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A contrastive cross-cultural study of the speech act of correction in Egyptian Arabic and American English

Nadir Anis
University of Northern Iowa

A CONTRASTIVE CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF THE SPEECH ACT OF CORRECTION IN EGYPTIAN ARABIC AND AMERICAN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an empirical cross-cultural investigation of the speech act of correction in Egyptian Arabic and American English. The purpose of the study is to examine how and why Egyptians and U.S. Americans modify the illocutionary force of their corrections in terms of mitigation and aggravation in different speech situations.

A Discourse Completion Task/Test (DCT) was used to elicit corrections from 30 Arabic-speaking Egyptians and 30 English-speaking U.S. Americans. All the respondents were either university students or university graduates between the ages of 18 and 35. The six situations used to elicit corrections represented different settings (e.g., classroom, restaurant, theater), different interlocutor relationships (i.e., equal and unequal status relationships), as well as different types of correction (i.e., both information and action correction).

The findings of the study show that both Americans and Egyptians use mitigation strategies more frequently in lower-higher situations (i.e., when correcting a person of a higher status) than in higher-lower situations (i.e., when correcting a person of a lower status). However, there was a marked difference between the two groups in terms of style shift from lower-higher to higher-lower situations. Whereas the style shift in the American data was only 30% (i.e., there was a 30% increase in the frequency of mitigators from lower-higher to higher-lower situations), the style shift in the Egyptian data was 171%. Another major difference was in the frequency of aggravation strategies: the Egyptians used aggravation strategies, especially in higher-lower situations, almost five times more than the Americans. In terms of the preferred mitigation strategies, the

Egyptians preferred forms of address whereas hedging was the strategy most frequently used by the Americans.

The results of the study can be explained in terms of the underlying cultural orientations in Egypt and the U.S. For example, in the Egyptian society, which is referred to as Collectivistic, there is a high degree of awareness of distinctions between people in terms of status and power. In other words, society is so arranged that nearly everyone is superior to someone. This can account for the use of mitigation strategies more frequently in lower-higher interactions than in higher-lower interactions. It can also account for the use of aggravation strategies in higher-lower interactions. In the American society, on the other hand, which is referred to as Individualistic, there is a strong emphasis on equality. This can account for the use of mitigation strategies similarly in lower-higher and higher-lower situations. This can also account for the lack of aggravation strategies in the American data.

The findings of the present study can contribute to the field of teaching English as second/foreign language by providing Arabic-speaking learners of English with a better understanding of how and why the illocutionary force of correction is modified in American English. In the same way, it can contribute to the field of teaching Arabic as a foreign language. It is also hoped that the insights the study provides can lead to a better communication between speakers of American English and Egyptian Arabic.

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5-16-01

Date | Dr. Ardith J. Meier, Chair, Thesis Committee

5-28-01

Date | Dr. Victoria L. DeFrancisco, Thesis Committee Member

May 16'01

Date | Dr. Cheryl A. Roberts, Thesis Committee Member

6/29/01

Date | Dr. John W. Somervill, Dean, Graduate College

To Ardith Meier

With Respect and Admiration

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The last three decades have witnessed extensive theoretical and empirical investigation of speech acts. The concept of the speech act, which was first introduced by Austin (1962), captures an important feature of language: saying something can also involve doing something. For example, by saying *Could you please open the door?* a speaker not only produces an English utterance but also performs an act: requesting. Types of speech acts include requests, apologies, invitations, complaints, refusals, corrections, agreements, disagreements, and compliments. Speech acts have been extensively studied and analyzed by language philosophers (e.g., Austin, 1962; Katz, 1977; Schiffer, 1972; Searle, 1975). They have also been empirically investigated in terms of their realization strategies across languages and cultures (e.g., Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Meier, 1992; Olshtain, 1989; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Vollmer & Olshtain, 1989). Concepts of communicative competence (e.g., Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1974), pragmatic competence (e.g., Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983), as well as theories of politeness (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987), principles of cooperation (e.g., Grice, 1975), and, to some extent, theories of culture and interpersonal communication (e.g., Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Triandis, 1995) have formed the theoretical framework within which speech acts have been empirically investigated.

One of the main objectives of the empirical investigation of speech acts, as explained by Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985), is to provide a better understanding of how human communication is carried out via linguistic behavior. Another major objective is to describe similarities and differences in the ways in which communicative interactions are carried out under similar circumstances across languages and cultures (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985). Speech act research can also have an important explanatory role in identifying the underlying social and cultural norms that inform speech act realization (e.g., Meier, 1995, 1997, 1999; Richards & Schmidt, 1983). I also believe that this research can provide an empirical basis against which theories of politeness (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987) and intercultural communication (e.g., Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Okabe, 1983; Triandis, 1995) can be reassessed. In addition, cross-cultural speech act research is particularly important in the field of foreign and second language teaching and learning. There has been increasing awareness that teaching pragmatic aspects of language (e.g., speech act realization strategies) can minimize intercultural communication breakdowns and help reduce cultural stereotyping (e.g., Meier, 1995; Takahashi & Beebe, 1993). The findings of cross-cultural speech act research can be a useful resource for language teachers and teaching materials developers (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 1996).

Speech act research, which started in the 1980s, has investigated the realization strategies of several speech acts across a number of languages and cultures. Speech acts that have been investigated include apologies (e.g., Hussein & Hammouri, 1998; Meier, 1992; Olshtain, 1989; Vollmer & Olshtain, 1989), requests (e.g., Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Blum-Kulka, 1983; Eslamirasekh, 1993; Geis & Harlow, 1995), refusals (e.g., Lauper, 1997; Rubin, 1983), compliments (e.g., Barnlund & Araki, 1985; Nelson, El Bakary, & Al Batal, 1995), and complaints (e.g., Fescura, 1995; Murphy & Neu, 1996).

Other common and significant speech acts have, however, received little attention in the literature. The speech act of correction, the focus of the present study, is a case in point.

The speech act of correction warrants investigation for a number of reasons. First, it is very common: we often correct people in every day interactions. Bolinger (1965) observes that "the correction of others in conversations . . . in classrooms . . . is an unending business" (p. 248). This speech act is also of interest because its potential damage to the hearer's face is serious since it may imply that the hearer is "misguided or incompetent" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 38). In addition, it is both face-threatening (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and complex, demanding a high level of pragmatic competence to be performed successfully. Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) refer to the speech act of refusal as reflecting "fundamental cultural values," and involving "delicate interpersonal negotiation" that requires "the speaker to build support and help the listener avoid embarrassment" (p. 68). If this is true of the speech act of refusal, it is particularly true of the speech act of correction.

The speech act of correction has, however, received minimal attention in the literature: only two studies have been found. The first study (Takahashi & Beebe, 1993) examined the realization of this speech act in American English and Japanese as well as in the speech of Japanese speakers of English. The second study (Dogancay-Aktuna & Kamisli, 1996) investigated the realization of correction in Turkish. Both studies, which used a written questionnaire that included only two situations to elicit corrections, limited their investigation to status unequal interactions, and also limited the scope of correction to correction of factually wrong information.

The present study, which is an empirical investigation of the speech act of correction in American English and Egyptian Arabic, examines how the illocutionary force of this face-threatening act is modified by the use of mitigators and aggravators. The findings of the study are explained in terms of the underlying social and cultural norms of the two speech communities. The present study is both significant and original in a number of ways. First, it makes a valuable contribution to the literature by investigating an important speech act that has received minimal attention. In addition, unlike previous correction studies, the present study investigates the speech act of correction in different situations (e.g., not limited to classroom interactions) as well as in different interlocutor relationships (i.e., both equal and unequal status relationships). Moreover, it extends the scope of correction to include not only correction of misinformation but also correction of action that is the result of misinformation, misunderstanding or lack of attention. Although the concept of action correction is not new in the literature (e.g., Keating, 1993), there has not been, to my knowledge, any empirical study that has investigated this type of correction. The present study is also significant because it investigates Arabic, in an attempt to fill another gap in the literature: expanding the scope of speech act research to include non-Western languages. This need has been noted by several researchers (e.g., Flowerdew, 1988; Rose, 1992; Wierzbicka, 1985). Finally, by attempting to explain the realization of correction in terms of the underlying social and cultural norms of the speech community, the present study fills yet another gap in the literature: it has been indicated that studies with such an explanatory goal are relatively few (e.g., Meier, 1999). It is hoped that the findings of the present study will provide a better understanding of how and why Egyptians and U.S. Americans modify the illocutionary force of their corrections. It is also hoped that the findings will provide further insights into the cultural orientations of the Egyptian and U.S. American societies. Finally the findings of this research can have useful applications in the fields of teaching English as a foreign/second language (EFL/ESL) as well as teaching Arabic as a foreign language (AFL).

The present study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction that places the study into perspective by briefly explaining the rationale, the background and the purpose of the study.

Chapter 2 is a comprehensive literature overview that introduces the concept of the speech act and explains how it was introduced and investigated by language philosophers, and also by ethnographers of communication. It additionally explains how the concepts of communicative competence and pragmatic competence, as well as theories of politeness, have provided a theoretical framework for the study of speech acts. A number of speech act studies will be reviewed with particular attention paid to correction studies and studies investigating Arabic. Data collection methods will be examined in some detail. Theories of culture will also be reviewed with particular attention to Hofstede's (1980) distinction between Individualistic and Collectivistic cultures. A review of the main cultural orientations in the US and Egypt, as portrayed in the literature, will follow. The significance of cross-cultural speech act research in the field of second language teaching and learning will also be addressed.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework of the study and justifies the empirical design in terms of the data collection method and the data analysis method. It also provides a detailed description of the study, including the respondents, the procedures, as well as the limitations.

Chapter 4 reports the findings of the study both quantitatively and qualitatively. The data will be analyzed according to a number of categories that have been developed to account for the data. Frequency counts of the different strategies will be reported along with the variables that are examined, which include situation type, correction type, and gender.

Chapter 5 discusses the results of the study, exploring explanations of the findings in terms of the underlying social and cultural norms of both speech communities. The implications of the findings for intercultural communication and ESL/EFL teaching and learning will be addressed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

Introduction

Speech acts were initially investigated by language philosophers, who first triggered interest in their study. A major development in the study of speech acts came with Hymes' (1962) theory of the ethnography of communication, in which he drew attention to the importance of studying language as a social phenomenon. Hymes also introduced the important concept of communicative competence (a central construct in his ethnography of communication), which emphasized the importance of learning the rules of language use. This approach prompted increased interest in the empirical investigation of speech acts. Researchers became more aware that the realization strategies of speech acts reflect major social and cultural values of the speech community. Theories of politeness, notably Brown and Levinson's (1987), have been used as a framework for the empirical investigation of speech acts. Such theories have been refined based on the results of empirical research, which investigated the realization strategies of different speech acts such as apologies, requests, compliments and complaints. In this chapter the theoretical foundation for the empirical investigation of speech acts will be explained. Concepts of communicative and pragmatic competencies will be discussed in relation to intercultural communication. Major theories of politeness, especially those that have been used as a framework of empirical speech act research will reviewed. A number of intralingual, interlingual and learner-centered speech act studies will also be reviewed, with particular reference to Arabic and correction studies. Data collection methods will receive close attention. Finally, a review of major intercultural communication theories that are relevant to the study of speech acts will be provided.

Speech Acts

The concept of the speech act was first introduced by Austin (1962) in his seminal work *How to Do Things with Words*. Austin observed that 'saying' something can also involve 'doing' something. For example, by saying "I apologize," a person both produces an English sentence and performs an act of apologizing. Austin (1962) distinguishes three types of acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. By uttering a sentence such as *Can you close the door?* a speaker performs a locutionary act, which is the vocalizing of a sentence with a certain sense and reference. At the same time, the speaker performs an illocutionary act: making a request. Austin (1962) defines the perlocutionary act as an act that "will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons" (p. 101). The perlocutionary act of the sentence above would be, for example, the addressee reacting by closing the door. Austin (1962) refers to the illocutionary acts as performatives, distinguishing explicit performatives from implicit performatives: An implicit performative does not contain a performative verb (e.g., *I'll talk to her*) whereas an explicit performative does (e.g., *I promise to talk to her*).

Felicity Conditions

According to Austin (1962), such performatives do not have truth-values and therefore are not subject to truth-conditions. However, there are certain conditions that need to be met for the successful and appropriate performance of a speech act. These conditions are referred to as felicity conditions. For example, a speech act can go wrong if the speaker does not have the right to perform it. Only certain persons, for instance, have the right to say *I hereby pronounce you husband and wife*, and therefore marry people. A speech act can also go wrong if the speaker does not have the necessary intention when saying, for example, *I promise to come in time*. Bach and Harnish (1979), argue that although Austin provided a fairly elaborate taxonomy of such conditions, his doctrine seems to be mainly appropriate for "highly developed explicit performatives associated with conventional, ritual, and ceremonial acts" (p. 55). This kind of dissatisfaction with Austin's classification led a number of language philosophers (e.g., Searle, 1969) to further develop the concept of felicity.

Searle's (1969) main contribution to the speech act theory is his development of Austin's concept of felicity. Searle argued that speech acts are subject to four types of felicity conditions: propositional content conditions, preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions, and essential conditions. Searle's (1969) conditions on requests, for example, are as follows. The propositional content condition of a request is some future act of the hearer. The preparatory condition is that the speaker believes that the hearer is able to perform that particular act, and also that it is not obvious to the speaker or hearer that the hearer will do the act of his own accord in the normal course of events. The sincerity condition is that the speaker wants the hearer to perform the act. The essential condition is that the speech act counts as an attempt to get the hearer to do the act.

Taxonomies of Speech Acts

Many taxonomies of illocutionary acts have been proposed (e.g., Austin, 1962; Katz, 1977; Schiffer, 1972; Searle, 1975). Searle (1975), for example, classified illocutionary acts into five categories: directives (e.g., requests, commands), commissives (e.g., promises, threats.), representatives (e.g., assertions, claims), declaratives (e.g., declaring war), expressives (e.g., apologies, thanks). Bach and Harnish (1979), on the other hand, classified speech acts into four categories: constatives (e.g., assertions, suggestions), directives (e.g., requests, advice), commissives (e.g., promises, offers), acknowledgements (e.g., apologies, congratulations).

Speech acts have also been categorized in terms of directness and indirectness. Indirect speech acts have been extensively discussed by language philosophers (e.g., Austin, 1962; Gordon & Lakoff, 1971; Green, 1975; Levinson, 1983; Morgan, 1978; Sadock, 1974; Searle, 1975). What constitutes an indirect speech act, and how the meaning is encoded and decoded have received much attention in the literature. Searle (1975), for example, argues that certain forms have become "conventionally established" as the standard "idiomatic forms" for indirect speech acts (p. 76) (e.g., the question form has conventionally been used to perform requests). Gordon and Lakoff (1971), on the other hand, argue that there exists a set of conversational postulates, in which the input is the literal meaning of an utterance and the output is the performative logical form that determines the utterance's illocutionary force. These postulates depend on mutual recognition by speaker and hear. Sperber and Wilson (1986) adopt a different view, emphasizing the role of general pragmatic principles as proposed by Grice (1975), especially the principle of relevance, to account for the process involved in encoding and decoding meaning in indirect speech acts.

Speech acts have been of interest not only to language philosophers, but also to ethnographers of communication, who have investigated speech acts within Hymes' (1962) framework of the ethnography of speaking. Hymes' (1962) ethnography of speaking is concerned with "the situations and uses, the patterns and functions, of speaking as an activity in its own right" (p. 101). Within this framework, speech acts are seen as functional units in communication, and are governed by the socioculturally-based rules of speaking. This, in fact, is a very important development in the study of speech acts since it draws attention to the importance of social and cultural factors that inform the realization of speech acts. Hymes (1974) makes a distinction between speech situations, speech events and speech acts. A speech situation takes place within a speech community and is "associated with (or marked by the absence of) speech" (Hymes, 1974, p. 51), and includes such contexts as fights, meals, parties. A speech event refers to an activity that is "directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech" (Hymes, 1974, p. 52), and takes place within a speech situation (e.g., a conversation in a party). A speech event also comprises at least one speech act, which is a minimal unit in a speech situation (Hymes, 1974). A speech act also does not stand in a one-to-one relationship with a particular syntactic form (e.g., a sentence that is interrogative in form can be a request or a command).

Hymes's contribution to our understanding of the role speech acts play in communication is not, however, limited to his investigation of linguistic behavior within his theory of ethnography of speaking. In fact, his introduction of the concept of communicative competence (a central construct within the ethnography of communication) is considered to be a major contribution to the subsequent theoretical and empirical investigation of speech acts and other types of linguistic behavior. This important concept will be examined next.

Communicative Competence

Hymes (1962, 1974) argues that knowledge of a language does not only involve knowledge of grammatical rules (e.g., the ability to produce grammatical sentences) as argued by Chomsky (1965), but also knowledge of the appropriate use of the language (e.g., when to speak, what to say, to whom, and how to say it appropriately in a given speech situation). As Hymes (1974) asserts, the rules of language use are very important since without them the rules of grammar would be useless. These rules are what "a child internalizes about speaking . . . while becoming a full-fledged member of its speech community . . . [and] what a foreigner must learn about a group's verbal behavior in order to participate appropriately and effectively in its activities" (Hymes, 1962, p. 101).

It is important to note that Hymes used the term communicative competence to refer to both grammatical competence and knowledge of language use. As indicated by Canale and Swain (1980), there has been a diversity of opinion about the use of the term 'communicative competence.' For some researchers (e.g., Hymes, 1974; Morrow, 1977; Savignon, 1983), it includes grammatical competence as well as knowledge of language use, whereas for others (e.g., Paulston, 1974) it refers exclusively to knowledge of language use.

There have been a number of attempts to develop Hymes's concept of communicative competence (e.g., Bachman & Palmer, 1982; Canale & Swain, 1980; Morrow, 1977). Canale and Swain (1980), for example, proposed a theory of communicative competence that was intended as a framework for second language teaching. They posited three components of communicative competence: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. Grammatical competence refers to knowledge of phonological and morphological forms, syntactic patterns and lexical items. Sociolinguistic competence consists of two sets of rules: sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse. The sociocultural rules of use "specify the ways in which utterances are produced and understood appropriately" (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 30). The rules of discourse refer to the rules of coherence and cohesion as proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The third component, strategic competence, refers to "verbal and non-verbal communication strategies" (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 30).

Canale and Swain's (1980) model was later revised by Canale (1983), who limited the definition of sociolinguistic competence to the sociocultural rules of language use, and discourse competence became a separate component in the model. According to this later definition, sociolinguistic competence "addresses the extent to which utterances are produced and understood appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts depending on contextual factors such as status of participants, purposes of the interaction and norms or conventions of interaction" (Canale, 1983, p.7). This model is particularly significant since it emphasizes the importance of the socioculturally-based rules of appropriateness, which are crucial for the production and comprehension of linguistic behavior in cross-cultural communication. The type of language competence that requires knowledge of these rules has been referred to, especially in cross-cultural speech act research, as pragmatic competence. The concept of pragmatic competence, which is an important component of communicative competence, has been found particularly useful in cross-cultural speech act studies, and has been used as a framework for the empirical investigation of speech acts.

