Cross-Cultural Realization of the Speech Act of Requests: Case Study of Algerian Ph.D. Students

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Cross-Cultural Realization of the Speech Act of Requests: Case Study of Algerian Ph.D. Students

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Intellectual Property Statement

The work within this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge, nothing in the thesis has been previously published or written by another author except where reference is made.

Signature: Halima Benzdira

Date: 01/12/2021

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of a loving father, who was very happy I had my Dr. title, I gift it also to my grandmother Zazia and to the caring family, my mother, and my sister Mayssa.

Acknowledgment

An adventure! I am certain that this thesis could never have been completed without the support of several people. Therefore, I would like to express my gratitude to all of you who have contributed to the work and supported me throughout the journey in anyway and anyhow.

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Abstract

The present study is concerned with probing how Algerian Ph.D. students formulate requests to their supervisors at a UK higher education institution; and how their supervisors respond to these. The data are derived from a case study focussing on a group of fifteen Algerian PhD students and six Supervisors at Manchester Metropolitan University (hereafter MMU). The thesis falls within third wave approach to politeness research, which advocates the integration of aspects from classical and discursive approaches (Bousfield, 2010; Leech, 2014; Haugh and Culpeper, 2018) into the analysis of politeness phenomenon. The current research, therefore, seeks to explores the speech event of requests as a fundamentally written interactional phenomenon. In other words, it considers this type of communication as a phenomenon that needs both interlocutors; those who produce requests and those who respond to these successively.

More specifically, the study aims to examine how these participants (Algerian Ph.D. students) attempt, using strategically different politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987), to achieve their interactional goals in an asymmetrical power-relations context. Further, and while looking at the supervisors' response, the study also investigates how the receivers perceive those requests from the Algerian Ph.D. students. While studying the speech acts (Austin 1962) of requests and responses to these, the study also explores the socio-cultural factors influencing the use of politeness strategies use and responses to the requests.

To meet the aims of the research project, a mixed method approach was used to elicit the performances and perceptions of the participants. On one hand, Interaction-based Discourse Completion Tasks (Hereafter, I-DCTs) were designed for the purpose of approaching a realistic performance of requests and responses to requests in email communication. On the other hand, followed-up semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants to investigate and understand how the socio-cultural factors map out and influence their use of politeness strategies. Moreover, the interviews also aim at discovering how the supervisors perceive the students' email requests.

While the methodological contribution in this research is an innovation in the study of politeness and pragmatics as an adaptation of Discourse Completion Tasks is implemented to take account of requests and responses to requests. The study is also a contribution to knowledge through the insights provided regarding the use of politeness strategies by an under researched Algerian population.

The results of the current study, generating from a total of 21 I-DCTs (15 from students and 6 from supervisors) and a total of 21 semi-structured follow-up interviews with participants, show that the participants use mostly negative politeness strategies. The results also show that the Algerian Ph.D. students are perceived as polite by their supervisors. The study's contribution, therefore, adds to the existing knowledge on the realization of the speech act of requests and politeness in an intercultural communication context.

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List of Abbreviations

CMC: Computer-Mediated Communication.

D: Distance.

DCT: Discourse Completion Tasks.

EFL: English as Foreign Language.

FL: Foreign Language.

FTA: Face Threatening Act.

H: Hearer.

I-DCT: Interactant-based-Discourse Completion Tasks.

L1: First language.

L2: Second Language.

MMU: Manchester Metropolitan University.

MP: Model Person.

P: Power.

R: Rank of the Imposition.

S: Speaker.

SAT: Speech Acts Theory.

UKHEI: United Kingdom Higher Education Institution.

W: Weightiness of the face threatening act.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

The current study is positioned at the intersection of politeness studies (Brown and Levinson, 1987), speech act research (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Searle, 1976) and intercultural pragmatics (Kecskes, 2014; Cogo and House, 2017) where the study of requests has been a rich area of research to date (Taguchi, 2006; Bella, 2012; Susilo, 2017; Al Masaeed, 2017; Hussein and Albakri, 2019). Nevertheless, in investigating their realization, requests have been either studied from a speaker-oriented (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989b; Al-Momani, 2009; Septiani, 2014; Su and Ren, 2017; Sanjaya and Sitawati, 2017), or hearer-oriented (Van der Wijst, 1995; Dunn, 2012; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2016; Savić, 2018; Seniarika and Sinaga, 2019) point of views; where the studies tend to privilege the role of the speaker over that of the hearer, or the role of the hearer over that of the speaker, respectively. Hence, insignificant research has been conducted on requests as a dialogic and interactional phenomenon. i.e. requests and responses to requests. In this regard, Kecskes (2016: 30) suggests that pragmatics should be studied from a dialectical/dialogic approach to better understand how communication of meaning occurs. By the previous claim, Kecskes (ibid) means that utterances by both the speaker (S) and hearer (H) should be taken into account in the process of meaning analysis. In the current research I use the term *hybrid approach* (Bousfield, 2010) to refer to a coherent model for the analysis of politeness/speech acts, and which in turn provides a full image of how the realization of these unfold during an interaction. The current study, by focusing on requests and responses to requests, is, therefore adopting a *hybrid approach* (Bousfield, 2010), integrating aspects of both the traditional and the discursive approach in order to come up with a comprehensive and holistic understanding of politeness phenomena in intercultural communication.

