بمقطع صوتي للتسجيل الذي تم فيه الاعتذار. يرجى قراءة التفاصيل التوضيحية للسياق الذي وقع فيه الاعتذار ومن ثم الاستماع إلى المقطع الصوتي والإجابة على كل من الأسئلة الواردة في كل قسم.

#### الاعتذار الأول

السياق:

مجموعة من الرفقات اتفقوا يروحوا رحلة سوا واشتروا البطاقات. قبل أسبوع من الرحلة وحدة من الرفقات بتقرر تبطل تروح عالرحلة فتبعت هالتسجيل الصوتي مجموعة الماسنجر اللي هني عليا لحتى تعتذر منن وتبرر الموقف. الرجاء الاستماع إلى الاعتذار الأول عبر الضغط عالرابط المرفق تحت.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1OakXnBnabqMSqVDPzoNbu2w4oWL-sjLy>

السؤال الأول: على مقياس من 1 ل 5 كيف بتقييم الاعتذار بهالموقف؟

1

2

3

4

5

كثير غير مهذب

كثير مهذب

السؤال الثاني: على مقياس من 1 ل 5 أديش بتقييم درجة الإساءة بالموقف اللي حصل مشانو الاعتذار؟

1	2	3	4	5
إساءة كبيرة كثير				إساءة خفيفة كثير

السؤال الثالث: على مقياس من 1 ل 5 برأيك أديش كان الاعتذار صادق؟

1	2	3	4	5
غير صادق أبدا				صادق جدا

### الاعتذار الثاني

السياق:

في رفيق ورفيقة. الرفيق ببسأل رفيقتو إذا أهلها بسوريا بيقدروا يدينوا مصاري لعيلة رفيقو بسوريا (الشخص اللي رح يتدين المصاري مانو رفيق مشترك و البنيت اللي بدا تطلب من أهلها ما بتعرف الشب). الرفيقة بتقترح إنو خالتا ممكن تساعد وبتتصل بخالتا اللي بتقلا إنو ما عندا قدرة تدين حدا حاليا. الرفيقة بدورا بتعتذر من الرفيق وبتبعتلو هالتسجيل. الرجاء الاستماع إلى الاعتذار الثاني عبر الضغط عالرابط المرفق تحت.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1CuogwKh6BED9eU6UDJeHI9hs8M997GkN>

السؤال الأول: على مقياس من 1 ل 5 كيف بتقييم الاعتذار بهالموقف؟

1	2	3	4	5
كثير غير مهذب				كثير مهذب

السؤال الثاني: على مقياس من 1 ل 5 أديش بتقييم درجة الإساءة بالموقف اللي حصل مشانو الاعتذار؟

1	2	3	4	5
إساءة كبيرة كثير				إساءة خفيفة كثير

السؤال الثالث: على مقياس من 1 ل 5 برأيك أديش كان الاعتذار صادق؟

1	2	3	4	5
غير صادق أبدا				صادق جدا

### الاعتذار الثالث

السياق:

شخص عزم رفيقو ع حفل تخرجو. الرفيق ببسكن بمدينة تانية فبيعتنر عن الجية على حفل التخرج. الرجاء الاستماع إلى الاعتذار الثالث عبر الضغط عالرابط المرفق تحت.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cEKyWH0LjcjSGT\\_2KLAkOxssc7TRGPLp/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cEKyWH0LjcjSGT_2KLAkOxssc7TRGPLp/view?usp=sharing)

السؤال الأول: على مقياس من 1 ل 5 كيف بتقييم الاعتذار بهالموقف؟

1	2	3	4	5
كثير غير مهذب				كثير مهذب

السؤال الثاني: على مقياس من 1 ل 5 أديش بتقييم درجة الإساءة بالموقف اللي حصل مشانو الاعتذار؟

1	2	3	4	5
إساءة كبيرة كتير				إساءة خفيفة كتير

السؤال الثالث : على مقياس من 1 ل 5 برأيك أديش كان الاعتذار صادق؟

1	2	3	4	5
غير صادق أبدا				صادق جدا

#### الاعتذار الرابع

السياق:

رفيقة بتبعنا لرفيقتنا تسجيل صوتي عم تسلم عليا وتسأل عن أمورنا. الرفيقة الثانية بتفتح الرسالة بس بتلتهى بشغلة وبتنسى تسمع التسجيل أو ترد عالرسالة. بعد كذا يوم بتنتبه لوجود الرسالة الصوتية اللي ما سمعنا ف بتبعنا تسجيل لرفيقتنا لتعتذر منا. الرجاء الاستماع إلى الاعتذار الرابع عبر الضغط عالرابط المرفق تحت.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ugo-pmDcQgscCeWN2aJUz2kwRKRNItsz/view?usp=sharing>

السؤال الأول: على مقياس من 1 ل 5 كيف بتقييم الاعتذار بهالموقف؟

1	2	3	4	5
كتير غير مهذب				كتير مهذب

السؤال الثاني: على مقياس من 1 ل 5 أديش بتقييم درجة الإساءة بالموقف اللي حصل مشانو الاعتذار؟

1	2	3	4	5
إساءة كبيرة كتير				إساءة خفيفة كتير

السؤال الثالث: على مقياس من 1 ل 5 برأيك أديش كان الاعتذار صادق؟

1	2	3	4	5
غير صادق أبدا				صادق جدا

الأعضاء المشاركين, يرجو إبداء رأيكم في إجراء مقابلات لاحقة معي من أجل تسليط المزيد من الضوء على إجاباتكم.

1. أرغب في إجراء مقابلة.

2. لا أرغب في إجراء مقابلة.

إن كنت ترغب/ترغبين في إجراء مقابلة, يرجى تزويدي بعنوان بريدكم الالكتروني من أجل التواصل معكم لاحقا. (إن كنتم اخترتم الخيار 2 في السؤال السابق, يمكنكم كتابة لا أرغب مجددا هنا).

شكرا جزيلا على مشاركتكم في هذا الاستبيان

## Appendix H

### *Perceptions of (im)politeness survey in English*

Dear participants:

The aim of this research is to examine variability in (im)politeness perceptions of four apologies, and the data will be used in a PhD dissertation project. Participating is voluntary and you can opt out participation at any time you want. In this case, your responses and your personal data will not be recorded. However, if you wish to participate, please answer all of the questions in the survey, which should take no more than 10 minutes of your time. All responses and personal information will be kept anonymous and will be used for research purposes only. For me to obtain a homogeneous sample of answers, please respond to this survey only if you are an undergraduate or graduate university student.

#### **Personal information:**

Gender: 1. Male 2. Female

Age:

Education level (which the participant is currently studying to obtain):

1. BA 2. MA 3. PhD

Name of your university:

#### **The Survey:**

The following survey consists of four section, each containing a description of an apology situation. The description is followed by a link to the apology recording. Please read the description of the context of the apology first, then listen to the voice recording and answer each question in the following sections.

#### **Apology one**

Context:

a group had agreed to go on a trip and bought the tickets. One week before the planned trip one of them decides not to go. So, she sends the following group voice message to Messenger. She apologizes and tries to explain the situation. Please listen to the first apology by clicking on the hyperlink below.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1OakXnBnabqMSqVDPzoNbu2w4oWL-sjLy>

**Question 1:** On a scale from 1 to 5, how do you rate the apology in this situation?

1 2 3 4 5  
very impolite very polite

**Question 2:** On a scale from 1 to 5, how do you rate the severity of the offense?

1	2	3	4	5
very severe				very mild

**Question 3:** On a scale from 1 to 5, how sincere do you think the apology was?

1	2	3	4	5
very sincere				very insincere

### Apology two

Context:

Two friends. One of them asks the other if her family can lend money to his friend's family in Syria (the person who wants to borrow the money is not a mutual friend and the one who is supposed to lend the money doesn't know the borrower). The friend who was asked proposes her aunt can help and she calls her aunt, who tells her that she cannot lend the required sum. The friend in turn apologizes to her friend and sends the following voice message. Having proposed her aunt can help, responds later to the request with a rejection. She sends a voice message to her friend and apologizes. Please listen to the second apology by clicking on the hyperlink below.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1CuogwKh6BED9eU6UDJeHI9hs8M997GkN>