Pragmatic Competence

The concept of pragmatic competence, which generally refers to the socio-culturally-based rules of language use, has been investigated from varied perspectives. Chomsky (1980), for example, refers to pragmatic competence as a "certain system of constitutive rules represented in the mind" (p. 59) that underlies the ability to use grammatical competence to achieve certain ends. Rubin (1983) extends the function of pragmatic competence as defined by Chomsky (1980), by proposing three levels of knowledge that are essential for the production of pragmatically competent speech. These are the appropriate form-function relation, the relevant social parameters, and the underlying social values of the speech community. Fraser (1983) defines pragmatic competence in terms of conveying an attitude. He views linguistic communication, in which pragmatic competence plays an important role, as an interaction between speaker-meaning and hearer-effect, and this interaction is accomplished successfully when the speaker conveys his or her attitude to the hearer. Faerch and Kasper (1984) propose two categories of pragmatic competence/knowledge: declarative pragmatic knowledge and procedural pragmatic knowledge. The declarative pragmatic knowledge includes six categories of knowledge: linguistic, sociocultural, speech act, discourse, context, and knowledge of the world. The pragmatic procedures, on the other hand, refer to the process of selecting and combining declarative pragmatic knowledge from these categories. Bachman (1990) proposes another model that divides language competence into organizational and pragmatic competencies. Organizational competence refers to two types of knowledge: grammatical and textual. Pragmatic competence is divided into illocutionary and sociolinguistic competencies. The illocutionary competence has four main functions: ideational, manipulative, heuristic, and imaginative. The sociolinguistic competence, which is described in terms of sensitivity to language and context, is divided into four categories: sensitivity to differences in dialect, sensitivity to register, sensitivity to naturalness, and knowledge of "the extended meanings given by a specific culture to particular events, places, institutions or people" (Bachman, 1990, p. 97).

These models of pragmatic competence reflect the complex nature of this type of knowledge, which involves an intricate interplay of different factors, both linguistic and socio-cultural. This complexity poses a difficulty for language learners when interacting with native speakers of the target language. As Wildner-Bassett (1990) explains, language learners "can only function in an acceptable manner within the target language community generally, if they are able to perceive and act within the bounds of the interplay among functional adequacy, situational appropriateness, and norms of language use" (p. 29). The learners' inability to "perceive and act" within these bounds leads to pragmatic failure. Pragmatic failure, which will discussed below, can generally be defined as the failure to follow the pragmatic rules of the target language. Thomas (1983) posits two causes of pragmatic failure: (a) the learner's lack of "the foreign language means to express his/her pragmatic competence," and (b) "cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behavior" (p. 99). When learners lack the knowledge of what constitutes appropriate language behavior in L2, they often draw on their L1 pragmatic knowledge. This type of transfer has been referred to in the literature as (negative) pragmatic transfer and is believed to be the major cause of pragmatic failure. This important concept of pragmatic transfer will be examined next.

Pragmatic Transfer

As Kasper (1992) explains, one of the general assumptions in interlanguage/cross-cultural pragmatics is that non-native speakers' comprehension and production of language is considerably influenced by their L1 pragmatic knowledge. In other words, non-native speakers tend to transfer their L1 knowledge when comprehending or producing speech in L2. The concept of transfer is defined by Odlin (1989) as "the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps, imperfectly) acquired" (p. 27). Pragmatic transfer is defined as the transfer of the "rules of speaking," or of "the patterns and conventions of language behavior" (Wolfson, 1989, p. 141). Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) also refer to the "transfer of L1 sociocultural competence in performing L2 speech acts or any other aspects of L2 conversation" (p. 56). Kasper and

Blum-Kulka (1993) explain that negative transfer, the transfer of knowledge that is inconsistent across L1 and L2, has received much attention in the literature because of its potential risk to communication. Positive transfer, which is the transfer of knowledge that is consistent across L1 and L2, on the other hand, has received less attention. Two types of negative pragmatic transfer have been identified.

Types of negative pragmatic transfer. Thomas (1983) distinguishes two types of negative pragmatic transfer: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic. Pragmalinguistic transfer is defined as the transfer "from the mother tongue to the target language of utterances which are semantically/syntactically equivalent, but which, because of different 'interpretive bias,' tend to convey a different pragmatic force in the target language" (Thomas, 1983, p. 101). This includes, for example, the use of L1 speech act strategies or formulas when interacting with members of an L2 speech community. Socioprgmatic transfer, on the other hand, refers to the transfer of knowledge about the "social conditions placed on language in use" (Thomas, 1983, p. 99). These social conditions, which underlie the speaker's perception and production of linguistic action in a speech situation, include, for example, social distance, rights, and obligations.

It is important, however, to note that it is sometimes difficult to determine whether pragmatic failure (either sociopragmatic or pragmalinguistic) results from L1 transfer or from other factors. Hurley (1992), for example, argues that pragmatic failure may also result from developmental and proficiency factors or from L2 learners overgeneralizing the use of an L2 form to inappropriate settings. Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) argue that the learner's pragmatic transfer can also be seen as a "marker of cultural identity" since "[t]he degree of sociocultural accommodation to the L2 culture may be as well a matter of choice as of ability" (p. 11). This issue of the relationship between pragmatic competence and cultural identity will be considered in more detail in the last section of this chapter.

As explained above, pragmatic failure can lead to communication problems in cross-cultural encounters. This is because pragmatic failure violates the socioculturally-based rules of language use. This can be seen in part as a violation of the rules of politeness as perceived by the speech community of the target language. The concept of politeness has, in fact, been a major concern in the empirical investigation of speech acts. Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) explain that two major issues in cross-cultural speech act research are the value and function of politeness in speech act realization as well as the universality of politeness phenomena across languages and cultures. The concept of politeness will be examined in relation to speech act realization.

Politeness

A number of theories have been proposed to explain how people demonstrate politeness for one another. Early work on politeness was conducted by Goffman (1967), who described politeness or deference in the context of a general theory of behavior. He defined deference as "the appreciation an individual shows to another through avoidance or presentation rituals" (Goffman, 1967, p. 77). Goffman also introduced the important concept of face, which was later incorporated into Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness. Tannen (1986) defines politeness as "the broad concept of the social goals we serve when we talk . . . trying to take into account the effect of what we say on other people" (p. 21). Lakoff (1975), on the other hand, defines politeness as those forms of behavior which have been developed to "reduce friction in social interactions" (p. 64). She proposed a set of rules for politeness, which dictate how the speaker should act toward the hearer (e.g., Don't impose; Give options; Make the listener feel good; Lakoff, 1977). She also shows how to achieve these goals using syntactic and lexical strategies. Leech (1983) proposed a set of politeness maxims (e.g., Tact, Generosity, Modesty), which are similar to Grice's (1975) maxims of conversation. Leech also argued that cross-cultural variability would lie in the relative importance given to one of these maxims in relation to the others. What Lakoff (1977) and Leech (1983) have in common is their attempt to develop a set of rules for polite behavior. In a similar manner, Fraser and Nolen (1981) suggest that politeness is a set of constraints on verbal behavior. These approaches have been criticized on the grounds that the number of politeness rules can be infinite since the nature of interaction varies greatly according to the social setting, the interlocutors and the goals of the interactions (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987; Watts, 1992). Brown and Levinson (1987) adopt an approach in which politeness does not depend on a set of pragmatic rules but rather on the need to minimize imposition on the hearer. This theory is considered to be the most comprehensive work to date on politeness. It is particularly important because it has been used as a theoretical framework for most cross-cultural speech act studies that have been conducted in the last 15 years. This theory will be reviewed in some detail in the next section.

Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that politeness phenomena are associated with the concept of face. This concept, which was first introduced by Goffman (1967), refers to the "public self-image that every member [in society] wants to claim for himself" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). Brown and Levinson make a distinction between two types of face: negative face and positive face. Negative face refers to the person's freedom of action and freedom from imposition, whereas positive face refers to the person's desire to be liked and approved by others.

Brown and Levinson (1987) also make a distinction between two types of politeness: positive politeness and negative politeness. Positive politeness is the "redress directed to the addressee's positive face" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 101). In other words, it refers to the hearer's desire that his or her wants (e.g., actions, acquisitions, values) be thought of as desirable. Positive politeness achieves this goal by conveying to the hearer that the speaker's wants are in some ways similar to the hearer's wants. Brown and Levinson (1987) also describe strategies used to attend to the hearer's positive face. These strategies generally emphasize solidarity and rapport between hearer and speaker by attending to the hearer's wants and needs. This is achieved by expressing approval and sympathy with the hearer, by using terms that signify in-group membership and in general by being agreeable and conveying friendliness.

Negative politeness, on the other hand, attends to the hearer's negative face. It attends to the hearer's desire to have his "freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 129). Negative politeness strategies involve showing respect for the hearer's freedom by minimizing impositions on him or her. This goal is achieved by showing that the speaker does not wish to interfere with the hearer's freedom and personal space.

Face Threatening Speech Acts

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), "everyone's face depends on everyone else's being maintained . . . [therefore] it is in general in every participant's best interest to maintain each other's face" (p. 61). However, there are certain kinds of acts that inherently threaten face. Brown and Levinson classify these acts, which they call face-threatening acts (FTAs), according to whether they threaten the speaker's or the hearer's face and also whether they threaten the positive or the negative face. For example, the speech act of requesting threatens the hearer's negative face since it shows that the speaker does not intend to avoid impeding the hearer's freedom of action. The act of complaining, on the other hand, threatens the hearer's positive face by showing that the speaker does not care about the hearer's feelings or wants. Brown and Levinson (1987) also specify three factors that determine the seriousness of an FTA (i.e., the degree of risk to the hearer's face) and these are: the social distance between hearer and speaker, the hearer's power over the speaker, and the rank of the imposition.

Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that speakers have three options in face-threatening encounters. They can decide to go 'bald on record' by not trying to mitigate the force of the illocutionary act. This shows that the speaker is not concerned about the face-needs of the hearer. (This can be due to the relative authority or power of the speaker over the hearer.) The speaker can also choose to go 'on record' by redressing the FTAs by using politeness markers (e.g., mitigators) to minimize the extent of the imposition. Speakers can also go 'off-record' by using, for example, hints or metaphors in order to sound ambiguous, making the speech act open for negotiation.

Brown and Levinson (1987) also identify certain syntactic, lexical and prosodic features or markers of politeness.

Brown and Levinson's Claims of Universality

It is important to note that Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, as reviewed here, claims to account for politeness as a universal phenomenon. Brown and Levinson (1987) also make a number of other claims of universality. For example, they argue that politeness is based largely on "universal principles," but "the application of the principles differ systematically across cultures" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 283). For example, there are three universal principles that govern the performance of a face-threatening speech act (FTA). These are the perceived weight of the FTA (Rank), the social distance between the interlocutors (Distance) and their relative power (Power). These universal principles are applied differently cross-culturally, since the social and cultural values differ from one society to another. For example, the relative power of a university professor in Chinese society may be different from that in U.S. American society.

Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that indirect speech acts are likely universal, as are the strategies for producing them. In addition, they claim that there is a linear relationship between indirectness and politeness: as indirectness increases, so does politeness. However, it is important to note that Brown and Levinson's claims of universality are not claimed to have any predictive power: "our universal claims constrain but do not determine what we would expect native concepts in this area to be . . . . It would be worth testing these hypothetical constraints" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 48).

Critique of Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

Despite its great value as a framework for the formal and empirical investigation of politeness phenomena, Brown and Levinson's theory has been subjected to much criticism. Meier (1992), for example, finds Brown and Levinson's (1987) distinction between positive and negative face to be problematic since a person's positive face (the desire for one's wants be respected) logically includes negative face (the desire that one's freedom be unhindered). Brown and Levinson's (1987) claims for the universality of the concepts of positive and negative politeness have also been questioned. Findings of speech act studies in Polish (Wierzbicka, 1985), in Japanese (Matsumoto, 1988) and in Chinese (Gu, 1990) show that the concept of negative politeness may be irrelevant in some cultures. In addition, Brown and Levinson's claim of the universality of a linear relationship between indirectness and politeness has been shown to be empirically unfounded (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1987; Wierzbicka, 1985, 1991; Wolfson, 1989). It has also been noted (e.g., Meier, 1995, 1997), that this claim has led some empirical researchers working within this theory to simplistically identify whole cultures as more or less direct and therefore more or less polite. Meier (1995) points out that "the use of such labels is not only unhelpful but risks perpetuating national stereotypes" (p. 386). Brown and Levinson's theory has also been criticized as being ethnocentric in its representation of the formal and functional features of politeness (e.g., Meier, 1995, 1997; Wierzbicka, 1985, 1991). Finally, the theory has been criticized, too, for focusing on the hearer's face as the most important factor in defining and identifying FTAs, whereby the speaker's face seems to be ignored (Meier, 1995).

Other Approaches to Politeness

Dissatisfaction with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory has led a number of researchers to propose other models. Lakoff (1989), for example, proposed a three-fold distinction between polite, non-polite, and rude. Polite refers to "those utterances that adhere to the rules of politeness whether or not they are expected in a particular discourse type," whereas non-polite refers to "behavior that does not conform to politeness rules, used where the latter are not expected" (Lakoff, 1989, p. 103). Rude, on the other hand, refers to "behavior that does not utilize politeness strategies where they would be expected" (Lakoff, 1989, p. 103). Watts (1992), realizing that "socially appropriate language usage can easily entail the very opposite of linguistic politeness" (p. 48), suggests the term politic verbal behavior. He defines it as "socioculturally determined behavior directed towards the goal of establishing and/or maintaining in a state of equilibrium the personal relationships between individuals of a social group" (Watts, 1989, p. 5). He further explains that "what counts as polite behaviour depends entirely on those features of the interaction which are socioculturally marked by the speech community as being more than merely politic" (Watts, 1992, p. 51).

Wolfson (1989) proposed the Bulge Theory, which opposes Brown and Levinson's (1987) and also Leech's (1983) claim that greater social distance between interlocutors leads to a greater degree of politeness. Wolfson's (1989) research showed that speakers of American English use more direct speech patterns to intimates, strangers and status unequals, while preferring a more indirect mode of address to status equal acquaintances, and coworkers. In accounting for this observation, Wolfson maintains that relationships that are at the extremes of the social distance scale are relatively certain and thus people know what to expect of one another. On the other hand, the relationships that fall in the middle of the scale (e.g., status equal acquaintances) are less fixed and are unclearly defined and thus people take more care in their speech behavior. Scarcella's (1980) findings, however, seem to contradict Wolfson's Bulge Theory since they show hints (indirect language behavior) to be used more often to both superiors and subordinates than to status equal familiars.

Another approach, which can be considered a serious challenge to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, defines politeness in terms of appropriateness (i.e., appropriate behavior is polite behavior) (e.g., Fraser & Nolen, 1981; Meier, 1995; Zimin, 1981). According to this approach, as Meier (1995) explains, "politeness can only be judged relative to a particular context and a particular addressee's expectations and concomitant interpretation" (p. 387). One advantage of this approach is that there will be no need for some absolute measure of directness or politeness since appropriateness is concerned with "the social interpretation of a particular linguistic behavior within a particular speech community" (Meier, 1995, p. 387). In this way, neither language nor its users can be labeled as inherently polite or impolite (Meier, 1995).

Speech Act Studies

Speech act studies which have been conducted since the 1980s have compared and contrasted the realization strategies of several speech acts across a number of languages and cultures. They have also investigated the realization of speech acts by non-native speakers. With the exception of few non-Western languages, notably Japanese and Hebrew, cross-cultural speech act research has mainly focused on Western languages, especially American English. The goal of this research has been to describe the realization strategies of speech acts in different languages and cultures and also to examine to what extent language learners transfer their pragmatic knowledge from L1 to L2. Some speech act studies also examined whether demographic variables such as age and gender influenced the choice of particular strategies.

Two of the speech acts that have been extensively investigated cross-culturally are apologies (e.g., House, 1989; Hussein & Hammouri, 1998; Vollmer & Olshtain, 1989), and requests (e.g., Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Blum-Kulka, 1983; Eslamirasekh, 1993; Fukushima & Iwata, 1987; Geis & Harlow, 1995; House & Kasper, 1981). Other speech acts that have also been studied include refusals (e.g., Lauper, 1997; Nelson, Al Batal, & El Bakary, 1998; Rubin, 1983), compliments (e.g., Barnlund & Araki, 1985; Nelson, El Bakary, & Al Batal, 1995; Nelson, Al-Batal, & Echols, 1996), complaints (e.g., Fescura, 1995; Murphy & Neu, 1996), suggestions (e.g., Koike, 1995), gratitude (e.g., Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988), and corrections (e.g., Takahashi & Beebe, 1993).

In this section I review a number of speech act studies, interlingual and intralingual as well as learner-centered studies. Arabic speech act studies will be reviewed as will correction studies. Data collection methods employed in such studies will also be discussed in some detail.

Interlingual Studies

Perhaps the most ambitious speech act study to date is the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), conducted in the 1980s by a number of international researchers. This project investigated crosscultural and intralingual variations in two speech acts, requests and apologies, across 7 languages: Australian English, British English, Canadian French, Danish, German, Hebrew, U.S. American English. It also investigated the similarities and differences in the realization strategies of these speech acts between native and non-native speakers. Non-native speakers in the study were students learning the following languages: English, German and Hebrew. The number of respondents in this project ranged from 34 to 227. A written questionnaire was used to elicit the data. The questionnaire contained 16 situations representing different social and power relationships. The findings of the study show interesting culturally-based differences in the realization patterns of these speech acts across the different languages. The findings have also revealed interesting intralingual variations.

Beebe et al. (1990) investigated the production of the speech act of refusal by native speakers of American English, native speakers of Japanese as well as Japanese learners of English. The data were collected using a written questionnaire that consisted of 12 situations eliciting four types of refusals: refusal of requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions. The situations also represented different power relationships (i.e., status equal and status unequal interactions). The results of the study show that although both native speakers of American English and Japanese used excuses in their refusals, the Japanese excuses in Japanese were less specific than the American excuses in English. The results also show that pragmatic transfer influenced the English of the Japanese speakers in terms of the order, frequency and tone of the semantic formulas they used for their refusals.

Another study was conducted by Fukushima and Iwata (1987), in which they compared the strategies of the speech acts of requesting and offering in Japanese (18 respondents) and American English (14 respondents). They found that the sequence of semantic formulas in requesting in the two languages were similar (e.g., apology-reason-request). They also found similar strategies (e.g., reason for the request, cost minimization, address terms). The linguistic expressions of the Japanese students, however, seemed to depend on socioculturally-based factors such as the closeness of the friendship.