The present study, while investigating the speech act of requests by Algerian [1]FL speakers of English, probes how politeness strategies are used in requests and responses to them in a mimicry of email exchanges. As the current study focuses on written communication, it deems essential to use terms like writer (W) and Reader (R) rather than speaker hearer, sentence as opposed to utterance. Performing requests, as a directive speech act (Searle, 1979), involves the speaker/writer's attempt to get the hearer/reader to do something in response to what he/she says. Though the speech act of request has been defined in different ways (Searle, 1969; Bach and Harnish, 1979; Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris, 1996), making a request is generally regarded as a "face threatening act" (hereafter FTA) (Brown and Levinson, 1987). In other words, and whilst all speech acts are potentially face threatening, requests are more face threatening then others. For example, a compliment would seem to be less face threatening than a request, which is inherently face threatening. To mitigate the potential face threat that a request might cause, speakers/writers need to use a wide range of politeness strategies. Yet, making requests is commonly regarded as a difficult speech act for language learners and specifically second (L2) and foreign language (FL) learners. To successfully realize a high level of appropriateness when making a request, English language learners should have substantial cultural and linguistic knowledge of the target language (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989b). In addition, requests are used in everyday communication for various aims like seeking information, help or cooperation from others. As such, requests have

[1] For the purposes of the present study, the criterion used for defining Foreign Language speaker is anyone who learned English as a third/foreign language rather than being exposed to it since childhood.

attracted considerable attention in linguistics research since the 1980s. However, most of the previous studies on requests were conducted following either a traditional (Brown and Levinson, 1987) or a discursive approach (Watts, 2003; Mills, 2003) to analyse politeness, and not much research has been performed on the speech act of request and responses to requests in an intercultural context. More notably, almost no research has been done on requests within North African population. Hence the present study has been undertaken to address this contextual gap in the literature to explain the use of politeness in the speech act of requests and their responses. The study incorporates two approaches to politeness (a Traditional approach informed by a discursive one; and therefore, what Bousfield, 2010 refers to as hybrid approach) to serve the goal of the current research, which is about revealing how requests and their responses are realized and perceived in the context of intercultural email correspondences.

Electronic mail (email), as another important and relatively new medium, is used in the present study because it is widely and commonly employed for various communication purposes (Bafoutsou and Mentzas, 2001). As Crystal (2001) points out, email is a crucial medium for both interpersonal and institutional correspondences. As such, it is especially used in academic settings, where it has been widely employed by university students to make requests related to academic concerns and send these to staff and teachers. Regarding the realization of the speech act of requests, a plethora of studies has been, recently, conducted on requests and email communication (Al Afnan, 2014; A, 2016; Orthaber, 2017 among others). Yet only few studies have dealt with email requests in educational and intercultural contexts (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011). Like the claim, above, that there is not enough research on the North African use of politeness, there are more specifically not enough studies investigating the realization of requests in emails by Algerian students. This study, therefore, aims to provide further insights on how politeness is implemented in email requests and their responses between Algerian Ph.D. students and their supervisors at UK higher education institution (hereafter UKHEI).

1.2. Research Aims

The primary objective of this study is to reveal how Algerian Ph.D. students use politeness strategies, when sending email requests to their supervisors. As such, the present study looks at how these strategies affect the responses they receive from the supervisors. Further, the study aims to provide insights on Algerian Ph.D. students' email communication within an intercultural context, specifically where English is used as a Lingua Franca, and therefore, the study looks at how prospective supervisors perceive email requests they receive from those students. The study then contributes to the body of knowledge in intercultural pragmatics, politeness, and speech act realization by addressing two main limitations. First, it seeks to shed light on the language use of an underrepresented population of Algerian foreign language learners of English, who are, like other foreign language speakers, influenced by different sociocultural and language (s) transfer from their L1 and L2 norms (Al-Issa, 2003; Pinto and Raschio, 2007), and who have proved to use different requesting strategies (especially on a locutionary level/sentence surface level) in comparison to native speakers of English (Deveci and Hmida, 2017). Second, the present study seeks to provide a critical application of Brown and Levinson's (1987) and Bousfield's (2008) models of, respectively, politeness and responses to (im)politeness in relation to the realization of requests and responses to them interculturally (see section 5.2. for further details). Although the results might not provide generalizations that are representative of the whole population, the current research is a sound basis for further studies to improve email communication between overseas students and their teachers/lecturers/ supervisors at UKHEIs. Thus, results of the study can be beneficial to researchers interested in the classroom teaching of foreign language pragmatics, as they might be useful to universities' international offices and international partnership development offices. To achieve the goals mentioned above, the research needs to adapt reliable theoretical and analytical frameworks which facilitate our understanding of the writing practices of email requests and their responses.

1.3. Research Questions

My research questions, below, have been shaped by the literature and earlier studies dealing with requests and relevant politeness phenomena. In the following, I present the research questions, while reflecting on why these have been raised in the first place.