**Question 1:** On a scale from 1 to 5, how do you rate the apology in this situation?

1	2	3	4	5
very impolite				very polite

**Question 2:** On a scale from 1 to 5, how do you rate the severity of the offense?

1	2	3	4	5
very severe				very mild

**Question 3:** On a scale from 1 to 5, how sincere do you think the apology was?

1	2	3	4	5
very sincere				very insincere

### Apology three:

Context:

A friend invites his friend to attend his graduation ceremony. The other friend lives in another city, so he declines the invitation. Please listen to the third apology by clicking on the hyperlink below.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cEKyWH0LjcjSGT\\_2KLakOxssc7TRGPLp/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cEKyWH0LjcjSGT_2KLakOxssc7TRGPLp/view?usp=sharing)

**Question 1:** On a scale from 1 to 5, how do you rate the apology in this situation?

1	2	3	4	5
very impolite				very polite

**Question 2:** On a scale from 1 to 5, how do you rate the severity of the offense?

1	2	3	4	5
very severe				very mild

**Question 3:** On a scale from 1 to 5, how sincere do you think the apology was?

1	2	3	4	5
very sincere				very insincere

#### **Apology four:**

##### **Context**

A friend sends a voice message to the other to ask about how she's doing. The other one unwittingly views the messages but neither listens to them nor replies. The latter, a couple of days later, realizes that she hadn't responded to the messages and send a voice message apologizing to her friend. Please listen to the four apology by clicking on the hyperlink below.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ugo-pmDcQgscCeWN2aJUz2kwRKRNitsz/view?usp=sharing>

**Question 1:** On a scale from 1 to 5, how do you rate the apology in this situation?

1	2	3	4	5
very impolite				very polite

**Question 2:** On a scale from 1 to 5, how do you rate the severity of the offense?

1	2	3	4	5
very severe				very mild

**Question 3:** On a scale from 1 to 5, how sincere do you think the apology was?

1	2	3	4	5
very sincere				very insincere

Please indicate whether you are interested in participating in a follow-up interview that would help clarify your responses.



1. I'd like to participate.

2. I don't feel like participating.

If you'd like to participate, please provide your email address. If you chose 2 above, you might write 'I don't feel like participatin' again.

**Thanks a lot for your participation**

## Appendix I

### Correlation matrices

#### Correlation matrix in Recording 1:

Correlations			How would you rate the (im)politeness of the apology?	How would you rate the (in)sincerity of apology?	How would you rate the severity of the offense in the situation?
Spearman's rho	How would you rate the (im)politeness of the apology?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.272*	.600**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.017	.000
		N	77	77	77
	How would you rate the (in)sincerity of apology?	Correlation Coefficient	.272*	1.000	.216
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.	.059
		N	77	77	77
	How would you rate the severity of the offense in the situation?	Correlation Coefficient	.600**	.216	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.059	.
		N	77	77	77

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### Correlation matrix in Recording 2:

Correlations			How would you rate the (im)politeness of the apology?	How would you rate the (in)sincerity of apology?	How would you rate the severity of the offense in the situation?
Spearman's rho	How would you rate the (im)politeness of the apology?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.452**	.602**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	77	77	77
	How would you rate the (in)sincerity of apology?	Correlation Coefficient	.452**	1.000	.415**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	77	77	77
	How would you rate the severity of the offense in the situation?	Correlation Coefficient	.602**	.415**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	77	77	77

\*\*, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### Correlation matrix in Recording 3:

Correlations			How would you rate the (im)politeness of the apology?	How would you rate the (in)sincerity of apology?	How would you rate the severity of the offense in the situation?
Spearman's rho	How would you rate the (im)politeness of the apology?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.661**	.715**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	77	77	77
	How would you rate the (in)sincerity of apology?	Correlation Coefficient	.661**	1.000	.686**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	77	77	77
	How would you rate the severity of the offense in the situation?	Correlation Coefficient	.715**	.686**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	77	77	77

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### Correlation matrix in Recording 4:

Correlations			How would you rate the (im)politeness of the apology?	How would you rate the (in)sincerity of apology?	How would you rate the severity of the offense in the situation?
Spearman's rho	How would you rate the (im)politeness of the apology?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.295**	.707**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.009	.000
		N	77	77	77
	How would you rate the (in)sincerity of apology?	Correlation Coefficient	.295**	1.000	.378**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.	.001
		N	77	77	77
	How would you rate the severity of the offense in the situation?	Correlation Coefficient	.707**	.378**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.
		N	77	77	77