Eslamirasekh (1993) investigated the realization strategies of the speech act of requesting in Persian and in American English. A written questionnaire was used to elicit the data from 52 Persians and 50 Americans. The focus of the data analysis was the degree of directness/indirectness. Results suggest that speakers of Persian (Farsi) tend to be more direct than speakers of American English. The Iranians, however, as the researcher explains, seem to compensate for the level of directness by using other strategies such as alerters (*Sir*, *Mr.*, *excuse me*) and supportive moves. The researcher also suggests that there is a preference in Iranian culture for positive politeness, arguing that this is due to the value of group-orientedness in this culture.

Intralingual Studies

The number of intralingual (i.e., one speech community) studies is relatively few compared to interlingual studies. Boxer (1989), for example, used naturally occurring data to examine the realization strategies of the speech act of complaint in American English. Six types of complaint responses were found (i.e., no response, request for an elaboration, a response in the form of joking or teasing, a contradiction or explanation, advice, and commiseration). Commiseration seemed to be the most preferred type (appearing in 52% of the cases) and was most common among status equals who were neither intimates nor strangers. Boxer (1993) conducted another study of indirect complaints (i.e., griping) involving 295 respondents. She found that indirect complaints were frequently employed to establish rapport or solidarity between interlocutors. She also identified six types of responses to them (i.e., no response, a question, a contradiction, a joke or teasing, advice, and commiseration). Boxer also found commiseration to be the most common response to indirect complaints. Gender also played a role with women tending to commiserate with indirect complaints whereas men tended to contradict them or give advice.

Goldschmidt (1989) also analyzed the realization strategies of the speech act of favor-asking in American English using ethnographically collected data. The data were analyzed according to the status, gender, age and social relationships of the participants. A number of strategies were found (e.g., hinting at reciprocation, building solidarity) and three types of favor were also identified (i.e., veiled obligation, a veiled favor, and a true favor.

Valentine (1994) examined the production of the speech acts of agreement and disagreement in everyday conversation of English speakers in India. Naturally occurring data were collected from speakers in cross-gender and same-gender conversations in different formal and informal situations. A number of agreement and disagreement strategies were identified. Agreement strategies, for example, included direct expression of agreement, repetitions of components in the previous turns and hedging. Disagreement strategies included the use of softeners such as honorifics, apologies and hedges. The results of the study suggest that there is a high potential for misunderstanding in both cross-cultural and cross-gender contexts.

Learner-Centered Studies

A number of speech studies have investigated the production of speech acts by language learners. These studies typically examine simultaneously the realization of speech by native speakers of the target language as well as native speakers of the learner's L1. The goal of these studies is to examine the learner's transfer of pragmatic knowledge from L1 to L2.

Cordella (1991), for example, used a role-play technique to elicit data from 40 native speakers of Australian English and 30 Chilean speakers of English. She analyzed the data in terms of the frequency, distribution and function of apology strategies. The findings show that there are similarities in the strategies employed by both groups; however, there is difference in the modification attached to them. The study also shows positive politeness strategies to be more frequent in the speech of Chilean speakers of English

Nakahama (1999) compared high-imposition request sequences of native speakers of Japanese with those used by American learners of Japanese. Five advanced American learners of Japanese and 5 native speakers of Japanese. The study employed open roleplays and retrospective verbal reports. The transcribed data were rated by 7 raters on a scale of 1-to-5 according to the overall impression of politeness, as well as six notions of politeness, which were determined by the subjects in Ide, Hill, Carners, Ogino, and Kawasaki's (1992) study (i.e., respectfulness, pleasantness, appropriateness, considerateness, casualness, friendliness). The researcher used only one scenario: a student asking a professor to write him/her a recommendation letter upon a short notice (giving the professor a few days to write the recommendation letter. [the study also investigated transfer from L1/English]. The results of the study (the opening and the requesting phases) show that American learners of Japanese transfer L1 sociopragmatic rules to their performance of the speech act of requesting in Japanese. The results demonstrate both sociopragmatic transfer (due to socioculturally-based perceptions of politeness) and overgeneralization of Japanese forms (pragmalinguistic features); this made their requests less polite (i.e., perceived as less politeness).

Arabic Speech Act Studies

There have been a few studies investigating the realization strategies of speech acts in Arabic. The speech acts investigated include apologies (Al-Hami, 1993; Ghawi, 1993; Hussein & Hammouri, 1998), compliments (Nelson, El Bakary, & Al-Batal, 1993), compliment responses (Nelson et al., 1996), and refusals (Nelson et al., 1998; Stevens, 1993). The following is a review of some of these studies.

Nelson et al. (1993) conducted a study investigating the realization of American and Egyptian compliments. A written questionnaire was used to elicit data from 243 Egyptians and 265 U.S. Americans. Results show that there are similarities such as the use of adjectival compliments and also the use of a limited number of adjectives and syntactic patterns, preference for direct complimenting and frequent praise of personal appearance. Egyptians tended to give longer compliments and use more similes and metaphors, use formulaic expressions, cluster compliments on appearance and personality traits. American compliments tended to compliment skills and work more frequently than Egyptian compliments. Both groups seemed to prefer direct rather than indirect compliments.

Nelson et al. (1996) investigated similarities and differences between Syrian and U.S. American compliment responses. Eighty-seven Americans and 32 Syrians were interviewed to obtain demographic information (e.g., *What part of the United Sates are you from?*). After a few questions the interviewer complimented the interviewee on some aspect of his or her appearance, personality trait or on a skill, in an attempt to obtain naturalistic speech data. The interviews with Americans yielded 87 compliments/compliment response sequences and the interviews with Syrians resulted in 52 sequences. Examination of the data suggested 3 broad response categories: acceptance, mitigation and rejection and subcategories. The results suggested that both Syrians and Americans are more likely to either accept or mitigate the force of the compliment than to reject it. Both groups used similar response types (e.g., agreeing utterances, compliment returns, deflecting or qualifying comments). The American respondents, however, were much more likely than the Syrians to use appreciation tokens. The Syrians' preference for a compliment response that consisted of acceptance and a formula did not appear in the American data at all.

Hussein and Hammouri (1998) compared the apology strategies employed by speakers of Jordanian Arabic and American English. The researchers used a discourse completion task (DCT) to elicit apologies from 100 Jordanians and 40 Americans. The DCT consisted of 8 apology situations that represented different social and power relationships between the interlocutors. The results of the study show that the Jordanian respondents' strategies were more varied than the American ones: 27 strategies of apology were used by the Jordanian respondents, compared to only 17 in the American data. The apologies that were used exclusively by Jordanians include praising God and proverbial expressions. The results also show that the Jordanians were less direct and used more elaborated strategies than their American counterparts.

Ghawi (1993) investigated the production of the speech act of apology by Arabic-speaking EFL learners. The respondents were 17 Arabic-speaking intermediate level EFL students and 17 native speakers of American, which formed the control group. The researcher used a closed role-play technique that consisted of 8 situations; the interactions were audio-taped. A week before administering the role-play the Arab respondents were interviewed for information about their perception of the specificity or universality of apology across languages (e.g., they were asked questions such as *Do you think that speakers of English apologize more or less than speakers of your native language?*). One of the interesting findings of this study is that all the Arab respondents said that they felt

Americans apologized differently, specifically that Americans apologized more frequently and at times unnecessarily. For example, some of the Arab participants stated that Americans even apologized to their children, implying that this was less common in Arabic. Findings of the study showed that the Arab learners transfer some strategies from Arabic, particularly the explanation strategy. The findings also suggest that, despite some accommodation to L2 norms, the Arab learners' sociopragmatic norms are sometimes transferred to L2. The study also suggests that the extent of pragmatic transfer of certain apology strategies may be related to the learners' perception of the language universality or specificity of the speech act of apology.

Stevens (1993) also investigated the production of the speech act of refusal by native speakers of American English, native speakers of Egyptian Arabic, and Arab learners of English. Data were obtained via a written questionnaire that consisted of 15 situations designed to elicit three types of refusal (i.e., refusal of requests, offers and invitations). Three groups of respondents participated in the study: a group of native speakers of American English in the US (13), a group of Arabic-speaking ESL learners in the US (17), and a group of native Arabic speakers in Egypt (21). In addition to these 3 groups, the researcher used data collected from two other groups in an earlier study (see Stevens, 1988). These were a group of native English speakers in Egypt (10) and a group of EFL learners in Egypt (21). Findings of the study showed that EFL learners transfer pragmatically inappropriate strategies from L1 when speaking in L2 (e.g., chiding). The findings of the study also showed that pragmatically inappropriate strategies used in L2 were not due to negative transfer from L1 (e.g., brutally frank explanations). In other words, learners did not transfer from L1 the strategies that would have worked in L2 (i.e., the strategies that L1 and L2 shared). The findings suggested that there could be a great deal of positive pragmatic transfer from Arabic to English but these common strategies need to be taught. The researcher explains that the learners' inability to transfer common strategies may be due to their lack of knowledge of the equivalent English formulas.

Another study that investigated the realization strategies in the speech act of refusal was conducted by Nelson et al. (1998). The researchers used a modified discourse completion test (DCT) that consisted of three requests, three invitations, three offers and three suggestions. Each situation included one refusal to a person of higher status, one to a person of equal status, and one to a person of lower status. The DCT was used to elicit data from 30 native speakers of American English and 25 native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. The refusals were categorized according to the formula used and analyzed for order, directness and frequency of the semantic formulas. Results showed that both groups of respondents used similar semantic formulas to realize this speech act, and also used a similar number of direct and indirect formulas. The Egyptian respondents, however, used more direct formulas in the status-equal situations. Both groups also expressed similar reasons for refusal. In some situations, the order of the semantic formulas varied. Also the American respondents used more expressions of gratitude.

Correction Studies

To my knowledge there have only been two correction studies reported in the literature. The first study (Takahashi & Beebe, 1993) investigated the production of this speech act by native speakers of American English and Japanese as well as by Japanese speakers of English. A discourse completion test (DCT) was used to elicit the data. The DCT consisted of 12 situations, 2 of which were used to elicit one of the following four speech acts: correction, disagreement, chastisement and announcing embarrassing information, in addition to two other speech acts as controls. One of the two situations eliciting the speech act of correction involved a teacher (higher status) correcting a student (lower status), and the other involved a student correcting a teacher. The respondents consisted of 15 Americans responding in English, 25 Japanese responding in Japanese and 15 Japanese responding in English. The responses were analyzed in terms of a sequence of semantic formulas (e.g., expressions of regret, positive remarks).

Takahashi and Beebe (1993) found that in the higher-to-lower status situation (i.e., teacher correcting student) the American respondents prefaced their correction with positive remarks (e.g., *That was very good*) 79% of the time. The Japanese respondents responding in English, on the other hand, used positive remarks 23% of the time, and the Japanese respondents responding in Japanese used positive remarks only 13% of the time. The researchers also found that the pattern for the use of softeners was the same as that for positive remarks. Softeners, according to the researchers, include hedges (e.g., *I believe, I think*), questions (e.g., *Did you say . . . ?*), and other expressions intended to lighten the seriousness of the mistake (e.g., *You made one small error in the date*). The American respondents used softeners 71% of the time whereas the Japanese respondents speaking English used them 50% of the time, and the Japanese respondents speaking Japanese used them only 26% of the time.

In the lower-to-higher status situation (i.e., student correcting teacher) the researchers found that no positive remarks were used by any of the respondents except one Japanese respondent responding in Japanese. It was also significant that 10 of the Japanese respondents responding in Japanese (40%) opted out whereas only two of the American respondents (13%) opted out. The percentages of softeners used by the three groups of respondents were reversed from those in the first situation: The Japanese students responding in Japanese used softeners 133% of the time, the Japanese respondents responding in English used softeners 116% of the time, and American respondents used them 100% of the time (These percentages refer to the total number of softeners used in relation to the total number of respondents performing the speech act) The researchers also observe that the Americans seemed to be elaborating their softeners by using more self-deprecating softeners (e.g., *I may be wrong/mistaken but* . . .). The researchers argue that positive remarks (e.g., praise, complimenting, positive evaluations) are "extremely important prefixes to face-threatening acts in English" (Takahashi & Beebe, 1993, p. 141).

The other correction study was conducted by Dogancay-Aktuna and Kamisli (1996). In this study the researchers investigated the speech acts of correction and disagreement between status-unequal interlocutors in Turkish. The study focused on the politeness markers used to mitigate the force of these face-threatening speech acts. The study also investigates the relationship between social status, power and context on the one hand and language use on the other. The respondents were 80 individuals aged 19 to 22 (28 males, 52 females). Data were collected using a DCT. Brown and Levinson's

(1987) theory of politeness was used as a framework for data analysis. The data were analyzed statistically for patterns of positive and negative politeness, and also for directness and indirectness. The researcher adopted the situations used by Takahashi and Beebe (1993) for eliciting these speech acts. The situations were translated into Turkish. The data for correction and disagreement were analyzed within the framework of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness. Three main categories were used: bald on record, on record with redressive politeness marker, and off record. The redressive markers were analyzed in terms of positive and negative politeness markers. The researchers also compared the respondents' linguistic behavior in the different contexts to determine how their answers were affected by the social variables. The findings of the study showed that the Turkish people prefer negative politeness strategies to positive strategies.

Comments on the Correction Studies

The elicitation method used in both correction studies (i.e., a written DCT) included only two situations, both involving status-unequal interactions. The researchers in the Turkish study used the same situations used in Takahashi and Beebe's (1993) study. In the first situation the respondent imagines himself/herself a professor in a history class correcting a student who has just given an account of a famous historical event with the wrong date. In the second situation the respondent imagines himself/herself a student in a sociology class correcting the professor who has just quoted a famous statement attributing it to the wrong scholar.

The method used in both of these studies has two main limitations. First, the fact that the situations in both studies are limited to classroom interaction between student and teacher may affect the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. In addition, both situations in the studies are limited to status-unequal interactions. They also limited the speech act of correction to correction of information, neglecting action too.

There is also a methodological problem concerning the description of the correction situation in that the two situations used to elicit the speech act of correction did not contain information specific enough for the proper elicitation of this speech act. By its very nature, the speech act of correction requires two specific and contradictory pieces of information to be performed adequately. The situations used by Takahashi and Beebe (1993) are too abstract for this speech act to be performed properly. For example, in the first situation the respondent (assuming the role of a teacher) is asked to correct a student who "gives an account of a famous historical event with the wrong date" (Takahashi & Beebe, 1993, p. 155). In order to perform the act of correction adequately, the respondent needs specific information (e.g., a specific date). From the examples given by the researchers (Takahashi & Beebe, 1993, pp. 142-143), it is clear that the respondents, who were distracted by the lack of information, had to make up imaginary dates: *Isn't it 1945? That was in 1492, Was it 1968?* rather than focusing on performing the act of correction itself.

These technical issues in designing the elicitation instrument provides a good introduction for discussing the data collection methods in cross-cultural speech act research.

Data Collection Methods

One major concern in cross-cultural pragmatics is the way the data are collected. A number of methods have been used to collect data in cross-cultural speech act studies. Wolfson (1986) explains that these methods fall into two main categories: observation of authentic data and elicitation. Kasper and Dahl (1991), who reviewed 39 studies of cross-cultural pragmatics, observe that two major data elicitation measures have been extensively used: discourse completion tasks/tests (DCTs) and (open) role-plays. The advantages and disadvantages of these and other methods will be discussed below.

Observation of Authentic Speech

As Wolfson (1986) notes, observation of authentic speech grew out of anthropological studies and has high internal validity. Many researchers (e.g., Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Wolfson, 1981; Wolfson, Marmor & Jones, 1989;) have argued that this method is the most reliable means of learning about the social and linguistic constraints on a particular speech act, since it allows for observation of naturally occurring speech events. Therefore, the data reflect what speakers actually say rather than what they think they would say (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993). However, as has been pointed out by some researchers (e.g., Kasper & Dahl 1991; Rintell & Mitchell 1989), it has a number of limitations, one of which is that contextual variables (e.g., power relationships, gender) cannot be controlled, thereby posing a major problem for cross-cultural comparability. Another problem is that the occurrence of a particular speech act cannot be predicted (e.g., the data may not yield enough or any examples of a particular speech act). In addition, collecting and analyzing the data can be very time-consuming (Cohen, 1996).

Open Role-Play

In a role-play respondents are asked to enact a scene that will elicit the desired speech act. Houck and Gass (1996) explain that one of the advantages of this technique is that the interaction takes place orally rather than in writing, and therefore it is believed to be the closest to natural speech. This is why Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) refer to it as a semiethnographic technique. As some researchers (e.g., Edmondson, 1981) have indicated, this technique is also more appropriate for eliciting particular speech acts (e.g., refusals) that are not the result of a single utterance but of extended negotiation between two speakers. However, a number of disadvantages have been indicated. For example, it is difficult to administer role-plays and analyze the resulting data. In addition, it is not known to what degree the data obtained represent interactions in real-life situations (Houck & Gass, 1996).

Discourse Completion Task/Test (DCT)

The DCT, first developed by Blum-Kulka (1982), seems to be the most popular elicitation instrument in cross-cultural speech act studies. It presents a short description of the situation, the setting, the social distance between the interlocutors and their status relative to each other, followed by an incomplete dialogue. The respondents are asked to complete the dialogue by providing the required speech act. The DCT has been used in different forms: open-ended (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), multiple choice (Rose, 1992), or respondents may be asked for rankings of possible answers (Hill, Ide, Ikuta, Kawasaki, & Ogino, 1986; Ide, Hill, Carners, Ogino, & Kawasaki, 1992). Cohen and Olshtain (1981) also designed a semi-oral DCT, where the situation was described in written form while the actual exchange was done orally in role-play manner with the researcher being one of the interlocutors.

The DCT has both advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages of the DCT is that it can be easily and efficiently administered and a large amount of data can be collected quickly (Green, 1995). In addition, it allows for cross-cultural comparability (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). It also allows the researcher to control different contextual variables.

The DCT has, however, a number of disadvantages. One major disadvantage discussed in the literature is that it does not provide opportunities for respondents to opt out (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985). Bardovi-Harlig (1999), however, explains that this need not be considered a disadvantage because the DCT was originally designed to investigate how speakers perform specific speech acts, not whether they perform them or not. One other disadvantage is that the DCT does not allow multiple respondent turns, which is characteristic of negotiation. Another disadvantage is that the DCT has typically been a written task whereas the interactions it describes take place orally. As a result some important features of natural oral interaction are lost, such as prosodic and nonverbal features, which cannot be captured in the written version. In addition, the response time is almost unlimited in the written version, allowing respondents to consider their responses more carefully or even make corrections, and this, of course, is not the case in actual verbal interactions (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985). However, one possible solution to this problem is to conduct the DCT orally (e.g., Murphy & Neu, 1996; Yuan, 1998). One other point that has been discussed in the literature is that format of the DCT often encourages respondents to write more than they would say in comparable real-life situations (Beebe & Cummings, 1985, 1996). Some researchers (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Green, 1995), however, argue that this may be to the researcher's advantage, since it can give the researcher information about the formulas that speakers typically use to perform the speech act in question. In this way, it can be informative about the shared beliefs or conventions that govern usage.