The motivation for politeness in interaction, according to Thomas (1995: 179) is that 'people employ certain strategies [...] for reasons of expediency—experience has taught us those particular strategies are likely to succeed in given circumstances, so we use them'. Considering Thomas (ibid), politeness strategies are a universal property of languages, and their influence with respect to the linguistic choices used to perform speech acts depends on prior usage by other interlocutors in similar situations. Despite the existence of some similarities of expressing politeness in different languages there is equally a variation in its expression in different cultures. In this regard, Hamza (2007: 3) claims that the universality of politeness as a theory cannot be sustained when it comes to intercultural communication. More importantly, it has been stressed in some studies (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989b; Cohen, 1996; Gass and Neu, 1996; Houck and Gass, 2009; Lyuh,

1992) that language instructors and learners must remain aware that speech acts vary in both conceptualization and realization across languages and cultures due to deep-seated differences in cultural conventions and assumptions. The present study, therefore, aims to investigate the politeness strategies use, while responding to the increasing need to understand (im)politeness by examining an under-researched population (Sifianou and Blitvich, 2017: 580) of Algerian EFL speakers at UKHEI. The considerations outlined above, therefore, led to the following research question:

1. *What are the linguistic politeness strategies that the Algerian Ph.D. students use to achieve their communicative goals while constructing differently weighted requests to supervisors?*

As previously stated, there has been a considerable amount of research on requests in email exchanges, yet most of the previous studies have only focused on the way non-native speakers of English write email requests and what politeness strategies they use in comparison to native speakers. None of the studies, in the section above, have extended their investigation by probing the participants' motivation behind using a particular strategy. As such, the present study reveals how email writers (Algerian Ph.D. students at MMU) employ different politeness strategies in emails to ultimately achieve request compliance from their recipients (Ph.D. supervisors at MMU). The second research question, below, has been formulated to unpack the different motivations for the use of politeness strategies, while taking the speaker/writer's perspective into account rather than solely depending on the researcher's or the analyst's point of view.

2. *What are the PhD. Students' own motivations and intentions for requesting while adopting different linguistic politeness strategies?*

Kecskes (2004: 2) claims that studying intercultural communication means studying interactions between people from different cultures, while Hamza claims that:

> "Interactants may experience misunderstanding, embarrassment or conflict if they belong to different cultures and hold certain stereotypical views of their interlocutors".
>
> (Hamza, 2007: 2)

In line with the argument that misunderstanding occurs when there are cultural differences, there seem to be only few studies, in the context of the present study, that emphasize the likelihood of miscommunication between Algerian EFL speakers and English-speaking interactants[2], and which in turn are believed to be the results of diversity in history, linguistics, and culture (e.g. Hamza, 2007). Differing perceptions of the weight and values of social variables (e.g., right, obligation, and power) have proved to be an area of cross-cultural variation that influences speech act production (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a; Kasper and Dahl, 1991; Shimamura, 1993; Mir, 1995). It has been essential, here in the current research, to establish how these, accordingly, affect the supervisors' perception of email requests. Therefore, investigation into the factors influencing politeness production and perception can provide explanations of, and further insights into, Algerian EFL learners' request behaviour and the responses to these by their supervisors at a UK higher education institution. Consequently, the third and fourth research questions, respectively, investigate the perception of the supervisors regarding the email requests they receive from Algerian Ph.D. students; and the sociological factors influencing choice of politeness strategies by Algerian Ph.D. students and responses to these by their supervisors at MMU.

[2] In this study, English-speaking interactants are those speakers of English by exposure and by birth.

3. *What effect(s) do the linguistic politeness strategies (made by students) have on the responses' forms/types of the supervisors, given the weightiness (Brown and Levinson 1987) of the requests made?*

4. *What are the sociological, socio-cultural aspects that affect the Ph. D. students' choice of politeness strategies/ and supervisors' responses to these?*

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study stems from a personal experience of being an international EFL speaker in the UK, and which can be summarized by the following quote from one of the student participants in the current study:

> **Rose:** I remember when we were at Canterbury, scholar x has showed us some emails and refer to one example and said that if someone sent him this email, I would not even consider him or her for a future supervision because the language is poor, and the person seem to be impolite and not strategic. He said that there are some formalities that we need to pay attention to as foreign language speakers of English. Most importantly, he emphasised the point of being smart and being strategic to demonstrate a good image of yourselves as prospective researchers when sending email requests to different supervisors in different UK universities.

It has been important and intriguing to me as a researcher to explore the language practices adopted by Algerian Ph.D. student when they communicate with their supervisors via email. Moreover, I am interested, more precisely, in how participants use politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987) when sending email requests to their supervisors, and how these may influence email receivers' (supervisors) perceptions of the students (senders of email requests). Accordingly, the current endeavour/study intends to make several contributions, among these are contributions to linguistics research on politeness and speech acts. First, and from an empirical investigation perspective, the study provides an exploration into intercultural communication in relation to producing speech act of request and responses to these requests in email educational exchanges. The study hopes also to contribute to the field of pragmatics, and politeness research by adopting a theoretical framework (Bousfield, 2010), which calls for the integration of some aspects from the traditional approach to politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987) and discursive politeness approaches (Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003) in the analysis of (im)politeness. Furthermore, the comprehensive analysis of the socio-pragmatic aspects that is the appropriate language use in context), and pragma-linguistic aspects that is the correct use of different linguistic formulae in a specific language (Leech, 1983: 11) of Algerian foreign language speakers of English, can provide effective guidelines for course designers and language teachers in study abroad contexts. The significance of the study can be also attributed to "responses model/diagram", which is provided in chapter 4 (see section 4.2.1., and figure 10 for further details), and which has been a result of adapting Bousfield's (2008) model of responses to (im)politeness.

The study also aims at contributing to the field of pragmatics at a methodological level, where an innovative way (see chapter 3 for further details) of using discourse completion tasks (thereafter DCTs). In the present study, the new form of DCTs is referred to as "interactant-based discourse completion tasks (I-DCT), and this is because it is used to overcome the disadvantage of traditional DCTs (see chapter three) of not accounting for turn taking[3]. In other words, I-DCT provides researchers in the future with the possibility to investigate speech act realization (in our study it is requests) and the responses to these (responses to requests).