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



Registry number: DEENK/66/2022.PL  
Subject: PhD Publication List

Candidate: Christina Hodeib  
Doctoral School: Doctoral School of Linguistics  
MTMT ID: 10061135

### List of publications related to the dissertation

#### Foreign language scientific articles in Hungarian journals (4)

1. **Hodeib, C.:** An overview of research methods in speech acts and politeness: The case for triangulation.  
*Argumentum (Debr.)*. 17, 108-124, 2021. EISSN: 1787-3606.  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.34103/ARGUMENTUM/2021/7>
2. **Hodeib, C.:** Variability in perceptions of (im)politeness in Syrian Arabic: The observers' perspective.  
*Argumentum (Debr.)*. 17, 125-160, 2021. EISSN: 1787-3606.  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.34103/ARGUMENTUM/2021/8>
3. **Hodeib, C.:** On the discursive expression of politeness in Syrian Arabic: The case of apologies.  
*Alk. Nyelvtud.* 22 (2), 1-34, 2020. ISSN: 1587-1061.  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18460/ANY.2020.2.003>
4. **Hodeib, C.:** Apology Strategies in Syrian Arabic.  
*Argumentum (Debr.)*. 15, 674-701, 2019. EISSN: 1787-3606.





### List of other publications

Foreign language scientific articles in Hungarian journals (1)

5. **Hodeib, C.:** The Sociopragmatics of Attitude Datives in Levantine Arabic.

*ALing. [Epub ahead of print]*, 1-7, 2022. ISSN: 2560-1016.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1556/2062.2021.00527>

IF: 0.523 (2020)

**Total IF of journals (all publications): 0,523**

**Total IF of journals (publications related to the dissertation): 0**

The Candidate's publication data submitted to the iDEa Tudóstér have been validated by DEENK on the basis of the Journal Citation Report (Impact Factor) database.

1 February, 2022





Nyilvántartási szám: DEENK/66/2022.PL  
Tárgy: PhD Publikációs Lista

Jelölt: Hodeib Christina  
Doktori Iskola: Nyelvtudományok Doktori Iskola  
MTMT azonosító: 10061135

### **A PhD értekezés alapjául szolgáló közlemények**

#### Idegén nyelvű tudományos közlemények hazai folyóiratban (4)

1. **Hodeib, C.:** An overview of research methods in speech acts and politeness: The case for triangulation.  
*Argumentum (Debr.).* 17, 108-124, 2021. EISSN: 1787-3606.  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.34103/ARGUMENTUM/2021/7>
2. **Hodeib, C.:** Variability in perceptions of (im)politeness in Syrian Arabic: The observers' perspective.  
*Argumentum (Debr.).* 17, 125-160, 2021. EISSN: 1787-3606.  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.34103/ARGUMENTUM/2021/8>
3. **Hodeib, C.:** On the discursive expression of politeness in Syrian Arabic: The case of apologies.  
*Alk. Nyelvtud.* 22 (2), 1-34, 2020. ISSN: 1587-1061.  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18460/ANY.2020.2.003>
4. **Hodeib, C.:** Apology Strategies in Syrian Arabic.  
*Argumentum (Debr.).* 15, 674-701, 2019. EISSN: 1787-3606.





### **További közlemények**

Idegen nyelvű tudományos közlemények hazai folyóiratban (1)

5. **Hodeib, C.:** The Sociopragmatics of Attitude Datives in Levantine Arabic.

*ALing. [Epub ahead of print]*, 1-7, 2022. ISSN: 2560-1016.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1556/2062.2021.00527>

IF: 0.523 (2020)

**A közlő folyóiratok összesített impakt faktora: 0,523**

**A közlő folyóiratok összesített impakt faktora (az értekezés alapjául szolgáló közleményekre): 0**

A DEENK a Jelölt által az iDEa Tudóstérbe feltöltött adatok bibliográfiai és tudásmetriai ellenőrzését a tudományos adatbázisok és a Journal Citation Reports Impact Factor lista alapján elvégezte.

Debrecen, 2022.02.01.