Empirically-based evaluation of the DCT. A number of empirical studies have been conducted to evaluate the validity of the DCT as an elicitation instrument. Some of these studies compared different forms of the DCT. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993), for example, compared the influence of two forms of a DCT for the speech act of rejection of advice. An open questionnaire providing scenarios alone was compared with a classic discourse completion task in which a conversational turn (e.g., a rejoinder) is provided. The results showed some task influence, although the influence was greater for the nonnative speakers. The researchers explain that the rejoinder seemed to help the respondents frame their replies. Their findings, however, seem to contradict those of Rose (1992), who found that the presence of a rejoinder made little difference. But Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) suggest that the results can be reconciled, taking into consideration that Rose (1992) investigated a different speech act (i.e., request). Requests, they argue, can stand alone as they are initiating speech acts, whereas rejections are reactive speech acts and cannot stand alone.

The effect of the type of the rejoinder added to a DCT has also been examined. Johnston, Kasper, and Ross (1998) investigated the effect of three types of rejoinder (positive, negative or absent) on nonnative and native speakers' choice of strategies to perform complaints, requests, and apologies. Results show that strategy choice is differentially affected by rejoinder type. This study, therefore, suggests that findings from studies using different DCT formats may not be comparable. The researchers recommend using open-ended, rejoinder-free DCTs.

Researchers have also compared the data elicited by a DCT to naturally-occurring data. Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992) compared data on rejections of advice by NS and NNS collected from natural conversation with data collected using a DCT. The respondents were students in an academic advising session. The study shows that although the use of DCT has advantages such as the availability of large samples and experimental controls, the technique affects the data in certain ways. For example, the participants used a narrower range of semantic formulas on the DCT, used fewer status-preserving strategies, and did not engage in extended negotiations found in the natural data. However, the DCT provided large samples of data compared to the naturally occurring data. The researchers conclude that the DCT is an effective tool because it not only allows the researcher to test his or her hypotheses but it also can provide data which help explain and interpret the natural data.

The DCT has also been assessed in terms of its adequacy for data collection cross-culturally. Rose (1994) investigated the validity of the open-ended DCT in non-Western contexts. In his study he used a DCT and a multiple-choice questionnaire (MCQ) to elicit requests in Japanese and American English. The results of the study show that there are reasons to suspect that the DCT may be inappropriate for collecting data in non-Western contexts (e.g., Japan).

As seen from the above review, the findings of empirical studies assessing the validity of the DCT are far from conclusive, if not contradictory. These studies are also relatively few, in view of the fact that the DCT is the most popular elicitation instrument in cross-cultural speech act studies.

Technical issues in designing the DCT. One important issue concerning the designing of elicitation instruments in cross-cultural speech act studies is the choice of both the setting and the elicitation task (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999). In a study investigating the effect of the elicitation method on the data obtained, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) found that the more familiar respondents were with the context, the less the DCT influenced their responses. This could be true of any elicitation instrument in general. This is why some researchers (e.g., Eslamirasekh, 1993; Meier, 1992) preferred using written DCTs or closed role-plays that included "realistic" situations familiar to the respondents. For example, all 200 respondents in Meier (1992) had been in similar situations (except one) to those they were asked to role-play. This seems to be a more realistic technique than asking the respondents to imagine themselves to be professors, managers or corporation presidents (e.g., Beebe & Takahashi, 1989; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987). However, it is important to indicate that there has not been (to my knowledge) any empirical study that has compared 'realistic' to 'imaginary' situations in DCTs in cross-cultural speech act studies.

Some researchers argue that in order to determine which types of interaction are familiar to particular respondents, it is important to do some basic ethnographic observation (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993). The information obtained from such observation can be used in creating realistic situations familiar to the respondents. For example, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) developed dialogue completion tasks and open questionnaires based on actual interactions that occurred in their corpus of academic advising interviews. Rose (1994) and Rose and Ono (1995) integrated the collection of actual requests into the construction of their elicitation tasks in order to create realistic scenarios for their respondents. Two other methodological issues raised by researchers (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 1999) concern designing a DCT: a) how much detail should be included in a scenario, and b) how to convey the desired information. These two issues should certainly be taken into account when designing DCTs or role-plays.

Other Data Collection Methods

Other techniques have also been used to elicit speech acts. One of these is the use of film excerpts. Jarvis and Juhasz, 1997 (as cited in Bardovi-Harlig, 1999) used excerpts from films and television as a tool for the elicitation tasks. Film excerpts have also been used as a source of data. For example, Rose (1993, 1997) used film as a source of compliment data.

Verbal report interviews is another data collection method that has been used in a small number of studies (e.g., Cohen & Olshtain, 1993). It is usually used in combination with another elicitation technique (e.g., DCT, role-play). In this method the respondents, after completing the DCT or enacting the role-play, are asked to provide retrospective verbal reports about how they assessed the different variables and analyzed the situations before responding. This method is interesting since it has the potential for providing insights into how speakers plan and execute speech acts (Cohen, 1996).

It is important to indicate that some researchers (e.g., Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985) have argued for combining different methods of data collection due to the inability of one method to yield a complete assessment of the speech act in question. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) suggest a five-phase process for collecting data in cross-cultural speech act studies. These are: (a) the ethnographic phase (i.e., observations of natural conversation); (b) the semiethnographic phase (i.e., the use of role-play technique); (c) discourse completion tests (to control social and situational variables); (d) acceptability studies (to establish the range of acceptable strategies); (e) a revised ethnographic study to verify the findings). It is clear that this cycle of data collection is fairly complex and time-consuming. Perhaps that is why there has not been (to my knowledge) any cross-cultural speech act study that has applied this multi-method approach. However, I find this approach useful since it provides interesting insights into the complexities associated with data collection in cross-cultural speech act studies. It also calls for re-evaluating the validity of data collected by one-method. Hence, it is worthy of inclusion in this review of the methodology.

Speech Act Research and the Language Learner

There has been an increasing awareness in the field of language teaching of the importance of developing the language learner's pragmatic competence. It has become increasingly clear that the learner's lack of pragmatic competence in the target language can lead to communication problems. These problems may be serious enough to result in communication breakdowns or may result in conveying negative unintended impressions on the part of the language learner. For example, the learner may unintentionally give the impression that he or she is impolite, unfriendly, eccentric or simply ridiculous. Bentahila and Davies (1989) present an example from written discourse that illustrates the kind of effect that can result when the learner fails to follow the pragmatic rules of the target language and transfers, instead, his/her L1 pragmatic knowledge. The following is a quotation from a request for a letter of recommendation written by an Arabic-speaking Moroccan student to the head of his university department (Bentahila & Davies, 1989):

> I beseech your honour to report favourably on my suitability and ability for research. Now that all my chances of acceptance heavily depend on your favourable words, receive – dear sir – my greatest respects. And I pray God that he may give you his guidance and help to allow you to brilliantly fulfil the heavy burden of duties placed upon you. (p. 105)

This quotation is particularly interesting in two ways. First, as noted by Bentahila and Davies (1989), it shows that pragmatic competence does not usually develop as the student becomes more 'proficient' in L2. For example, although the writer of this request shows a relatively advanced command of grammar and vocabulary, his or her discourse seems to be highly inappropriate. In fact, research has shown that L2 learners often develop grammatical competence in the absence of concomitant pragmatic knowledge (Bardov-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Beebe et al., 1990; Cohen & Olshtain, 1981; Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986; Olshtain & Cohen, 1991; Wolfson, 1989). The second interesting thing about this quotation is that it shows that the learner is transferring pragmatic knowledge from his or her native language, Arabic (e.g., exaggeration, excessive praise, elaborate good wishes, and reference to God).

Learners' lack of pragmatic knowledge of the target language can also cause problems at the receptive level: Learners may considerably misjudge the intentions of their native-speaker interlocutors. This can also lead to further communication problems. It has also been argued that developing the learner's pragmatic competence will not only minimize such communication problems but will also enhance the quality and scale of native-nonnative interactions. Boxer (1993) argues that pragmatic knowledge is important for "establishing a fertile ground for increased interaction between NNSs and their NSs interlocutors" (p. 296).

Such problems have led language teachers and researchers to try to find ways to increase learners' pragmatic competence. Many questions have been raised: What kind of pragmatic information should be taught? How should this information be communicated to the learner? What is the role of teaching materials? Do learners have to adopt the socio-cultural norms of the target language community? These issues will be addressed in the next section.

Developing the Learner's Pragmatic Competence

Kubota (1996) explains that the focus of the TESOL field has shifted from prescribing and teaching appropriate pragmatic formulas to building of sensitivity toward appropriateness. This observation seems to be true when examining some current views about introducing pragmatics in the ESL/EFL classroom. Bardovi-Harlig (1996), for example, stresses the importance of raising the learner's pragmatic awareness, rather than teaching pragmatic information explicitly. She argues that "if students are encouraged to think for themselves about culturally appropriate ways to compliment a friend or say good bye to a teacher, then they may awaken their own lay abilities for pragmatic analysis" (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996, p. 31). She suggests that this can be achieved by using techniques to develop noticing in order to enhance the learners' ability to observe. She also makes specific suggestions to the teacher on how to raise the learners' pragmatic awareness. For example, the teacher can provide the learner with opportunities to listen to interactions between native speakers, interpret and respond to a variety of speech acts, and to compare and contrast speech acts in L1 and L2. She also emphasizes that the teacher should not explicitly impart knowledge about every speech act, since "the learner must take a key role in the discovery process" (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996, p. 32).

Meier (1997) also stresses the importance of raising the learner's awareness of the sociocultural and, particularly, contextual factors informing the production and interpretation of speech acts (e.g., the roles of dominance, power, and rights). She explains that this awareness-raising has two aspects: (a) an understanding that different evaluations of appropriateness may exist in different cultures, and (b) attention to contextual factors and their possible values in the target language. Meier (1997) also proposes that in the field of ESL/EFL pedagogy the concept of politeness should be limited to the working definition of appropriateness (i.e., appropriate behavior is deemed polite behavior). The focus in this approach, therefore, should be on contextual factors since appropriateness is highly situation-dependent. Like Bardovi-Harlig (1996), Meier (1997) argues against teaching pragmatic information explicitly, especially in terms of cultural rules, since "[c]ultural assumptions and situational factors present a complexity that can never be adequately captured by a list of cultural rules or by a recipe for every, or even most, possible constellations of contextual factors" (p. 25).

Kramsch (1993) also advocates the awareness-raising approach. She suggests a number of activities that aim to raise the learners' socio-cultural awareness. These include discussing judgments of appropriateness in a particular context in the native and target cultures, incorporating the learners' observations in the classroom activities; comparing successful and unsuccessful dialogues, and enacting role-plays to increase learners' awareness of socio-cultural factors. Holmes and Brown (1987) also argue for an awareness-raising approach and make specific suggestions for the teacher on how to develop the learner's pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competencies. For example, they explain that when teaching the speech act of complimenting, the teacher can focus on the learner's pragmalinguistic competence by teaching compliment formulas and compliment collocations (e.g., *very nice/pretty/kind*). The teacher can also focus on the learner's sociopragmatic competence by giving the learner information about common compliment topics, encourage the learner to collect complimenting data, and help the learner to develop knowledge of social and cultural factors relevant to the speech situation.

Rose (1994), who also calls for adopting a pragmatic consciousness-raising approach, argues that this approach should aim at the sensitizing of learners to context-based variation in language use and the role of variables that help determine that variation. In this way it can provide learners with foundation in some of the central aspects of pragmatics, and can be employed by both native and non-native speaker language teachers. Rose also advocates the use of videos, which, he argues, represent an ideal medium for introducing pragmatic issues in the classroom. Finally, Rose (1994) suggests that teaching the pragmatics of the target language, especially in an EFL setting, should start by discussing the pragmatic rules of the native language.

EFL/ESL Materials and Pragmatics

Most of the ESL/EFL materials that are commercially available have been subject to harsh criticism for their inadequate treatment of pragmatic information. Bentahila and Davies (1989), for example, explain that pragmatic, especially sociopragmatic, information is inadequately presented in ESL/EFL textbooks. This information is either presented as 'snippets here and there' or organized through separate courses. It is also "often regarded as an optional supplement, as something of a luxury which is provided to stimulate interest or improve general knowledge," rather than as crucial for the adequate production and interpretation of speech in the target language (Bentahila & Davies, 1989, p. 100).

Meier (1997) also notes that ESL/EFL textbooks treating speech acts/functions typically include a list of phrases and strategies along a directness/politeness or formality continuum. She argues that this "present[s] a rather arbitrary selection in light of the diversity in research findings and risk oversimplification, which in itself can cause problems in cross-cultural communication" (Meier, 1997, p. 24). Bardovi-Harlig (1996), examining the treatment of speech acts in a number of ESL/EFL textbooks, also observes that textbooks, even the new ones, are lacking in at least two ways: (a) either a particular speech act is not represented at all, or (b) some speech acts are poorly represented (e.g., unrealistically represented).

Schmidt (1994) examined the extent to which textbooks covered the speech act of requests. He compared the actual use of this speech act (based on naturalistic data) to the request types presented in four commercially available ESL textbooks that emphasized communicative competence. The findings of the study showed that these textbooks did not use the wide range of request types used in authentic conversation, and did not contain enough, clear explanation of variables affecting choice of request type. In addition, the limited number of forms presented in the textbooks did not reflect the most common forms in real interactions. Boxer and Pickering (1995) surveyed seven ELT texts that were organized around teaching of functions and examined their presentation of the speech act sequence of complaint/commiseration. They also found that there was a mismatch between data presented in these books and naturally occurring data they had collected. They argue that information presented in textbooks should depend on natural data and should not be based on the intuitions of textbook writers.

Billmyer, Jakar, and Lee (1989) examined the presentation of compliments and apologies in TESOL materials and found that these materials also seemed to be based on the writer's intuitions about the realization of these speech acts. This kind of intuitive knowledge, they argue, does not usually match the speech behavior in actual interactions. Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan, & Reynolds (1991) also note that commercially available ESL/EFL materials do not provide natural, or even pragmatically appropriate models for the learner.

It has been argued that the native speaker's intuition cannot be an acceptable alternative to good teaching materials. Wolfson (1989), for example, questions the adequacy of relying on the native speaker's intuitions because of the unconscious nature of the rules of speaking and the norms of interaction. She explains that "native speakers' opinions about what is right and wrong, good and bad, are reflections of community norms or attitudes and have little to do with the actual use of the individual who uses them" (Wolfson, 1989, p. 40). Wolfson (1989) emphasizes the importance of collecting information on sociolinguistic rules for textbook writers and ESL teachers.

The Learner and the Sociocultural Norms of the Target Language: A Sensitive Issue

Teaching the learner the pragmatic rules of the target language has, however, been found to be a sensitive issue. It has been argued that learners may feel that the verbal behavior they are expected to conform to in the target language is quite "alien or unacceptable" (Bentahila & Davies, 1989, p. 106). The learners may also feel frustrated that they are not able to respond in certain situations in the way they are used to, or feel that they are "being forced to disguise or modify their own personality in order to conform to foreign norms" (Bentahila & Davies, 1989, p. 106). Researchers have argued that teachers should be sensitive to their students' psychological needs. Littlewood (1983), for example, recommends that "rather than imposing language which may seem alien to the learner and his [sic] psychological needs, we should try to ensure that he can identify with the language he uses and invest his own personality in it" (p. 203). Via (1981) also argues that teachers should not ask learners to pretend to be native speakers of the target language, but should encourage them to be themselves when using the target language. In fact, as explained by Bentahila and Davies (1989), teachers who try to make their students adopt the sociocultural norms of the speech community of the target language can be accused of what Verschueren (1984) calls cultural imperialism, since they attempt to suppress the learners' personalities and restrict their preferences. These teachers also seem to foster the illusion that the communication style of the target language is inherently superior to that of the native language. Thomas (1983) also explains that the teacher needs to be particularly sensitive when teaching sociopragmatic information (i.e., sociocultural norms of L2), since "sociopragmatic decisions are social before they are linguistic, and while foreign learners are fairly amenable to corrections which they regard as linguistic, they are justifiably sensitive about having their social . . . judgment called into question" (p. 104). She suggests that ESL teachers should provide sociopragmatic information to the learners and let them choose how to express themselves. This view is also shared by Bardovi-Harlig (1996), who argues that it should be up to the learner whether or not to adopt an American style of communication.

Culture and Communication

It has been argued (e.g., Keesing, 1974) that culture provides its members with implicit information on how to behave in different situations and how to interpret others' behaviors in these situations. Culture theorists have proposed a number of dimensions for comparing and contrasting different cultures.

Collectivism vs. Individualism

One of the concepts that has been found very useful in understanding similarities and differences between cultures in terms of behavior is Hofsetede's (1980) concepts of Collectivism and Individualism. Hofstede (1991) explains these concepts as follows:

> Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive ingroups, which through people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. (p. 51)

According to Hofstede (1980), and as explained by Kim, Sharkey, and Singelis (1994), Individualistic societies emphasize "I" consciousness, autonomy, emotional independence, individual initiative, right to privacy, pleasure seeking, financial security, and need for specific friendship. Collectivistic societies, on the other hand, emphasize "we" consciousness, collective identity, emotional dependence, group solidarity, sharing, duties and obligations, need for stable, predetermined friendship, and group decision.

Hofstede's distinction between Collectivistic (C) and Individualistic (I) cultures has been adopted by most culture theorists and researchers, and has been used as a general theoretical framework by empirical researchers. A number of concepts have been introduced to further refine this framework and account for several cultural phenomena associated with I/C distinction. Triandis (1988), for example, introduced the concepts of particularism and universalism. He argues that Collectivistic cultures are particularistic, that is, their members apply different values to their ingroups (e.g., those who belong to their group) and to their outgroups (e.g. those who do not belong to their groups). Individualistic cultures, on the other hand, are described as universalistic: Their members typically apply the same values to those who belong to their groups and those who do not.

Triandis (1995) has also introduced the concepts of vertical and horizontal cultures as additional constructs within Hofstede's (1980) I-C model. Triandis (1995) argues that an I or C culture is either horizontal or vertical in terms of whether it values equality and/or freedom. A vertical I culture allows people to stand out from others and places high value on freedom and low value on equality (e.g., US, Germany, Britain, France). A horizontal I culture, on the other hand, allows people to act as individuals but does not expect them to stand out from others and it also places high value on both freedom and equality (e.g., Sweden, Norway). Horizontal C cultures value equality but little value is placed on freedom (e.g., Japan). Vertical C cultures (e.g., India), on the other hand, encourage individuals to belong to ingroups but also allows them to stand out in their ingroups.