[3] I take turn taking here to mean exchange of requests and responses to requests in written correspondences rather than turn taking as originally used to refer to oral communication.

Finally, the study hopes to contribute to study abroad literature, and to English Language curricula in North African higher education institutions, in highlighting the need to implement the teaching of email etiquette for those going to study abroad (coming from Algeria, or North Africa) or those enrolled at UKHEI on foundation years and language pre-sessional courses.

1.5. Overview of the Thesis

The introduction, above, discusses the background of the study while positioning it relative to the research on requests and politeness in an intercultural context. The chapter, also, highlights the need for the present study by stating the main research problems. Put differently, the chapter provides the rationale for the study, and this is by pointing out the need for further research on emails requests and politeness in an EFL and Study abroad context. The chapter, further, introduces the research questions one by one (see section 1.3.); where each of the questions is informed by literature. Study' aim is another aspect that the first chapter addresses to explain what is investigated exactly, and which approach has been taken. The chapter concludes with a section on the significance of the present research, where it points out how the study adds to the existing research on intercultural communication. The chapter also highlights how the outcomes of this study are important for study abroad in general and, particularly, in the Algerian Higher education context.

The second chapter provides the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that inform the study. The chapter introduces research on speech act theory (Austin, 1962) and discusses how it is adapted in the present study (see figure 2, section 2.1.2.). The chapter also provides an overview of politeness theory (Brown and Levinson, 1987), where it focuses, mainly, on notions of face (positive and negative) and how the politeness strategies Brown and Levinson (ibid) have suggested attempt to address each of these two aspects of face. The chapter, then, points out the factors (sociological) influencing politeness use (Brown and Levinson, 1987). After introducing theories of speech acts (Austin, 1962) and politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987), the chapter critiques the model suggested to analyse politeness instances and it further highlights the need for a politeness response model (Bousfield, 2008). The chapter, therefore, critically reviews and adapts both the politeness model (Brown and Levinson, 1987) and responses to impoliteness (Bousfield, 2008) to provide a comprehensive analysis of requests and their responses in the context of the current research. The study, as stated earlier in chapter one, follows a *hybrid approach* (Bousfield, 2010), which aims at broadening our understanding of the phenomenon of politeness and responses to it. The chapter also reviews the literature on requests in an asymmetrical context, mainly that related to requests in educational institutions. It opens with a section on speech acts and politeness then it discusses studies on requests and politeness. Moreover, the chapter includes a section that reviews literature on the speech act of requests. The previous section aims at discussing the literature of request realization by English foreign language speakers with a focus on Arabic-speaking ones. Throughout the chapter, I demonstrate sociocultural factors influencing politeness in EFL requests; I also develop a discussion on pragmatic transfer and how it influences the choice and use of politeness strategies. The chapter also provides a discussion on computer mediated communication to see how FL speakers perform requests in an asymmetrical context using email and more precisely my focus will be email requests in higher education. Discussions of email requests are important as the data collected in this research, mainly from the interview, shows that email communication influences the choice and use of particular politeness strategies, and this has been a prominent and consistently occurring theme.

Chapter three discusses the research design and methodology, where it focuses on the different theoretical assumptions I have as a researcher regarding the epistemology and ontology of the current endeavour. Then the chapter problematises the positionality of a researcher and thus discusses the challenges s/he faces and how s/he can overcome these. Prior to delving into the research approach, the chapter sets the scene for adapting the discourse completion tasks (DCTs), and this is to introduce the methodological contribution the present study implements. Then, the follow up section introduces the methodological approach of the research. Justifications and the rationale for using a mixed approach are provided and are described in the remainder of the chapter. The chapter also deals with the research settings, this including the process of recruitment and introduction to the research sample and its presentation in the work. After finishing the section dealing how participants were recruited, I justify the use of I-DCTs and semi-structured interviews while referring to the different stages of the data collection. I discuss later how the data analysis, using different analytical frameworks (Brown and Levinson, 1987; and Bousfield, 2008; Woodfield and Economidou-kogetidisis, 2010), seek to answer each research question. Towards the end of the chapter, I discuss the data transcription process; this includes trans-languaging instances (i.e. the process of using more than one language to maximize communication) in the interviews and consequently translation processes. I end the chapter with a note on the ethical considerations taken to approach participants, to collect their data and store it, hence, the confidentiality procedures that have been taken during the conduct of the research.

Chapter four introduces the research findings in accordance with the stages of data collection. In other words, it is divided into two parts. The first deals with results from, respectively, students' DCTs and students' interviews. The second parts report on results from, respectively, supervisors' DCTs and supervisors' interviews. The chapter provides a thorough interpretation of the research results, where it links and explains these against the different analytical frameworks used (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Bousfield, 2008).

Chapter five aims to discuss and answer the research questions according to their order in chapter one. While answering research questions, the chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the different results from chapter four relative to the different theories and literature that has been expanded on in chapter two. The chapter ends by discussing some conceptual, theoretical, and methodological contributions resulting from the study.