It is important to note that Hofstede's (1980) I-C model has been found particularly useful as a framework for explaining culturally-based differences in communication (e.g., Triandis, 1995). Gudykunst (1998) explains that "I-C provides a powerful explanatory framework for understanding cultural similarities and differences in interpersonal communication" (p. 114). The basic assumption in this approach is that there are general patterns of communication that are consistent in I cultures and there are other patterns that are consistent in C cultures. It has been argued, however, as explained by Gudykunst (1998), that a number of factors mediate the influence of I/C culture on communication behavior. These factors are individuals' personalities, individuals' values, and self construals. Triandis, Leung, Villareal, and Clack (1985) explain that individuals' personalities mediate the influence of culture through idiocentrism and allocentrism. Triandis et al. explain that idiocentrism mediates the influence of I cultures whereas allocentrism mediates the influence of C cultures. In I cultures, idiocentrism triggers the individuals' tendency to disregard the needs of their ingroups, whereas in C cultures it triggers the individuals' tendency to feel ambivalent to accept ingroup norms. Allocentrism, on the other hand, brings about the individuals' concern about their ingroups in I cultures, whereas in C cultures it initiates the individuals' wholehearted and unquestionable acceptance of their ingroup norms.

Self contrual, which is another factor that mediates the influence of culture (Kashima, 1989; Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 1994; Triandis, 1989), refers to how individuals conceive of themselves. A distinction has been made by Markus and Kitayama (1991, 1994) between independent and interdependent self construals. They argue that people in I cultures emphasize an independent construal of the self: The individual's self is seen as a unique independent entity. This involves "construing oneself as an individual whose behavior is organized . . . primarily by reference to one's own . . . thoughts, feelings and actions, rather than by reference to the thoughts, feelings and actions of others" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 226). People in C cultures, on the other hand, emphasize an interdependent construal of the self. As Markus and Kitayama (1991) explain, "experiencing interdependence entails seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one's behavior is determined by, contingent on, and to a large extent organized by what the actor perceive to be the thoughts, feelings and actions of others in the relationship" (p. 227). It has also been argued, as Gudykunst (1998) explains, that any individual in any culture has both independent and interdependent construals of the self. In addition, people with predominately interdependent construal of the self exist in I cultures and people with predominately independent construal of the self exist in C cultures.

The third factor that mediates the influence of I-C culture on communication is individuals' values. Schwartz (1992) argues that the interests served by value domains can be individualistic, collectivistic or mixed. Individualistic interests are served by the value domains of stimulation, hedonism, power, and achievement. Collectivistic interests, on the other hand, are served by the value domains of tradition, conformity, and benevolence. The mixed interests are served by the value domains of security, universalism and spirituality. Schwartz (1990) also argues that individualistic and collectivistic values do not necessarily conflict and individuals can hold both types of values; however, one tends to predominate.

High Context vs. Low Context Communication

Another distinction that has been proposed within Hofstede's I/C framework and that has been found useful in explaining differences in communication between I and C cultures is Hall's (1976) distinction between high and low context communication. Hall (1976) argues that a high context (HC) communication or message is one in which "most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message" (p. 79). A low context (LC) message, on the other hand, is one in which "the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code" (Hall, 1976, p.70). It has been argued (e.g., Gudykunst & Ting-Tommey, 1988) that LC communication is characteristic of I cultures whereas HC communication is characteristic of C cultures.

As Gudykunst (1998) explains, HC communication is characterized by being indirect, ambiguous, and understated, with speakers being reserved and sensitive to listeners. LC communication, on the other hand, is described as direct, explicit, open, and precise, with speakers' actions being consistent with their feelings. Okabe (1983) has also argued that LC communication involves the use of categorical words such as "absolutely," "certainly," "positively." HC communication, which is indirect and implicit, in contrast, prefers the use of qualifiers such as 'maybe,' 'perhaps,' or 'probably.' This indirectness in HC communication, which is seen as a source of ambiguity, has led some culture theorists (e.g., Gudykunst, 1998) to argue that HC communication violates Grice's maxims of conversation, especially the maxim of relevance. Kim (1994) also argues that LC communication values clarity more than HC. Kim and Wilson (1994) argue that LC communication views direct requests as effective whereas in HC communication, they are seen as least effective. HC and LC communication styles have also been contrasted in terms of the role of silence in communication. It has been argued that in LC communication silence is seen as interrupting the flow of conversation, whereas in HC communication silence is seen as communicative act in its own right.

LC communication and HC communication have also been characterized in terms of self-disclosure (i.e., telling others information about oneself). Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988), for example, argue that in LC communication there is a greater degree of self-disclosure compared to HC communication. Research done by Barnlund (1975) also seems to support this argument.

Another distinction between HC and LC communication styles is explained in terms of uncertainty, based on Gudykunst's (1995) theory of anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM). Gudykunst (1995) argues that effective interpersonal and inter-group communication is a function of the amount of anxiety and uncertainty individuals experience when communicating with others. Uncertainty is defined as the ability to predict and/or explain the others' feelings, attitudes and behavior. Based on earlier research (i.e., Gudykunst, Gao, Nishida, Nadamitsu, & Sakai, 1992), Gudykunst argues that in HC cultures (e.g., Japan and Hong Kong) uncertainty is lower in communication with members of ingroups than in communication with members of outgroups, whereas in LC cultures (e.g., U.S. and Australia) there is no such difference. Gudykunst also argues that the ways that individuals obtain information to reduce uncertainty differs in I and C cultures. Gudykunst and Nishida's (1986) research shows that members of I cultures look for person-based information to lower the uncertainty level about strangers, whereas members of collectivistic cultures seek group-based information to reduce uncertainty. Gudykunst (1995) explains that the focus on person-based information leads members of I cultures to look for personal similarities when communicating with outgroup members. On the other hand, the focus on group-based information makes members of C cultures look for group similarities when communicating with outgroup members.

Comments on the I/C Distinction

Despite its value as a flexible theoretical construct for comparing and contrasting cultures, Hofstede's (1980) I/C distinction has been criticized on the grounds that "it is too readily used as an explanation for every behavior studied cross-culturally – a catchall construct" (Kagitcibasi, 1994, p. 53). This problem has also been observed by Yamuna Kachru (1992), who warns against the use of this distinction in relation to all domains of a community's life. Kagitcibasi (1994) also explains that the I/C distinction, which is a culture-level construct has been used to account for observed differences in behavior at the individual level. She argues that this is problematic because culture is "too diffuse a concept and is therefore a poor independent variable unless its links with behavior are specified in terms of mediating variables" (Kagitcibasi, 1994, p. 53). Such problems in this construct have led Kim (1994) to argue that the patterns depicted by I/C "need further refinement, elaboration and validation" (p. 40).

Another criticism, as expressed by Kagitcibasi (1994), is concerned with a semantic issue, namely, the use of the terms individualism and collectivism, especially the latter. Kagitcibasi (1994) argues that in the social psychology literature the term collectivism has negative connotations "associated with conformity to group pressure, crowd behavior, deindividuation" (p. 55), in addition to its negative political overtones. She argues that one reason why collectivism carries these negative connotations is that it is viewed from a Western, especially American, perspective, from which individualism is highly valued. She argues that such negative connotations of the term "can influence interpretation and blur the boundaries between scientific inquiry and ideological thinking" (Kagitcibasi, 1994, p. 55). In addition, "interpretations that are perceived to be value-laden (or prejudiced) can create sensitivities and reactions on the part of psychologists from collectivist cultures, thus again pushing the debate beyond scientific limits" (Kagitcibasi, 1994, p. 55). From my reading of the literature I have found that this kind of prejudice manifests itself in the writings of major culture theorists and researchers. For example, Gudykunst (1998, p. 115) explains that the purpose of indirectness in LC communication (characteristic of I cultures) is that it "emphasizes listeners' abilities to infer speakers' intentions," whereas in HC communication (characteristic of C cultures) indirectness aims to "camouflage and conceal speakers' true intentions"!

Despite these potential problems using such labels as Individualism and Collectivism, they certainly have some value in providing insights into tendencies emerging in speech act studies across cultures, specially because of the role of context and perception of the factors therein.

Egypt and the U.S. can easily fit into these categories of Individualism and Collectivism. Egypt and the U.S. have been referred to in the literature as Collectivistic and Individualistic cultures respectively (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995). This distinction has been found useful to account for many of the cultural differences between the two countries.

CHAPTER 3

THE STUDY

Introduction

The focus of the present study is on the strategies speakers use to modify the illocutionary force of the speech act of correction, by either mitigating or aggravating it. A distinction has been made in the literature (e.g., CCSARP) between internal and external modification of speech acts. For example, in the sentence *Sir, I believe that you are in my seat*, the Head Act (i.e., the minimal unit that realizes the speech act) *you are in my seat* is modified internally by the hedge *I believe*, and externally by the form of address *sir.* This distinction between internal and external modification, is not, however, made use of in the present study, since the focus is on how speakers mitigate or aggravate the illocutionary force of their corrections. Therefore, no attempt is made in the present study to isolate correction strategies per se. The questions the present study attempts to answer are how and why Arabic and English speakers mitigate or aggravate their corrections. In answering the 'why' question the study seeks explanations in terms of the underlying sociocultural values and beliefs of both speech communities.

Respondents

Sixty respondents participated in this study: 30 Arabic-speaking Egyptians in Egypt and 30 English-speaking Americans in the U.S. All the respondents were either university students or university graduates between the ages of 18 and 35. All were native speakers of their respective languages. The average age of the Egyptian respondents was

24.7 years and the average age of the American respondents was 21.1 years. Both groups were equally divided by sex. All the American respondents were from Iowa except one male from Wisconsin. All the Egyptian respondents were from Alexandria, Egypt, except one male form Sohag (south of Egypt) and one female from Cairo and another female from Giza. All the respondents were nonpaid volunteers. The decision to choose university students and graduates was an attempt to have two comparable groups.

Materials and Procedures

A Discourse Completion Task/Test (DCT) was used because, as discussed in chapter 2, it is difficult to control variables in naturally occurring data. Hence, it is difficult to compare mitigation and aggravation strategies across the two languages or across gender.

The DCT consisted of 11 situations: 6 correction situations (i.e., situations numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11) and 5 other situations (eliciting other speech acts) (i.e., situations numbers 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10). The 5 non-correction situations were used as distractors to avoid a mechanical production of correction (see Appendix A for the English version of the questionnaire). The six correction situations were designed to represent different interlocutor relationships and different types of correction. Two situations (i.e., 1 and 3) involved a person of a lower status correcting a person of a higher status; two (i.e., 5 and 11) involved a person of a higher status correcting a person of a lower status; situations 7 and 9 involved correcting a person of equal status. All six correction situations except one involved specific settings: classroom (i.e., 1, 9, 11), theater (i.e., 3), and restaurant (i.e., 5); the setting for situation 7 was unspecified. The situations involved both correction of misinformation (i.e., 1, 7 and 11) and correction of action that was the result of misinformation, misunderstanding or lack of attention (i.e., 3, 5, and 9). See Table 1 below for an overview of the correction situations. Respondents were also asked to rank the situations in terms of the degree of seriousness in order to find out if there was correlation between the mitigators/aggravators used and the perceived seriousness of the situation.

Table 1

Overview of the Correction Situations

Relative Status	Type of Correction	Setting	Situation Number
Lower-Higher	Correction of information	Classroom	Situation 1
Lower-Higher	Correction of action	Theater	Situation 3
Equal-Status	Correction of information	(Unspecified)	Situation 7
Equal-Status	Correction of action	Classroom	Situation 9
Higher-Lower	Correction of information	Classroom	Situation 11
Higher-Lower	Correction of action	Restaurant	Situation 5

The DCT was first composed in English and then translated into colloquial Egyptian Arabic by both the researcher, a native speaker of Egyptian Arabic, and another Egyptian who is an Arabic-English bilingual. They compared their translations and all the differences were resolved. There were 3 minor differences between the Arabic version of the DCT and the English version in order to make them more situationally equivalent. In situation 5 (i.e., the restaurant situation) 'the steak' in the English version was replaced by 'kebab' in the Arabic version. In situation 7, the American state (i.e., New Mexico) was replaced in the Arabic version by an equivalent Egyptian governorate (i.e., Gharbia). The third change was that the two European countries (i.e., Germany and France) in situation 11 were replaced by two Egyptian cities (i.e., Hurgada and Sharm El Shiekh) in the Arabic version. The researcher felt that since most Egyptians cannot afford spending a summer in Europe, the Egyptian respondents would find such a scenario unrealistic.

The written questionnaire was administered to non-linguistic undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Northern Iowa, Iowa, by four graduate assistants. It was administered in Alexandria, Egypt, by two university students and two university graduates, who gave it out to their friends and colleagues. The persons administering the questionnaire in the U.S. and Egypt included both males and females. The respondents were given from 20 to 30 minutes to write the questionnaire. However, most of them, as has been reported, finished it in a much shorter time. They wrote their answers to the situations first and then ranked the six correction situations according to seriousness.

Data Analysis

The data consisted of responses to the 6 correction situations, and respondents' seriousness rankings of these situations as well as demographic information. Careful examination of the data led to a classification scheme of mitigating and aggravating strategies that accommodated the entire data. Mitigators comprised 17 categories and

Aggravators comprised 4 categories. Thirteen of the mitigation categories (e.g., Hedges, Forms of Address, Understaters, Expressions of Regret, Joking) are well documented in the literature as mitigating devices (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987). Therefore, no attempt is made here to justify their use. However, four new mitigation categories that were added to fit the data require some explanation. The first is Appealing to/Quoting a Third Party. Although this strategy can be seen as a correction strategy in its own right, it is considered here only as a mitigation strategy of the speech act of correction. This strategy mitigates the illocutionary force of correction by showing the hearer that the speaker does not wish to contradict/correct the hearer, but rather there is a third party/source that seems to do so (e.g., *I read in a book that he died in 323 B.C.*). Another strategy is Implicit Correction in which the speaker corrects the hearer implicitly by pretending not to have realized that the hearer has made a mistake (e.g., *Do you think you'll be ready for the quiz on March 25th?*). The third strategy is White Lie in which the speaker lies to save the hearer the embarrassment of realizing that he or she made a mistake (e.g., *I wrote it 29th at first, just like you did, but then the teacher said 25th*). The fourth strategy is Comments/Distractors in which the speaker mitigates the seriousness of the hearer's mistake by distracting attention away from it or commenting favorably on it (e.g., *But that's besides the point; But I am sure Germany would have been a lot of fun too*). The aggravation strategies used generally intensify the illocutionary force of the speech act of correction. The four aggravation categories used are Request for Action, Ridicule/Criticism, Admonishment/Chastisement, and Threat. Whereas the last three can be clearly seen as aggravation strategies, the first one requires some explanation. Request for Action is considered an aggravation strategy when performing the speech act of correction because it shows that the speaker does not expect the hearer to react in the right way (e.g., by self-correcting). For example, a speaker can say: *Excuse me, Sir, I think you are in my seat,* and wait for the hearer to react in the 'proper' way (e.g., by leaving the seat). However, a speaker may choose to aggravate the correction by adding a request: *Can you move? Can you go and get another chair?* See Appendix B for the Coding Manual, which also includes examples from the data.

A frequency count of all the Mitigators and Aggravators as well as the 21 sub-categories was calculated for each situation as well as for the 3 main situation types (i.e., Lower-Higher, Higher-Lower and Equal Status situations) and correction types (i.e., information vs. action). The overall occurrence of each type was also calculated for each language. The results were compared and contrasted across the two languages and for gender. The seriousness rankings were correlated with the number and type of mitigating and aggravating strategies.

Limitations of the Study

One of the main limitations of the study is that the data examined were not naturally occurring. Another limitation is that a written questionnaire was used to investigate oral interaction. Some of the problems involved in this method include the loss of prosodic and body language features. Also the respondents had unlimited time to consider their answers or even revise them, which is not usually true of naturually occurring spontaneous speech. The use of a written questionnaire is even more problematic in Arabic, because it is a diaglossic language. In Arabic there are two forms of the language, formal (mainly written) and informal (mainly spoken). In the present study a speech act which is naturally performed in the spoken language is being elicited using the written language. One other limitation in the present study is that the number of the respondents is relatively few; as a result, no statistical testing of the correlations between the variables and factors was conducted. Another limitation is that of the population sample: informants represented a specific age group, and all were students, mostly from one university and one geographical area. In other words, neither the Egyptian nor the American respondents are true representatives of their speech communities.

Despite these limitations, it is hoped that the present study will provide a basis and impetus for further studies on corrections, exploring ways in which this face-threatening act is differentially aggravated and mitigated across cultures.

CHAPTER 4

THE FINDINGS

Introduction

The findings of the study reveal some marked differences between Egyptians and Americans in the modification of the illocutionary force of the speech act of correction in terms of mitigation and aggravation. The major difference was in terms of the frequency of Mitigators used in the Higher-Lower situations (i.e., Waiter and Student situations). Another major difference was in the overall use of Aggravators, especially in the Higher-Lower Situations. There were also major differences in terms of the mitigation and aggravation types of strategies used by Egyptians and Americans in the Lower-Higher situations (i.e., Professor and Elderly Man situations). There was yet another major difference between the two groups in terms of the shift in style between Lower-Higher to Higher-Lower situations. In addition, there were differences between the two groups in terms of the strategies used in the action correction vs. information correction situations. The seriousness rankings also revealed differences. Finally, there were gender-based differences, especially in the American data. Differences between American males and females were particularly significant both in the overall frequency and types of Mitigators used in Equal Status and Lower-Higher situations. The difference I will consider first, however, is the number of respondents opting out in the different situations.

Opting Out

One of the major differences between Egyptians and Americans was in the number of people opting out, especially in the two Lower-Higher situations (i.e., the

Professor and the Elderly Man situations). More than half of the American respondents (16 out of 30) opted out in the Professor situation compared to only 3 (out of 30) Egyptian respondents. This pattern, however, was reversed in the Elderly Man situation where 11 Egyptian respondents opted out compared to only 4 American respondents. None of the respondents in either group opted out in the two equal-status situations except for one American female in the Classmate situation. In the Higher-Lower situations there were again differences. In the Student situation none of the Egyptian respondents opted out compared to 3 American respondents. In the Waiter situation 5 of the American respondents opted out compared to only 3 Egyptians.

Table 2

Number of Respondents Opting Out in Both Groups

	Egyptians			U.S. Americans		
Situation	M	F	%	M	F	%
1. Lower-Higher (Professor Situation)	1	2	10	6	10	53
2. Lower-Higher (Elderly Man Situation)	5	6	36	2	2	13
3. Equal Status (Friend Situation)	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Equal Status (Classmate Situation)	-	-	-	-	1	3
5. Higher-Lower (Student Situation)	-	-	-	3	3	20
6. Higher-Lower (Waiter Situation)	-	2	7	4	1	17

There were no major gender-based differences except that more American females opted out of the Professor situation than American males (10:6). See Table 2 for an overview of the number of respondents opting out.

Situation Types

Introduction

The percentages presented in this section represent the frequency of Mitigators or Aggravators used in each of the correction situations. The term frequency refers to the total number of Mitigators/Aggravators used in a particular situation divided by the total number of respondents performing the speech act in that situation. For example, if 10 respondents used a total number of 25 Mitigators when performing the speech act in a particular situation then the frequency of Mitigators used by the respondents would be 250%, that is the respondents used Mitigators 250% of the time. This method of frequency calculation has been used in other cross-cultural speech act studies (e.g., Takahashi & Beebe, 1993). Calculating the frequency of use of Mitigators/Aggravators in this way seems to provide a better understanding of how much 'politeness' respondents believe should be invested in a particular situation. This method seems to be better than saying 30% or 40% of the respondents used Mitigators/Aggravators. In addition, using merely raw numbers can be misleading. For example, reporting that Americans used 14 Mitigators and Egyptians used 7 Mitigators does not really tell us anything unless we know how many Egyptian and American respondents performed the speech act. Reporting the raw numbers of occurrences of Mitigators/Aggravators and the number of respondents performing them simultaneously is not practical and can actually be confusing (e.g., 12 Egyptian respondents used a total of 17 Mitigators, compared to 5 Mitigators used by 8 American respondents).

Lower-Higher Situations

Correcting a Professor

The Egyptian respondents used Mitigators 227% of the time compared to 177% in the American data. The most frequent strategy used by the Egyptians was Forms of Address (i.e., *Dr.;* 91% of the time) compared to only 22% in the American data. The most frequent mitigation strategy used by the Americans was Hedging (30%), which was also used by the Egyptians but only 18% of the time. Other strategies found in the American data included Questions, Appealing to/Quoting a Third Party, and Attention Getters (i.e., *excuse me*). The strategies used by the Egyptians also included Attention Getters (i.e., *excuse me*), Questions, Appealing to/Quoting a Third Party, Expressions of Regret, and Self-Deprecating. See Table 3 for the frequency of all the Mitigation strategies used by American and Egyptian respondents in this situation.

The major gender-based difference in this situation was between Egyptian males and females with Egyptian males using Mitigators 282% of the time compared to 173% by their female counterparts. No such a difference is found in the American data. In the American data the only noticeable difference is the males' preference for Questions (63%), compared to the females (20%). Interestingly this tendency is reversed in the Egyptian data with Egyptian males using Questions 45% of the time compared to only 18% by females. The Egyptian females did not use Hedging at all whereas the Egyptian males used it 36% of the time. (For gender-based differences in this situation see Table C1 for the Egyptian data and Table D1 for the American data.)

Table 3

The Professor Situation: Mitigation Strategies

	Egyptians		U.S. Americans	
Strategy	no.	%	no.	%
Appealing to/Quoting a Third Party	7	32	3	23
Attention Getters (i.e., Excuse me)	10	45	2	15
Expressions of Gratitude	1	5	-	-
Expressions of Regret	1	5	-	-
Forms of Address	20	91	5	38
Hedges	4	18	7	54
Implicit Correction	1	5	-	-
Questions	7	32	6	46
Self-Deprecation	1	5	-	-
Total	52	236	23	177

Note. No Aggravators were used by the respondents in either group.

Correcting an Elderly Man

In this situation the American respondents used more Mitigators than the Egyptian respondents (188%:135%). However, both groups were similar in using Attention Getters (i.e., *excuse me;* Egyptians 71% of the time and Americans 69% of the time). The Americans used Forms of Address (i.e., *sir*) 58% of the time compared to only 13% by the Egyptians. It was also interesting to note that whereas the Americans used Hedges 54% of the time, Hedges were not used at all by the Egyptians. Both groups also used Expressions of Regret but minimally (less than 10% of the time). The most interesting and marked difference between the two groups, however, was in the use of Aggravators. Whereas the Americans used Aggravators only twice (8% of the time), the Egyptians used them 59% of the time. The Aggravators used by both groups were in the form of a request for action (e.g., *Can you move?*). However, all the requests made by the Egyptians were mitigated by Attention Getters (i.e., *excuse me*) and two other Mitigators: Making Sure the Interlocutor is Comfortable (e.g., *Please leave, if this is not going to be a trouble for you*) and Making an Offer to the Interlocutor (e.g., *I'll get you another chair*). In the American data one Request for Action was used without mitigatation. The other Aggravator that was used was in the form of a question (i.e., *Are we switching seats, Sir?*). See Table 4 below for the frequency of all the strategies used by Americans and Egyptians in this situation. Also see Figure 1 below for the frequency of Mitigators used by Egyptians and Americans in both the Professor and the Elderly Man situation.

Table 4

The Elderly Man Situation: Mitigation and Aggravation Strategies

Strategy	Egyptians no.	Egyptians %	U.S. Americans no.	U.S. Americans %
Mitigators				
Attention Getters (i.e., *excuse me*)	12	71	18	69
Expressions of Regret	1	6	2	8
Forms of Address	9	53	15	58
Hedges	-	-	14	54
Preparatory/Explanatory Statement	1	6	-	-
Total	23	135	49	188
Aggravators				
Request for Action	10	59	1	4
Ridicule/Criticism	-	-	1	4
Total	10	59	2	8

Gender-based differences also emerged in both groups. Females in both groups used Mitigators more than males with the American females using Mitigators 69% of the time more than American males. The Egyptian females used them 43% of the time more than Egyptian males. The Egyptian females also showed a preference for the polite form of address *hadretak*, using it 56% of the time compared to only 13% of the time by their male counterparts. The American females showed a preference for the use of the Attention Getter *excuse me* more than the American males (92%:46%). The American females also used almost twice as much Hedging as the males (69%:38%). There were, however, no differences in the use of Forms of Address. Another difference was that the American females did not use any Aggravators. In the Egyptian data Aggravators were used equally by males and females. (For gender-based differences in this situation see Table C2 for the Egyptian data and Table D2 for the American data.)

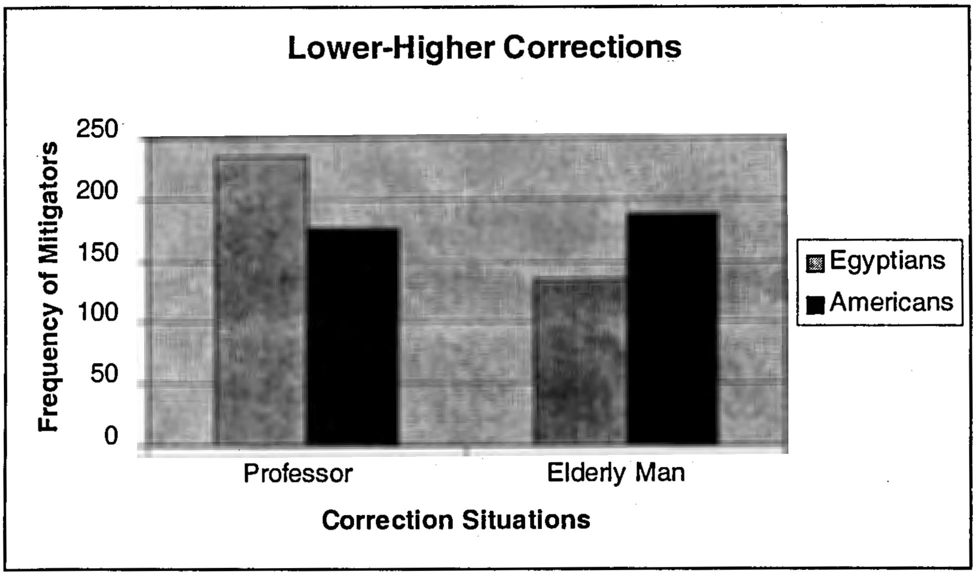

Figure 1. Frequency of Mitigators used by Egyptians and Americans in the Lower-Higher Situations

Equal Status Situations

Correcting a Friend

In this situation there are a number of similarities between the two groups of respondents. Both used Mitigators similarly: The Egyptians used them 61% of the time and the Americans 57%. Both groups used Joking 7% of the time and they also used Hedging similarly, with Egyptians using it 25% of the time and the Americans 27% of the time. However, the Egyptians used Ridicule/Criticism 21% of the time and the Americans used it 10% of the time. The Egyptians also used White Lie 7% of the time, a strategy that was not used by the Americans. See Table 5 for the frequency of all the strategies used by Americans and Egyptians in this situation.

This situation also exhibited gender-based differences. The Egyptian males used Mitigators 79% of the time, whereas their female counterparts used them only 43% of the time. No such difference was found in the American data. The American females, however, used Hedges more than the American males did (40%:13%). While the Egyptian males used Favorable Comments/Distractors 36% of the time, their female counterparts did not use it. Another gender-based difference in the Egyptian data was that the Egyptian males used twice as many Intensifiers as the Egyptian females. (For gender-based differences in this situation see Table C3 for the Egyptian data and Table D3 for the American data.)

Table 5

The Friend Situation: Mitigation and Aggravation Strategies

Strategy	Egyptians		U.S. Americans	
	no.	%	no.	%
Mitigators				
Comments/Distractors	5	18	3	10
Expressions of Gratitude	-	-	1	3
Friendly Terms	1	4	1	3
Hedges	7	25	8	27
Joking	2	7	2	7
White Lie	2	7	-	-
Questions	-	-	1	3
Total	17	61	16	53
Aggravators				
Ridicule/Criticism	6	21	3	10
Total	6	21	3	10

Correcting a Classmate

Both similarities and differences were evident in this situation. Both groups used Mitigators similarly, with Egyptians using them 80% of the time and Americans 92% of the time. There were differences, however, in terms of the preferences for strategies. Whereas the most popular strategy in the Egyptian data was Appealing to/Quoting a Third Party (used 33% of the time), it was only used 12% of the time in the American data. The preferred strategy in the American data, on the other hand, was Hedging (used 30% of the time). Hedging, however, was used only 13% of the time by the Egyptian respondents. Other strategies preferred by the Americans included Attention Getters (e.g., *excuse me*) and Friendly Terms (e.g., *dude*), both used 19% of the time. The Americans also used the Preparatory/Explanatory Statement strategy 19% of the time. Other strategies found in the Egyptian data included Friendly Terms, Questions, Joking, Exonerating/Defending the Interlocutor, and White Lie. Other strategies found in the American data included Implicit Correction, Questions, Understaters and White Lie. See Table 6 for the frequency of all the strategies used by Americans and Egyptians in this situation. Also see Figure 2 for the frequency of Mitigators used by Egyptians and Americans in the Student and Classmate situations.

Major gender-based differences appeared in the American data. For example, American females used Mitigators 3 times more than their male counterparts (18:6). In contrast, the Egyptian males used more Mitigators than the Egyptian females (8:4). The American females also used strategies that were not used by their male counterparts (i.e., Hedging and Appealing to/Quoting a Third Party). (For gender-based differences in this situation see Table C4 for the Egyptian data and Table D4 for the American data.)

Table 6

The Classmate Situation: Mitigation Strategies

	Egyptians		U.S. Americans	
Strategy	No.	%	no.	%
Appealing to/Quoting a Third Party	5	33	3	12
Attention Getters	-	-	3	12
Exonerating/Defending the Interlocutor	1	7	-	-
Friendly Terms	1	7	2	8
Hedges	2	13	7	27
Implicit Correction	-	-	1	4
Joking	1	7	-	-
Preparatory/Explanatory Statement	-	-	5	19
Questions	1	7	1	4
Understaters	-	-	1	4
White Lie	1	7	1	4
Total	12	80	24	92

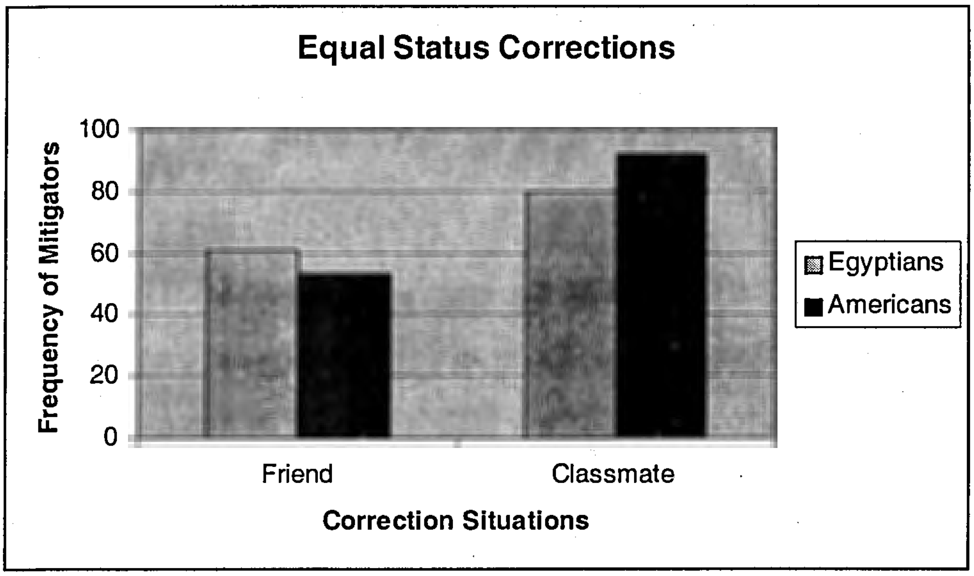

Figure 2. Frequency of Mitigators used by Egyptians and Americans in the Equal Status situations

Higher-Lower Situations

Correcting a Student

This situation represents the most striking differences between Egyptians and Americans. Whereas the American respondents used Mitigators 147% of the time, the Egyptian respondents used them only 65% of the time. The most popular strategies in the Egyptian data were Exonerating/Defending the Interlocutor and Positive Remarks, each used 15% of the time. The most popular strategies in the American data, on the other hand, were Questions (42%), Hedges (37%), and Positive Remarks (32%). The Egyptians used two other strategies that were not found in the American data: Gratitude (10%) and Preparatory/Explanatory Statement (10%). The Americans also used strategies that the Egyptians did not use: Understaters (16%), Forms of Address (5%), and Joking (5%).

Table 7

The Student Situation: Mitigation and Aggravation Strategies

	Egyptians		U.S. Americans	
Strategy	no.	%	no.	%
Mitigators				
Attention Getters	-	-	1	5
Comments/Distractors	1	5	-	-
Exonerating/Defending the Interlocutor	3	15	1	5
Expressions of Gratitude	2	10	-	-
Forms of Address	-	-	1	5
Hedges	1	5	7	37
Joking	-	-	1	5
Positive Remarks	3	15	6	32
Preparatory/Explanatory Statement	2	10	-	-
Questions	1	5	8	42
Understater	-	-	3	16
Total	13	65	28	147
Aggravators				
Admonishment/Chastisement	5	25	-	-
Ridicule/Criticism	4	20	-	-
Total	9	45	-	-

Another significant difference between the two groups was in the use of Aggravators. Whereas the American respondents did not use any Aggravators, the Egyptian respondents used them 45% of the time. The Egyptians used Ridicule/Criticism 20% of the time and Admonishment/Chastisement 25% of the time. See Table 7 for the frequency of all the strategies used by Americans and Egyptians in this situation.

There were few gender-based differences in this situation. Mitigators were used similarly by both sexes: 67%:64% in the Egyptian data, and 150%:144% in the American data. The most significant gender-based difference was the American females' preference for Hedging compared to the American males: (56%:20%). In the Egyptian data the most notable difference was the males' preference for the Admonishment/Chastisement strategy compared to their female counterparts: (44%:9%). (For gender-based differences in this situation see Table C5 for the Egyptian data and Table D5 for the American data.)

Correcting a Waiter

This situation too demonstrates striking differences between the two groups. Consistent with the other Higher-lower situation (i.e., Correcting a Student), the Americans used Mitigators almost 3 times more than the Egyptians: 100%: 38%. What the two groups have in common is that they both used Attention Getters (i.e., *excuse me*) similarly, with Egyptians using them 29% of the time and Americans 32% of the time. The other two strategies used by the Egyptians were Forms of Address (4%) and Exonerating/Defending the Interlocutor (4%). The strategies the Americans used included Hedges (32%), Expressions of Regret (20%), Forms of Address (12%), and Positive Remarks (4%). Another striking difference between the two groups was in the use of

Aggravators. While the Egyptians used Aggravators 33% of the time the Americans used them only 4% of the time. The Aggravators used by both groups, as in the Elderly Man situation, were in the form of request for action (e.g., *Return the kebab and get me the shrimp I ordered!*). Only one Egyptian respondent used the Threat strategy (i.e., *So please get me my order, or bring the manager so that I talk to him about this mistake!*). See Table 8 for the frequency of all the strategies used by Americans and Egyptians in this situation. Also see Figure 3 for the frequency of Mitigators used by Egyptians and Americans in both the Student and Waiter situations.

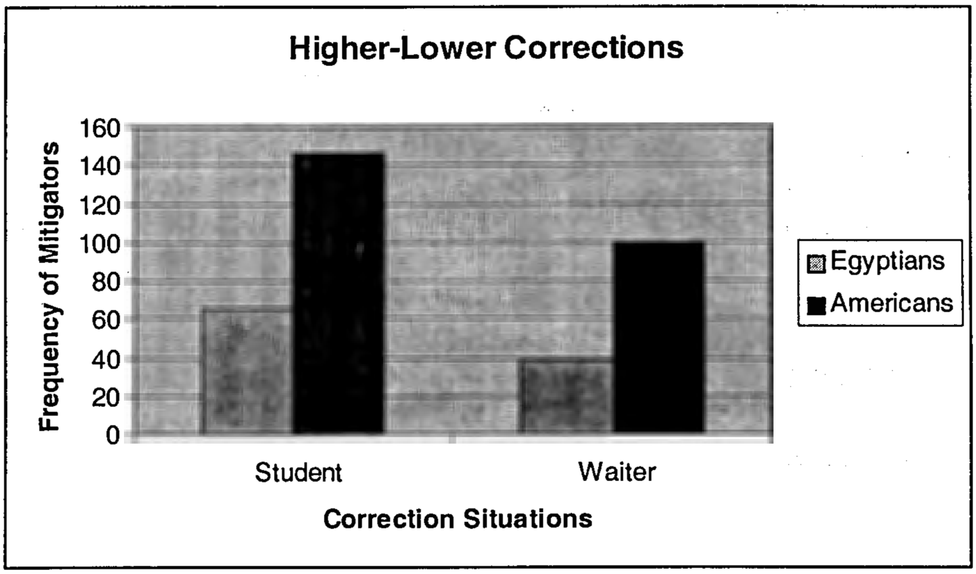

Figure 3. Frequency of Mitigators used by Egyptians and Americans in the Higher-Lower Situations

Table 8

The Waiter Situation: Mitigation and Aggravation Strategies

	Egyptians		U.S. Americans	
Strategy	no.	%	no.	%
Mitigators				
Attention Getters (i.e., Excuse me)	7	29	8	32
Exonerating the Interlocutor	1	4	-	-
Expressions of Regret	-	-	5	20
Forms of Address	1	4	3	12
Hedges	-	-	8	32
Positive Remarks	-	-	1	4
Total	9	38	25	100
Aggravators				
Request for Action	7	29	1	4
Threat	1	4	-	-
Total	8	33	1	4

Males and females in both groups generally used Mitigators in similar ways. However, American females used Attention Getters (i.e., *excuse me*) twice as much as their male counterparts (18%:40%). There were no significant gender-based difference in the Egyptian data concerning the use of particular strategies. (For gender-based differences in this situation see Table C6 for the Egyptian data and Table D6 for the American data.)