Chapter six summarizes the whole thesis while emphasising the different contributions made by the study. It also discusses the research outcomes, and thus the implications of these in different fields (politeness and pragmatics mainly), and different contexts (e.g. study abroad and in higher education institutions). The chapter concludes with research limitations and suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical frameworks that inform and guide the study while highlighting their shortcomings (See sections 2.1. and 2.2.). In addition to presenting the key theories and approaches that are used to explore this research, the chapter also reviews the previous studies on the speech act of request in the field of intercultural communication and politeness (See 2.3.). To provide an engaging and guided literature, the chapter critiques the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987 [1878]), where it focuses on notions of face (positive and negative) and how politeness strategies they (ibid) have suggested in the model address each aspect of face. More importantly, the chapter reveals, while critiquing, how the notion of politeness is invoked by Speech Act Theory (henceforth, SAT by Austin, 1962) and how both models do not capture the dynamics of communication as they are only speaker centred. Further, the chapter also discusses the sociological factors (power, distance, weightiness of the imposition) influencing politeness use (Brown and Levinson, 1987) and it demonstrates the other different factors (e.g. pragmatic transfer) influencing politeness in EFL requests. In a further section (2.4.), I review the two main approaches to study politeness (classical vs discursive), and by contrasting these approaches I justify the use of a *hybrid approach* (Bousfield, 2010), which considers both speaker (S) and hearer (H) actions in the analysis of politeness and related phenomena. I further problematize (in the same section) different notions and concepts like perlocutionary act; multiple strategies and responses to (intentional/strategic) politeness. Discussion arising from this chapter might contribute to a better understanding of the notion of politeness and responses to it cross/inter-culturally.

2.1. Speech Act Theory

Language is understood primarily as an important communication tool, where no sentence is uttered in a vacuum. As such, the communicative function of language has been of interest to many scholars. Aristotle (4 BC) was one of the first scholars to express interest in language as a mean to produce an effect rather than simply communicating meaning from an individual' mind to another. In other words, Aristotle has been interested in the outcome of the communication and this has been explained in his work "Rhetoric" and thus his taxonomy of Logos/Ethos/Pathos[4]. The previous view goes hand in hand with the view of language as social action (Holtgraves, 2002), and which entails individuals using language to do things and to produce an effect on their interlocutors, and therefore, change reality. Indeed, people use language in everyday life to achieve certain interactional goals; they then employ a range of utterances to convey meaningful messages (Kiaer, 2014: 1). Likewise, Culpeper and Haugh (2014: 155) argue that language in use is about utterances rather than sentences or words (linguistic units); where utterances are not merely saying something, but are doing something, as they bridge the gap between the linguistic units/forms and the context. In this regard, Jucker (2012: 499) points out that the start of the theory of *speech*

[4] According to Aristotle, Logos, Ethos, Pathos are forms of rhetoric, that is the ability to see the available means of persuasion. Aristotle explains Logos as the facts that support the presenter's claims, the Logos, accordingly, enhances the Ethos, that is the presenter's credibility. Finally, Pathos has been defined as the appeal to the audience's emotions.

acts (henceforth SAT) was originated in the work of Austin (1962) in his book *"how to do things with words*, and further developed by Searle (1969; 1976; and 1979)

Austin (1962) assumes that language is used to accomplish communicative tasks, and he (ibid) claims that the speaker performs acts through utterances. According to him, language communicative tasks are expressed by means of utterances, when speakers either express a psychological state (expressing their feelings for instance), or when they engage within a social interaction (e.g. requesting, apologizing). Austin (1962) has coined these language types and functions as speech acts. Similarly, to Austin, Yule (1996: 47) also conceives any action that has been performed through language (e.g. apology, complaints, compliments among others) as a speech act. Hence, the importance of speech act theory as an explanation of communicative function of language is significant in the current research. However, as the current research investigates email communication, terminologies like speaker, hearer, utterances, turn taking are used interchangeably with terminologies like writer, reader, sentence, correspondence.

As per the SAT analytical approach, Austin (1962) divided utterances into three "Speech act hierarchies", which the speaker/writer, simultaneously, can execute. First, the 'locutionary act', or the act of saying and reporting the utterance itself. Second, the 'Illocutionary act' or what one does by saying "X", which highlights the main function of the utterance and its *force*. Third, the result or the effect of the utterance on the hearer, and which has been coined its 'perlocutionary effect'. In this regard, I argue that Austin (1962) has explained the perlocutionary act in terms of the illocutionary force, and he explains the successfulness of the perlocution in terms of the success of the illocution by claiming that:

> Unless a certain effect is achieved, the illocutionary act will have been happily, successfully performed. This is not to say that the illocutionary

> act is the achieving of some effect. I cannot be said to have warned an audience unless it hears what I say and takes what I say in certain sense. An effect must be achieved on the audience if the illocutionary act is to be carried out. How should we put it best here? and how should we limit it? Generally, the effect amounts to bringing out the understanding of the meaning and the force of the locution. So, the performance of an illocutionary act involves the securing of uptake.
>
> (Austin, 1962: 116-117)

Yet, the analysis of utterances using the stratification (typology) Austin (1962) provides brings us to the conclusion that the hearer/reader is passive in Speech Act Theory (SAT), and consequently, the theory seems not to account for the interactional aspects of conversation as it is, in its entirety, a speaker-oriented theory. This, therefore, suggests that the hearer seems to be passive in speech act theory. In the following subsection (2.1.1.), and to further suggest some modifications (see section 2.1.1.1., figure 1 and figure 2), I highlight how the theory does not capture the mechanism of communication while discussing some drawbacks of the theory and the ongoing criticism received to date.