Style Shift

One of the most interesting findings of the present study concerned the difference in style shift between Egyptians and Americans from Lower-Higher to Higher-Lower situations, particularly from the Professor to the Student situations. Whereas in the Egyptian data the shift in style (in terms of the frequency of the Mitigators used) was 171% (i.e., from 235% to 65%), the shift in the American data was only 30% (i.e., from 177% to 147%).

Figure 4 shows the shift in style from Professor to Student situations. Interestingly there was no marked difference between the groups in style shift from the Elderly Man to the Waiter situations. In the Egyptian data the style shift was 97% (i.e., from 135% to 38%) and in the American data it was 88% (from 188% to 100%). Figure 5 shows the style shift from the Elderly Man to the Waiter situations.

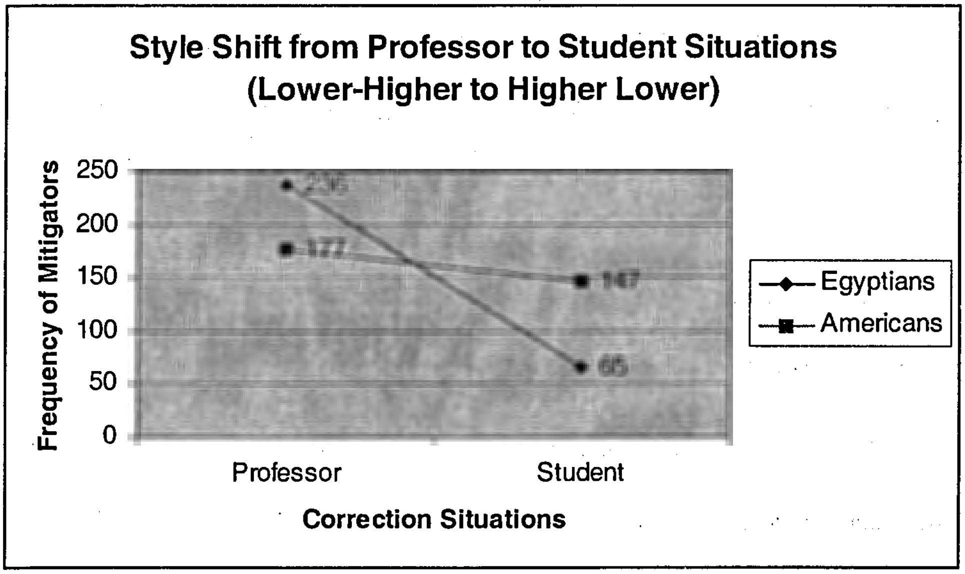

Figure 4. Style Shift from Professor to Student Situation

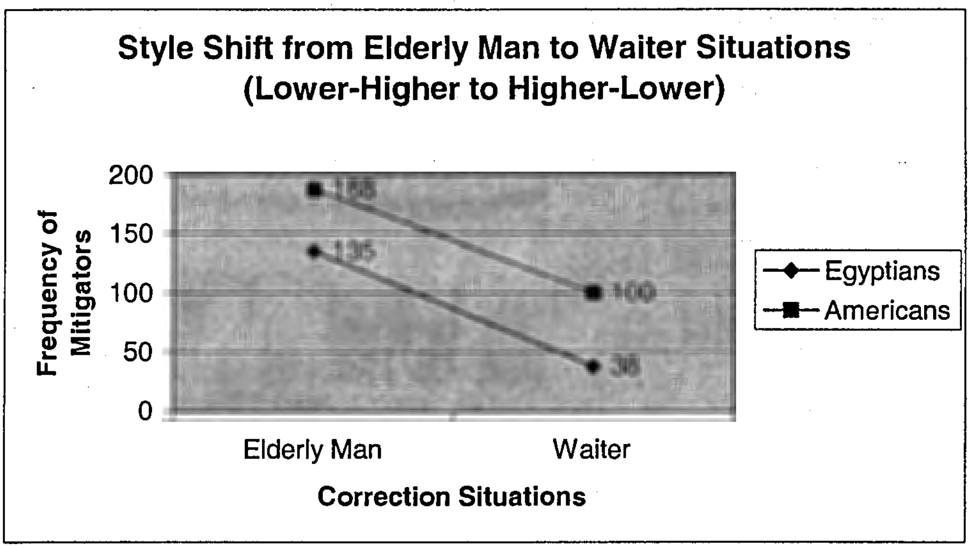

Figure 5. Style Shift from Elderly Man to Waiter Situation

Overall Use of Strategy Types

Mitigation Strategies

There were both similarities and differences in the mitigating strategy types used by the respondents in both groups. The strategy most frequently used by the Americans was Hedging, occurring 51 times, and appearing in all six correction situations. This strategy was also particularly preferred in the Higher-Lower situations. On the other hand, Hedging does not seem to be a preferred mitigating strategy by the Egyptians, occurring only 14 times, and used most frequently in the Equal-Status situations. The most frequently used strategies in the Egyptian data were Forms of Address (30 occurrences) and Attention Getters (i.e., *excuse me*) (29 occurrences). These two strategies were also frequent in the American data: 32 occurrences and 24 occurrences respectively. Both Egyptians and Americans used these two strategies most frequently in the Lower-Higher situations.

One marked difference between the two groups was the use of the Expressions of Regret. This strategy was used 7 times in the American data, compared to only 2 times in the Egyptian data. This strategy was used by the Americans most frequently in the Waiter situation (5 occurrences). The Appealing to/Quoting a Third Party strategy, on the other hand, was used twice as often by the Egyptians (12 occurrences), than by the Americans (6 occurrences). Both groups used this Mitigator in the Professor and Classmate situations only, with the Egyptians using it almost equally in both situations. Another strategy that Egyptians used more than the Americans was Exonerating/Defending the Interlocutor, occurring 5 times in the Egyptian data and only once in the American data.

The Egyptians used this strategy most frequently in the Student situation and the only occurrence of this strategy in the American data was also in this situation.

One of the strategies that seemed to be more preferred by the Americans than by the Egyptians is the Questions strategy. Questions occurred 16 times in the American data and 9 times in the Egyptian data. Whereas the Americans used Questions almost equally in the Professor and Student situations (46% and 42% respectively), the Egyptians used them most frequently in the Professor situation (7 occurrences) and only once in the Student situation. The Positive Remarks strategy was also more preferred by the Americans (7 occurrences) than by the Egyptians (3 occurrences). The Egyptians used this strategy only in the Student situation and the Americans also used it mostly in the Student situation (6 occurrences) and once in the Waiter situation.

One of the Strategies that seemed to be preferred by the Egyptians as compared to the Americans was the White Lie strategy, appearing 3 times in the Egyptian data and only once in the American data. Both Americans and Egyptians used this strategy in the Equal-Status situations. The only strategy that appeared in the American data but not in the Egyptian data was Understaters (4 occurrences). The Americans used it in the Student situation and once in the Classmate situation. The only strategy that was used by the Egyptians but not by the Americans was Self-Deprecation, although it appeared only once in the Egyptian data. See Table E1 for the number of occurrences of all Mitigators in the data.

Gender-Based Differences

There were some major gender-based differences, especially in the American data. The most significant difference between American males and females was that American females used more than twice as many hedges as American males (35:16). American females also used Attention Getters (especially, *excuse me*) three times more than their male counterparts (24:8). They also showed a relative preference for the Preparatory/Explanatory Statement strategy compared to American males (4:1). American males, however, seemed to prefer the Forms of Address strategy more than their female counterparts (15:9) did. The most important gender-based difference in the Egyptian data was in the use of the Comments/Distractors strategy, which was used by Egyptian males 6 times and was not used at all by the Egyptian female respondents. The only other noticeable difference in the Egyptian data was that Egyptian males tended to use Hedges more than their female counterparts (9:5). See Table E1 for gender-based differences in the use of Mitigators.

Aggravation Strategies

There were also major differences in the aggravating strategies. The Egyptians used more Aggravators than the Americans especially in the Higher-Lower situations. Whereas the Americans used the Request for Action strategy in the action situations (i.e., the Elderly Man and the Waiter situations) only 2 times, the Egyptians used this strategy 17 times. The Egyptians, however, used many mitigating moves to mitigate the illocutionary force of request. The Egyptians also used the Ridicule/Criticism strategy more than the Americans (10:4). Both the Egyptians and Americans used this strategy in the Friend situation; only the Egyptians, however, used it in the Student situation (4 occurrences). One American also used it in the Elderly Man situation. The Egyptians used a third aggravating strategy that was not used by the Americans, namely, Admonishment/Chastisement. There were 5 occurrences of this strategy in the Egyptian data, all of which appeared in the Student situation. See Table E2 for the number of occurrences of all Aggravators in the data.

Gender-Based Differences

There were significant gender-based differences in the use of Aggravators in both the Egyptian and the American data. Males in each group used more Aggravators than did their female counterparts. For example, whereas the American males used the Ridicule/Criticism strategy 3 times, the American females used it only once. Similarly, while the Egyptian males used the Admonishment/ Chastisement strategy 4 times, the Egyptian females used it only once. However, there were no major differences between Egyptian males and females in the Request for Action or Ridicule/Criticism strategies. The Threat strategy that occurred once in the Egyptian data was used by a male. In the American data, the Request for Action was only used by one male. (See Table E2 for gender-based differences in the use of Aggravators.)

Correction Types

Comparing and contrasting action correction situations (i.e., the Classmate, the Waiter, and the Elderly Man) with the information correction situations (i.e., the Professor, the Friend, and the Student) across the two languages reveal differences as well. Whereas Americans preferred to indicate the mistake in action correction situations (e.g., *This is my seat* or *You are sitting in my seat*), Egyptians tended not only to indicate the mistake but also to make a request for action (e.g., *Please leave my seat*). This strategy was used by Egyptians 59% of the time in the Elderly Man Situation and 29% of the time in the Waiter situation, whereas it was used by the Americans only once in each situation. As indicated above, the Egyptians, however, usually mitigated the illocutionary force of the request with different Mitigators (e.g., Making Offers to the Interlocutor).

It is also interesting to note that the Americans used more Mitigators than the Egyptians in all the action correction situations. The Egyptians, on the other hand, used more Mitigators in two of the three information correction situations (i.e., Professor and Friend situations).

Seriousness Rankings

The seriousness rankings of the correction situations reveal notable differences between Egyptians and Americans. Whereas the Egyptians consider the Professor situation (a Lower-Higher situation) the most serious one, the Americans rank the two Equal Status situations (i.e., Classmate and Friend) as more serious. In fact, the Americans rank a Higher-Lower situation (i.e., Student situation) as more serious than the Professor situation. Interestingly, the Egyptians rank the Student situation as the least serious one. However, both the Americans and the Egyptians rank the Elderly Man situation (a Lower-Higher situation) as one of the most serious situations.

We can also notice that the Egyptians consider the action correction situations (i.e., Classmate, Elderly Man and Waiter) as relatively more serious than two of the information correction situations (i.e., Friend and Student). The Americans, on the other hand, rank two of the information correction situations (i.e., Friend and Student) as more serious than two of the action correction situations (i.e., Classmate and Waiter). Table 9 below gives an overview of the respondents' seriousness rankings.

As for the correlation between seriousness rankings and the frequency of Mitigators used, neither group was consistent in all the six situations. The Egyptians, however, were generally more consistent than the Americans. For example, the Egyptians ranked the two Lower-Higher situations (i.e., Professor and Elderly Man) as more serious than the Higher-Lower situations (Student and Waiter situations), and they consistently used more Mitigators in the more serious situations. There is no such correlation between seriousness rankings and the frequency of Mitigators used in the American data. For example, although the Americans ranked the Friend situation (an equal status situation) more serious than the Waiter (a Higher-Lower situation), they used more Mitigators in the latter than the former.

Table 9

Seriousness Rankings for the Correction Situations

Strategy	Egyptians	U.S. Americans
Elderly Man	2	1
Waiter	4	6
Professor	1	5
Classmate	3	4
Friend	6	2
Student	5	3

Summary

The greatest difference between the Egyptian and American respondents was in terms of the frequency of Mitigators used in the Higher-Lower situations (i.e., Waiter and Student situations). The Americans used almost three times as many Mitigators as the Egyptians. In addition, whereas the Americans used a similar number of Mitigators in the Lower-Higher situations and the Higher-Lower situations, the Egyptians used about 4 to 5 times more Mitigators in the Lower-Higher situations than in the Higher-Lower situation. Another major difference was in the overall use of Aggravators, especially in the Higher-Lower Situations. The Egyptians tended to use more Aggravators than the Americans. In the fact, while the Americans used Aggravators only once in the Higher-Lower situations, the Egyptians used almost as many Aggravators as Mitigators in these situations. As for the preferred type of Mitigators, the Americans generally preferred the use of Hedges, whereas the Egyptians preferred the use of Forms of Address, and Exonerating/Defending the Interlocutor. In addition, there were differences between the two groups in terms of the strategies used in the action correction vs. information correction situations. The Americans used more Mitigators than the Egyptians in all the action correction situations. The Egyptians, on the other hand, used more Mitigators than the Americans in two of the three information correction situations (i.e., Professor and Friend situations).

The seriousness rankings also revealed interesting differences, with the Egyptians ranking the Professor situation as one of the most serious situations and the Americans ranking it as one of the least serious ones. However, there was no consistent correlation between the number of Mitigators used and the seriousness rankings in both groups. Finally, the findings also reveal gender-based differences, especially in the American data. Differences between American males and females were particularly significant both in the overall frequency and types of Mitigators used in Equal Status and Lower-Higher situations. The American females consistently used Mitigators more frequently than their male counterparts. For example, they used Hedges two times more than American males and Attention Getters (i.e., *excuse me*) three times more.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The findings of the present study reflect interesting cultural and social differences between Egypt and the U.S. These differences can be interpreted in terms of the main cultural orientations in each country. The distinction made in the literature between Individualistic and Collectivistic cultures has been found useful in interpreting the findings of the present study.

The Professor and Student Situations

In the Professor situation both Egyptians and Americans used more Mitigators than in any other situation. In both cultures teachers are expected to correct their students' mistakes; when these roles are reversed, the act of correction becomes highly face-threatening to both the student and the teacher, since it challenges the teacher's authority, hence upsetting the power relationship. In this situation, however, the Egyptians used more Mitigators than the Americans. The Egyptians also ranked this situation as the most serious one, whereas the Americans ranked it as one of the less serious situations. It seems that the teacher's role is perceived differently in the two cultures. Whereas a teacher may be viewed in the U.S. as a guide and facilitator of the learning process, in Egypt a teacher maybe viewed as a major source of knowledge, whose role is indispensable to the learning process. It seems that Egyptians greatly value people with knowledge and expertise, and believe that a great deal of respect and appreciation should be showed to them. This tendency manifests itself in Egyptian schools where students stand up when a teacher steps into the classroom. There are also popular Egyptian proverbs that reflect this kind of attitude towards teachers and the value of knowledge and learning. One of them can be translated as *Whoever taught me a letter, a slave should I be to him.* Another popular proverb is *Show respect to the teacher by standing up, for a teacher is almost a prophet.*

It also seems that Egyptians feel that they should rather seek the help of people of knowledge and expertise than try to solve their problems on their own. One of the popular Egyptian proverbs can be roughly translated as *Give the flour to the baker even though you know he might eat half the bread.* This tendency to rely on those with experience and knowledge provides insights about how Egyptian students view their teachers. It seems that Egyptian students believe that no learning can take place without the teacher's help.

The Professor situation can also be explained in terms of the main cultural orientations in the U.S. and Egypt. As explained in chapter 2, Egypt has been consistently referred to in the literature as a Collectivistic culture, and the U.S. as an Individualistic culture. In a Collectivistic culture people are more conscious of the social distinctions between individuals in terms of status and power. In Egypt people are more conscious of the hierarchical structure of their society. One popular proverb reads *The eye cannot rise above the eyebrow*, indicating that there is a fixed hierarchical order in society that should not be violated. As a result of this awareness, people in Egypt view the consequences of upsetting the power relationship to be serious. In American culture, on the other hand, as explained by Stewart and Bennett (1991), most Americans believe in equality and view themselves as members of an egalitarian middle class and "generally, . . . social background, money or power, bestow perhaps fewer advantages than in any other major society" (p. 89). This tendency in American culture may explain why the Americans used fewer Mitigators than the Egyptians in the Professor situation, in which the power relationship is clearly defined. It can also explain why the Americans used a similar number of Mitigators in the Student and Professor situations (Lower-Higher vs. Higher-Lower situation). The Egyptians, on the other hand, used Mitigators in the Professor situation almost four times more than they did in the Student situation.

In the Student situation the fact that the Americans used more Mtitigators can also be due to other reasons. For example, American instructors are evaluated by their students, and therefore usually try not to mistreat them in order to ensure job security. In Egypt, on the other hand, university professors have absolute power and are not evaluated by their students. As a result, they likely feel that there is no need for them to mitigate their face-threatening speech acts. In fact, it seems that Egyptian teachers tend to aggravate their corrections of their students. Whereas the American respondents used no Aggravators in the Student situation, the Egyptians used almost as many Aggravators as they used Mitigators. In a similar way, in the Waiter situation (another Higher-Lower situation), the Americans used more Mitigators than the Egyptians, and the Egyptians used more Aggravators in this situation than the Americans.

The Elderly Man and Waiter Situations

The Elderly Man situation also reveals interesting cultural differences. First, more Egyptian respondents opted out of this situation, compared to the American respondents.

Although the reasons the Egyptian respondents gave for opting out are not included in the analysis, they are interesting to consider. One of respondents said that the elderly man was as old as the respondent's father, and therefore one would not challenge his behavior or information. Another quoted a proverb to the effect that those who show no respect for the elderly are ungodly. It seems that in Egyptian culture people tend to show much respect for the elderly; age is one of the status markers. For example, Begley (2000) explains that "hierarchies according age, gender, and experience are crucial in Egyptian society" (p. 102). Wilber (1969) also observes that "social bonds among men are based on behavior patterns of respect and deference. Older persons and those of higher social class are tendered ceremonial expressions of respect by their juniors and inferiors. Society is so arranged that nearly everyone is superior to someone" (p. 98). This characteristic in the Egyptian/Arab culture is also asserted by Barakat (1993), who explains that the Arab society is patriarchal and "pyramidally hierarchical, particularly with respect to sex and age" (p. 23).

The Elderly Man situation also reveals interesting differences between Egyptians and Americans in terms of how the speech act of correction should be realized. As explained in chapter 4, whereas the Americans simply indicated the mistake as a way of initiating self-correction, the Egyptians both indicated the mistake and made a request for action. What is interesting here are the Mitigators the Egyptians used to modify the illocutionary force of their requests, such as offers and suggestions. No such Mitigators appeared in the American data. The American responses were short and did not involve the kind of negotiation found in the Egyptian data (e.g., making sure the interlocutor is comfortable, making offers to the interlocutors). This seems to be compatible with the American communication style, described by Stewart and Bennett (1991) as "direct, explicit, personal, and informal" (p. 155). The Egyptian responses in this situation seemed to show more concern for the interlocutor by showing that the speaker wishes to make up for inconveniencing the hearer. The Egyptian responses as a result were much longer and more elaborate.

Elaborateness

It seems that there is a tendency in Arabic to use elaborate, long responses when performing certain speech acts. For example, Nelson, El Bakary, and Al-Batal (1993) found Egyptians' compliments to be longer and more elaborate than the American ones. Hussein and Hammouri (1998) also found Arabic apologies to be less concise than the American ones. In the present study, Egyptian corrections, especially in Lower-Higher situations, tended to be longer and more elaborate than the American corrections. A correlation between the length of the utterance and perceived politeness might be posited, but this remains open to question.

Use of Forms of Address

Forms of Address is the most frequently used Mitigator by Egyptians in the Professor situation. Forms of address, as explained by Brown and Levinson (1987), is "typically strategically used to soften FTAs, by indicating the absence of risk to the addressee" (p. 182). Forms of address seem to be particularly important in Egyptian culture since they are used as status markers. It seems that Arabic, like Japanese (e.g., Takahashi & Beebe, 1993) and Persian (e.g., Eslamirasekh, 1996), prefers the use of this strategy to mitigate the illocutionary force of an FTA.

What is interesting too is the use of the Form of Address *haj,* which, unlike the English *sir*, reflects both respect and friendliness to an elderly male hearer. The literal translation of this word is 'pilgrim'. This is interesting because it draws attention to the frequency of religious reference in Arabic communication. It has been noted in the literature (e.g., Bentahila & Davies, 1989) that one very noticeable difference between English and Arabic communication characteristics is the frequency of formulas containing religious references in Arabic.

Equal Status Situations

There are differences and similarities between Egyptians and American in the use of Mitigators in the Equal Status situations. The Americans used Mitigators in the Equal Status situations less frequently than in the unequal status situations. The Egyptians used Mitigators in the Equal Status situations less frequently than in the Lower-Higher situations but more frequently than in the Higher-Lower situations. It seems that for the Americans unequal status situations are perceived as more face-threatening than Equal Status situations. For the Egyptians, Equal Status situations seem to be perceived as less face-threatening than Lower-Higher situations and more face-threatening than Higher-Lower situations.

The fact that both the American and Egyptian respondents used more Mitigators in the Classmate situation than in the Friend situation may be due to the specific nature of the Classmate situation, namely, the classmate had a hearing aid. This may have made the correction more face-threatening to the hearer and called for more mitigation than the Friend situation. It is noteworthy that the strategies used in the two Status Equal situations can be referred to as positive politeness in Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms. In other words these are strategies that emphasize solidarity and rapport between speaker and hearer. They also express approval and sympathy with the hearer, by using terms that signify in-group membership and in general by being agreeable and conveying friendliness. These include Joking, Exonerating/Defending the Hearer, Friendly Terms, White Lie, and Comments/Distractors.

Style Shift

It seems that in the Egyptian society the relationships between people are defined in terms of status and power. That would account for noticeable shifts in styles according to the speaker's relationship with the interlocutor in terms of their status and power relative to each other. Comparing the findings of the present study with the findings of Takahashi and Beebe (1993), it seems that there are similarities between the Egyptian and Japanese cultures. Like the Japanese speaker, the Egyptian speaker seems to tend to focus on the socially prescribed norm (which is defined in terms of power and status relationships), whereas the American speaker's focus is on his/her intention.

Conclusion

The present study provides useful insights into how and why speakers of Egyptian Arabic and American English modify the illocutionary force of their corrections in terms of mitigation and aggravation in different speech situations. The findings of the study also provide interesting insights into the underlying social and cultural values that inform linguistic behavior (e.g., speech act realization) in both speech communities.

It is hoped that these insights can lead to a better communication between speakers of American English and Egyptian Arabic. The results may also be generalizable to other speakers of Arabic and English.

The findings of the present study can contribute to the field of teaching English as second/foreign language by providing learners of English with a better understanding of how and why the illocutionary force of correction is modified in American English.

Directions for future research indicated by the present study include investigating the use of strategies in the in the realization of other speech acts, comparing them to the findings in this correction study. Further research is also clearly needed in investigating the realization strategies of correction per se. Future research should also deal with other languages and other cultures, in order to gain a deeper understanding of both the how and the why of linguistic behavior across cultures.

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APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

Age__________ Sex__________

Education Level ____________________ The state you have lived in for

Native Language____________________ the greater part of your life ____________

Instructions

Imagine that you are actually in each of the following situations and say exactly what you would say if anything. Write down your answers in the space provided. This information is needed for research purposes.

Situation One

You are in a university history class. The lecture is about the Greek civilization. During the class the professor makes a mistake by saying that Alexander the Great died in 320 B.C., and you know the right year is 323 B.C. You say:

____

____

____

Situation Two

You feel very tired after a long day at work. Your car is at the mechanic's. You want one of your coworkers to give you a ride home. You say:

____

____

____

Situation Three

You go to a live theater with your friends. During the interval you go to the restroom and when you come back you find a 50-year-old man sitting in your seat. You say:

Situation Four

Your professor lends you a book but you lose it. You have not told the professor yet. He asks you if you have finished reading the book. You say:

Situation Five

You are in a restaurant waiting for your order, shrimp. The waiter brings you a steak by mistake. You say:

Situation Six

Your mower breaks down and you want to borrow your neighbor's. You see her standing in front of her house. You say:

Situation Seven

Your friend asks you: *So did you have a good time in Germany last summer?* But you didn't go to Germany, you went to France. You say:

Situation Eight

You brother, who lives with you, plays very loud music. You try to concentrate on your homework but the music is too loud for you. You say:

Situation Nine

You are in class and your classmate, who sits next to you, has a hearing aid. You notice that he wrote the date of the next quiz wrong. The teacher said March 25 and he wrote March 29. You say:

Situation Ten

You promised to give your friend a ride to the airport on Sunday morning but the night before your car breaks down. You call her to apologize. You say:

Situation Eleven

Imagine that you are a university professor. During the class one of your students gives a presentation about the major cities in the Southern states of the U.S. He makes a mistake by saying that Albuquerque is the capital of New Mexico (rather than Santa Fe). You Say:

Which of the situations was the most embarrassing and which was the least embarrassing? Put the six situations below in order, starting with number (1), the most embarrassing, and ending with number (6), the least embarrassing.

( ) When you were in the theater and a 50-year-old man sat in your seat

( ) When the waiter brought you a steak by mistake

( ) When the history professor made a mistake about Alexander the Great

( ) When your classmate with the hearing aid wrote the date of the quiz wrong

( ) When your friend thought that you had visited Germany rather than France

( ) When you were a university professor and one of your students made a mistake about the capital of New Mexico

APPENDIX B

THE CODING MANUAL

The Coding Categories

Mitigators

Alerters

Attention Getters

Excuse me, Hey man!

Friendly Terms

Dude!
Buddy!
Brother!

Forms of Address

Sir, Professor, Dr., Your Excellency, Mr.

Questions

These questions serve as self-correction initiators

Didn't he die in 323 B.C.?
You mean France?
Are you sure that Albuquerque is the capital of New Mexico?
Did you say the capital of New Mexico was Albuquerque?
Is Tanta the capital of Dakahlyia or Gharbyia?
Isn't Santa Fe the capital of New Mexico?
Gharbia?

Understaters

You made *one small* mistake
You made a *simple* mistake

There was *just one* mistake
Just one small correction

Hedges

Well, I *actually* visited France
Unfortunately, I didn't go to Hurgada
By the way, I went to El Sharm
I *think* the year was 323 B.C.
Sir, I *am afraid*, you are in my seat
Sir, I *believe* that you are in my seat
I *think* you made a mistake
It *seems* that the quiz is on the 25th
You *might have made* a mistake
I *don't think* this is my order
I *think* I ordered shrimp

Appealing to/Quoting a Third Party

As part of the correction statement

I *read that* he died in 323 B.C.
I *have in my notes that* he died in 323 B.C.
I *learnt from another class* that he died in 323 B.C.

As a suggestion

Let me ask the professor for clarification
You might want to ask the teacher
Let's go and ask the teacher to make sure
Will you ask the one sitting next to you?

Implicit correction

This is correction made implicitly without directly drawing the interlocutor's attention to the mistake.

Do you think you will be ready for the quiz on *March 25th?*
After Alexander the Great died in *323 B.C.,* who succeeded him?

Self-deprecation

According to my knowledge, *which is certainly limited compared to yours*, I think . . .

Expressions of Regret

I *am sorry*, Doctor, the correct year is 323 B.C.
Sorry, I didn't order this!
I *am sorry*, but I ordered shrimp

Expressions of Gratitude/Appreciation

Doctor, you made a mistake . . . . It was 323 B.C., *thank you,* Doctor.
Thank you very much for your presentation
Thank you for your presentation

Positive Remarks

Good job!
Great presentation!
This looks great!
Overall well-done
Your answer was more than excellent!
All what you said was correct!

Joking

I went to Germany? I don't remember going!
It seems that the pen made a mistake and 5 looks like 9!

White Lie

Sorry I forgot and told you I was going to Hurgada
There was a change at the last minute, and instead of going to Hurgada we went to El Sharm
I wrote it 29th at first, just like you did, but then the lecturer said 25th
I think I might have it wrong (the date)

Comments/Distractors

These are used to lighten the gravity of the interlocutor's mistake by distracting the attention from it or commenting favorably on it

But that's beside the point!
But I am sure Germany would have been a lot of fun too
They both have nice weather!

Hurgada is well-known for its nice weather and is highly valued by tourists
Hurgada is a beautiful city
Sharm El Shiekh was better than Hurgada

Exonerating/Defending the Interlocutor

You must've meant Santa Fe
You must've got confused
We all make mistakes

Preparatory/Explanatory Statement

Just thought you would want to know
I noticed that you wrote down the 29th
I wasn't sure if you caught that!
I thought you might want to know

Aggravators

Request for Action

Can you move? Please move!
Can you go and get another chair?
Can you please leave my place and go to your place?
Please return this shrimp and bring me kebab!
Return this kebab and bring me the shrimp I ordered, please!
Get me what I ordered!

Request for Action with Mitigating Moves

Making sure the hearer is comfortable

Please leave my seat *if this is not going to be problem for you*
Please leave my seat *if this is not going trouble you*

You will be comfortable in this seat

Making offers/suggestions to the hearer

If you don't have a place to sit *you can sit in my place*
Please leave and *I can get you another seat*

Ridicule/Criticism

Revise primary school geography first!
So Tanta is the capital of Gharbia! What's the capital of Dakahlya, then?
Sit down, clever boy! Tanta is the capital of Gharbia!
Hurgada! Are you on drugs?

Admonishment/Chastisement

You've got to make sure you know the correct information!
Focus on what you're saying!
Dumbass!

Threat

Please get my order or *bring the manager so that I talk to him about this mistake!*

APPENDIX C

FREQUENCY OF STRATEGIES USED BY EGYPTIAN MALES AND FEMALES

Table C1

The Professor Situation

	Male		Female	
Strategy	no.	%	no.	%
Appealing to/Quoting a Third Party	3	27	4	36
Attention Getters (i.e., Excuse me)	6	55	4	36
Expressions of Gratitude	-	-	1	9
Expressions of Regret	-	-	1	9
Forms of Address (i.e., Dr.)	12	109	8	73
Hedges	4	36	-	-
Implicit Correction	-	-	1	9
Questions	5	45	2	18
Self-Deprecation	1	9	-	-
Total	31	281	21	191

Note. No aggravators were used in this situation.

Table C2

The Elderly Man Situation

	Male		Female	
Strategy	no.	%	no.	%
Mitigators				
Attention Getters (i.e., Excuse me)	6	75	6	67
Expressions of Regret	-	-	1	11
Forms of Address	2	25	7	78
Preparatory/Explanatory Statement	1	13	-	-
Total	9	113	14	156
Aggravators				
Request for Action	5	63	5	56
Total	5	63	5	56

Table C3

The Friend Situation

Strategy	Male no.	Male %	Female no.	Female %
Mitigators				
Comments/Distractors	5	36	-	-
Friendly Terms	1	7	-	-
Hedges	3	21	4	29
Joking	1	7	1	7
White Lie	1	7	1	7
Total	11	79	6	43
Aggravators				
Ridicule/Criticism	4	29	2	14
Total	4	29	2	14

Table C4

The Classmate Situation

Strategy	Male no.	Male %	Female no.	Female %
Appealing to/Quoting a Third Party	3	33	2	33
Exonerating/Defending the Interlocutor	-	-	1	17
Friendly Terms	1	11	-	-
Hedges	2	22	-	-
Joking	1	11	-	-
Questions	-	-	1	17
White Lie	1	11	-	-
Total	8	89	4	67

Note. No aggravators were used in this situation.

Table C5

The Student Situation

Strategy	Male no.	Male %	Female no.	Female %
Mitigators				
Comments/Distractors	1	11	-	-
Exonerating/Defending The Interlocutor	2	22	1	9
Expressions of Gratitude	1	11	1	9
Hedges	-	-	1	9
Positive Remarks	1	11	2	18
Preparatory/Explanatory Statement	1	11	1	9
Questions	-	-	1	9
Total	6	67	7	64
Aggravators				
Admonishment/Chastisement	4	44	1	9
Ridicule/Criticism	2	22	2	18
Total	6	67	3	27

Table C6

The Waiter Situation

Strategy	Male no.	Male %	Female no.	Female %
Mitigators				
Attention Getter (i.e., Excuse me)	4	36	3	23
Exonerating/Defending The Interlocutor	-	-	1	8
Forms of Address	-	-	1	8
Total	4	36	5	38
Aggravators				
Request for Action	4	36	3	23
Threat	1	9	-	-
Total	5	45	3	23

Note. Most requests for action were used with Mitigators (e.g., *Please*).

APPENDIX D

FREQUENCY OF STRATEGIES USED BY AMERICAN MALES AND FEMALES

Table D1

The Professor Situation

	Male		Female	
Strategy	no.	%	no.	%
Appealing to/Quoting a Third Party	2	25	1	20
Attention Getters (i.e., Excuse me)	-	-	2	40
Forms of Address	4	50	1	20
Hedges	4	50	3	60
Questions	5	63	1	20
Total	15	188	8	160

Note. No aggravators were used in this situation.

Table D2

The Elderly Man Situation

	Male		Female	
Strategy	no.	%	no.	%
Mitigators				
Attention Getters (i.e., Excuse me)	6	46	12	92
Expressions of Regret	1	8	1	8
Forms of Address (i.e., Sir)	8	62	7	54
Hedges	5	38	9	69
Total	20	154	29	223
Aggravators				
Ridicule/Criticism	1	8	-	-
Request for Action	1	8	-	-
Total	2	16	-	-

Table D3

The Friend Situation

	Male		Female	
Strategy	no.	%	no.	%
Mitigators				
Comments/Distractors	2	13	1	7
Expressions of Gratitude	1	7	-	-
Friendly Terms	1	7	-	-
Hedges	2	13	6	40
Joking	1	7	1	7
Questions	-	-	1	7
Total	7	47	9	60
Aggravators				
Ridicule/Criticism	2	13	1	7
Total	2	13	1	7

Table D4

The Classmate Situation

Strategy	Male no.	Male %	Female no.	Female %
Attention Getters	-	-	3	21
Questions	1	7	-	-
Implicit Correction	1	7	-	-
Appealing to/Quoting a Third Party	1	7	2	14
Preparatory/Explanatory Statement	1	7	4	29
Hedges	-	-	7	50
Understaters	-	-	1	7
White Lie	-	-	1	7
Friendly Terms	2	14	-	-
Total	6	43	18	129

Note. No Aggravators were used in this situation.

Table D5

The Student Situation

	Male		Female	
Strategy	no.	%	no.	%
Attention Getters	-	-	1	11
Exonerating/Defending the Interlocutor	1	10	-	-
Forms of Address	1	10	-	-
Hedges	2	20	5	56
Joking	1	10	-	-
Positive Remarks	4	40	2	22
Questions	4	40	4	44
Understaters	2	20	1	11
Total	15	150	13	144

Note. No aggravators were used in this situation.

Table D6

The Waiter Situation

	Male		Female	
Strategy	no.	%	no.	%
Mitigators				
Attention Getters (i.e., Excuse me)	2	18	6	43
Expressions of Regret	2	18	3	21
Forms of Address	2	18	1	7
Hedges	3	27	5	36
Positive Remarks	1	9	-	-
Total	10	91	15	107
Aggravators				
Request for Action	1	9	-	-
Total	1	9	-	-

APPENDIX E

TOTAL NUMBERS OF OCCURRENCES OF ALL THE STRATEGIES

Table E1

Mitigating Strategies

	Egyptians			U.S. Americans		
Strategy	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Appealing to/Quoting a Third Party	6	6	12	3	3	6
Attention Getters	16	13	29	8	24	32
Comments/Distractors	6	0	6	2	1	3
Expressions of Gratitude	1	1	2	1	-	1
Expressions of Regret	0	2	2	3	4	7
Exonerating/Defending the Interlocutor	2	3	5	1	-	1
Forms of Address	14	16	30	15	9	24
Friendly Terms	2	0	2	3	0	3
Hedges	9	5	14	16	35	51
Implicit Correction	0	1	1	1	0	1
Joking	2	1	3	2	1	3
Positive Remarks	1	2	3	5	2	7

Preparatory/Explanatory Statement	2	1	3	1	4	5
Questions	5	4	9	10	6	16
Self-Deprecation	1	-	1	-	-	-
Understaters	-	-	-	2	2	4
White Lie	2	1	3	0	1	1

Table E2

Aggravating Strategies

	Egyptians			U.S. Americans		
Strategy	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Admonishment/Chastisement	4	1	5	-	-	-
Request for Action	9	8	17	2	-	2
Ridicule/Criticism	6	4	10	3	1	4
Threat	1	-	1	-	-	-