2.1.1. Critique of Speech Act Theory.

Echoing the criticism that has been done on Austin's 1962 "Speech Acts" theory there have been several attempts in pragmatic theorizing to revise and correct the different frameworks suggested for speech act analysis (mainly Searle, 1969; 1976; 1979). Yet, many scholars (e.g. Allwood, 1977; Vanrees, 1992; Sbisà, 2002), interrogate the validity of speech act theory (the one suggested by Austin, 1962 mainly). While some (e.g. Geis, 1995; Mey, 2001; Mey, 2011) have criticized the theory's universality and ethnocentrism, others (e.g. Yechiam and Barron, 2003; Katz, 2015) forward a major criticism toward Austin's (1962) performative hypothesis, where he (ibid) assumes that every utterance has a *performative verb*, that is to say, the verb of the utterance that dictates and names its illocutionary force. For instance, in "I (request/ask) you to pass me the plate", "request/ask" is the performative verb based on which Austin (1962) classifies the previous utterance as a request. The focus on the illocutionary act continues to be apparent in later modifications to SAT by Searle (1979). Further to Austin's (1962) typology, speech act theory was expanded on, and developed by Searle (1979); where he (ibid: 11-20) has proposed five categories of speech acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Nevertheless, this does not overcome the drawbacks of the theory (discussed in the following lines). For example, the SAT analysis of utterances which does not take context into consideration (e.g. interlocutors; their relationship, cultural backgrounds) remains one of the major inadequacies of applying the theory to different contexts. Put differently, the study of single and exclusively isolated sentences, i.e. with ignorance of the context (time, distance, and relationship between interlocuters), renders the interpretation of the utterances' *force* complex and overlapping. By way of illustration, "the food is bland" can be interpreted into two different ways: [1] an indirect request from a speaker to a hearer, sitting on the same table, to pass the salt. The utterance force, however, can be also interpreted as [2] a criticism or warning if we suppose a chef has said it to a trainee. What can be concluded from the previous examples [1] and [2] above is that it is almost impossible to analyze a sentence out of context, as SAT suggests, without having several interpretations overlapping within the same sentence.

It is noteworthy at this point that language in use might hold a multitude of meanings, which are not fully and straightforwardly explained in dictionaries. Focusing on the notion of the "illocutionary force/act", Bach (1994: 5) states that utterances can mean different things, and an illocutionary act may have different performatives. To further illustrate, the sentence "The kitchen is dirty" might be interpreted [in isolation] differently as it might inform the hearer about [1] the kitchen state; or it can be [2] a request to clean it; or it can be only [3] a complaining statement. Accordingly, Yule (1996: 3) notes that language meaning is negotiated in terms of its transmission (Shannon and Weaver, 1948) from a speaker/writer to a hearer/reader in a particular context; consequently, interpretation of meaning should not be based on single isolated sentences but rather it should be interpreted with an eye open on the context in which it occurs. The previous example of "the kitchen is dirty" can, therefore, signal the indirect relationship between the utterance form and its function or what Searle (1979) refers to as indirect speech act; that is the performance of an action by means of another.

Moreover, one of the concepts to consider in order to understand what interlocutors mean while conversing is 'intentionality' (Anscombe, 1957; Haugh and Jaszczolt, 2012). Traditionally, consideration towards the speaker's intention has been the initial focus within Gricean approach (1957) and post Gricean pragmatics (Levinson, 1983). According to Grice's (1975) theory of cooperation principle, meaning, via what he refers to as 'implicature'; has been related only to the speaker's production, where he (ibid) states that communication is a matter of cooperation where the speaker implies, and the hearer infers. Furthermore, in his paper 'meaning' (Grice, 1957), he differentiated between natural and non-natural meanings, where the latter has been associated with the speaker meaning (or the utterer meaning) and the former has been associated with the semantic meaning of the utterance (surface meaning of an utterance). Nonetheless, as the speaker' intentionality seems to be a complicated phenomenon to study (and it is still problematic up to this moment), the focus later has been shifted to a hearer-centered approach (Braun and Saul, 2002; Culpeper, 2005). The hearer-centered approach, contrary to that of the speaker-centered approach, pays more attention to the hearer and how he infers. Noteworthy, here, is that the two concepts of "infer" and "imply" were problematized. In this regard, Bach (2006) claims that the conceptual and analytical errors are a result of treating implicature and inference as interchangeable terms.

Some scholars (e.g. Carston, 2002) emphasize the role of the listener and consider the addressee to determine what the speaker is saying. Yet, ignorance of the speaker' perspective (Kecskes, 2010, as cited in Culpeper and Haugh, 2014: 121) does not decrease its importance; the speaker is still one of the threads that needs to be considered during the analysis of interactions (Culpeper and Haugh, 2014: 119). In other words, meaning construction and accomplishment necessitate the existence of both interlocutors. In this regard, Watts (2003) argues that neither the speaker nor the hearer should be neglected while trying to understand the pragmatics of language. My main argument above is that Speech Act Theory employs the speaker-centred model of meaning that might contribute to the downgrading of the listener's meaning and the multiple interpretations s/he might have, and which might or might not align with the speaker intention. The above claim leads to the necessity of problematizing the perlocutionary act (see the section below) to understand the connectedness, as well as, discrepancies that Austin (1962) has ignored in his explanation of speech act theory. The following section also provides an adaptation to the model of Speech Act Theory that helps (in later sections) to problematise the study of politeness and speech act of requests in email correspondences.

2.1.2. The Perlocutionary Effect: The Need to Adjust Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory.

Since the 70's, and prior to being a field in its own rights, pragmatics from the start focused on the relation between the linguistic signs and their effect on the audience (see Nöth,1990: 41). In accordance with what has been noted above, Leech (2014: 8) claims that Speech Acts Theory (as an important notion/theory in pragmatics) has been widely investigated since its first foundation by Austin's (1962). However, the theory has been also criticized, as stated in the section above, by some researchers (Yechiam and Barron, 2003; Katz, 2015) for the typology Austin (1962) has provided. These previous studies, claim that the hearer decides on meaning, and what he infers from a certain utterance might not correspond to the intended meaning by the speaker. In other words, there might be discrepancies between the Illocutionary force and the perlocutionary act/ effect as the hearer might have different interpretations. To illustrate, if the speaker (hereafter S) utters the previously mentioned example of "the kitchen is dirty", the illocutionary force of this utterance might only, and potentially, be a statement and not a request to clean the kitchen, however, the perlocutionary effect on the Hearer' (hereafter H) results in that s/he (the hearer) replies by "I will clean it this evening". In this respect, the hearer' own interpretation of the utterance as a request to clean the kitchen is apparent in his response above. Noteworthy, the illocutionary force of the utterance (as just a statement) and the perlocutionary effect (promise to clean the kitchen) do not align.

Consequently, I argue for further stratification of the perlocutionary act/effect into "the intended perlocutionary act" and "the actual perlocutionary act". To clarify, I present the intended perlocutionary act in this study as what the writer wants to convey and what effect s/he wants to achieve, while the actual perlocutionary act is related to the reader and his/her actual uptake which is the result of the perlocutionary effect/act. In this regard, I adapt (see the figure 1 below) Austin's (1962) typology to fit the purpose of the current study. To exemplify, "the kitchen is dirty" may be intended from an illocutionary perspective as statement about the kitchen situation [1]; it can be also a request to clean it [2] and can as well be interpreted as a warning [3] but from a perlocutionary effect it is not guaranteed that the intended illocution is always met by the actual perlocution. Indeed, illocutionary act might hold different illocutionary forces and thus might result in different perlocutionary results. To further explain, writer/speaker and reader/hearer for some contextual reasons might be not aligned in their understanding, so the intended illocutionary force is not, necessarily, followed by the speaker intended/ wanted perlocutionary effect; this, however, can be simply because there is a) a miscommunication between writer/speaker and reader/hearer, or b) the reader/hearer fully understands what the speaker wants but for reasons s/he does not accept what he has been asked to do (to better understand, see figure 2 on the next page).

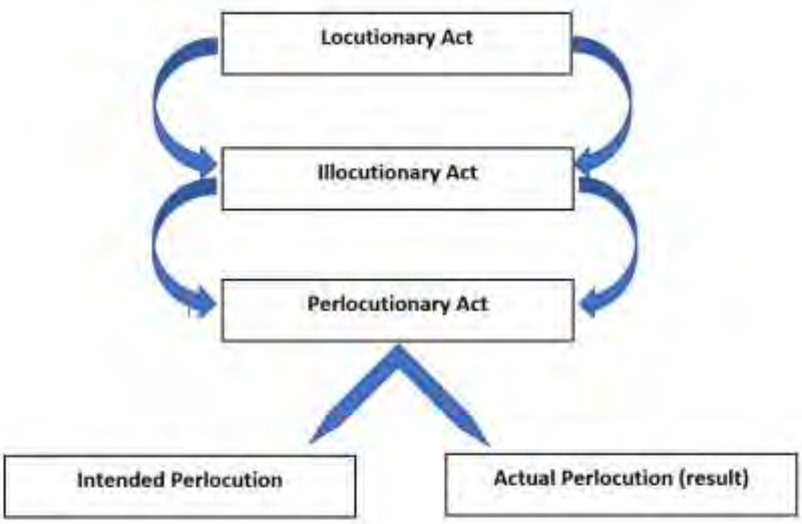

Figure1: Speech Act Taxonomy Adapted from Austin's (1962).

Figure2: Exemplification of How Austin's Speech Act Theory is Adjusted.

In support of the adaptation above, and despite the criticism of speech act theory (Austin's 1962) and the robust challenges that the theory has received, Archer, Aijmer, and Wichman, (2012: 41) claim that the theory of speech acts has influenced politeness research and remains the most commonly used analytical framework that invokes notions of politeness and speech act studies. Indeed, and over the years, researchers have investigated politeness realization in different speech acts. As a result, extensive research focuses on politeness and the speech act of apologies (Bataineh and Bataineh, 2006; Afghari, 2007; Chejnová, 2021; Beeching, 2019), requests (Kuriscak, 2015; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2016; Chen, 2015), and others including invitations (Yu and Wu, 2018; Bardovi-Harlig, 2019), and compliments (e.g.

Sharifian, 2005). In the following sections (2.2. and 2.3.), I discuss politeness theory (Brown and Levinson, 1987) and provide a critical stance towards it. In a later section (2.4.), I review specifically studies on the speech act of request and politeness in an intercultural context.

2.2. Politeness Theory: Brown and Levinson (1987)

It is worth noting at this point that speech acts were traditionally vital in pragmatics in general; and more precisely in politeness studies (Leech, 2014: 8). As stated in the last paragraph above, SAT has a tremendous impact on the development of the politeness theory. Consequently, ‘politeness’ is also regarded as one of the central themes discussed in pragmatic studies (Culpeper and Haugh, 2014: 10) under the light of speech act theory. The following paragraphs concern themselves with a brief explanation of politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1987) and go on discussing the critique the theory has received. The discussion addresses the politeness strategies suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987) (see 2.2.1.) and later discusses aspects related to face as a concept (see 2.3.2.). Following the explication of the different politeness strategies suggested (Brown and Levinson, 1987), the discussion focuses on the sociological and sociocultural factors influencing the use/choice of politeness strategies (2.2.2.) and the applicability of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model in an intercultural context (2.3.). Moreover, section (2.3.) highlights the inability of the model to account for interaction as an inherited inadequacy from Speech act theory (i.e. politeness theory is based on speech act theory). Finally, this section of the chapter concludes with the argument that although the politeness model (Brown and Levinson, 1987) has been heavily criticized, it provides a clear explanation of politeness phenomena and has been adopted (e.g. Kiyama, Tamaoka, and Takiura, 2012) and adapted (e.g. Kitamura, 2000; O'Driscoll, 2007) to either explain or investigate other related phenomenon.

Beeching and Murphy (2019: 202) claim Brown and Levinson's (1987) model to be a blueprint in politeness studies. Similarly, many other scholars (e.g. Culpeper, 1996; Spencer-Oatey, 2008; Haugh and Kádár, 2013; Kareem, 2018) agree that the word politeness and the two linguists' names almost become synonymous; and that since 1987 the model has continued to be influential. Before delving into the criticism that the theory has received from multiple angles (see section 2.3.), it is worth reminding ourselves of the crucial points the model discusses. Brown and Levinson's work on politeness (1987) is of a paramount importance, where the model revolves around two main concepts: "face" and "Model Person". First of all, inspired by Goffman's (1967: 5) notion of face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact". In the same breath, Brown and Levinson (1987) define face as the public self-image that members of any community are concerned with. According to Brown and Levinson (1987 [1978]), every individual has two faces: a "positive‟ and a "negative‟ face, where they (ibid: 59) argue that it is in the "mutual interest" for those interacting with each other "to maintain each other's face". Moreover, and in relation to Brown and Levinson's (1987) view on the notion of face and its components; the two types of face seem to be exclusive to each other and can be explained as such: while a person's negative face is "the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others", the positive face is "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (62). In other words, negative face is a want of freedom (freedom of action, and from imposition); positive face is a want of approval and appreciation (need to be valued by your interlocutors). Brown and Levinson (1987: 64) also posit that individuals are endowed with the awareness and the ability to rationalise from communicative goals to the linguistic (and non-linguistic) means to achieve these in interaction. Put differently, members of a community act rationally and strategically to attend to face needs and this has been explained by the Model Person (hereafter MP).

2.2.1. Politeness Strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987)

Brown and Levinson (1987: 65) claim that human interaction inherently involves a certain degree of friction where it impinges somehow on one's face, that is one's public image. As a result, individuals try to redress these potential threats to face (henceforth, Face Threatening Acts, or FTAs) by using different politeness strategies. The suggested politeness strategies in their (Brown and Levinson, 1987) model can be ranked from those strategies involving risks, and therefore, leading to face loss (e.g. bold on record with no redress) to those minimizing the face loss (e.g. redress strategies or avoidance of doing the FTA), and therefore, leading to face enhancement.

Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest that there are five (5) super-strategies to mitigate face threat (briefly outlined below from the most face-threatening to the least; the strategies are also illustrated by the figure 3 below). The first super-strategy is to do the face threatening act *on record*. This super-strategy can be divided into 1) *baldly or without redress* and 2) *with redress*. In performing speech act (e.g. request) without a redressive action (baldly), the speaker does not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer's face. To exemplify, look at the examples of "open the window", where the utterer of this sentence is not making any minimal effort to reduce or decrease the effect (threatening the hearer positive face) that his/her request for the window to be opened can have on the hearer. The previous example provides no optionality to the hearer; thus, it is highly imposing. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), this strategy can be used between equals (e.g. family members, friends) and in some situations like emergency (e.g. help!) and offers (e.g. Have this). Put differently, going on record is considered less face threatening if it is used in situations, where the social distance and social power are minimal among interlocutors or when the emergency of the situation is too high, thus necessitates going baldly on record.

Second, doing FTA on record can also be done through redressive actions. FTA, here, can be minimized through what Brown and Levinson's (1987) refer to as *positive politeness* and *negative politeness*. On the one hand, positive politeness entails a redress to the hearer's positive face. The speaker uses this strategy to make the hearer feel good about himself through paying attention to his/her interests or possessions like in the compliment "I love the colour of your hair". On the other hand, negative politeness refers to the redress to the hearer's negative face through reducing and avoiding imposition via increasing optionality to either accept or refuse what he is asked to do in "I wonder if you could pass me the plate". In this example, the hearer seems to have the option of whether to pass the plate to the speaker (requester) or not.

Politeness or reducing FTA can be also done *off record*. Off-record is the fourth politeness strategy suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987). In this strategy, no imposition is recognized, and the speaker expresses something totally different than what he means. To illustrate, the utterance "Oh, I forgot my card" can be an indirect request or a hint for the hearer to pay on the speaker's behalf thus, might pragmatically mean "would it be possible to pay for me". In this case it is the hearer's responsibility to interpret the illocutionary force of the utterance "Oh, I forgot my card" either as just a statement or a request to pay something for the speaker. This strategy is claimed to be used in highly imposing situations (e.g. borrowing or requesting a valuable items/ asking a highly imposing favour) and between socially distant interlocutors (e.g. strangers, employer and employee). *Off record* can also be performed through body language, an example of this can be the speaker searching into his/her bag to trigger the hearer's attention, and thus, lead him/her to ask the speaker of what they are looking for.

Finally, the last strategy that Brown and Levinson (1987) have suggested is *do not do the FTA* and here the speaker simply does not say a thing, and therefore, fails to attain his communicative goal. See below figure 3 that summarizes the politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), where the arrow at the left points out the face loss degrees.

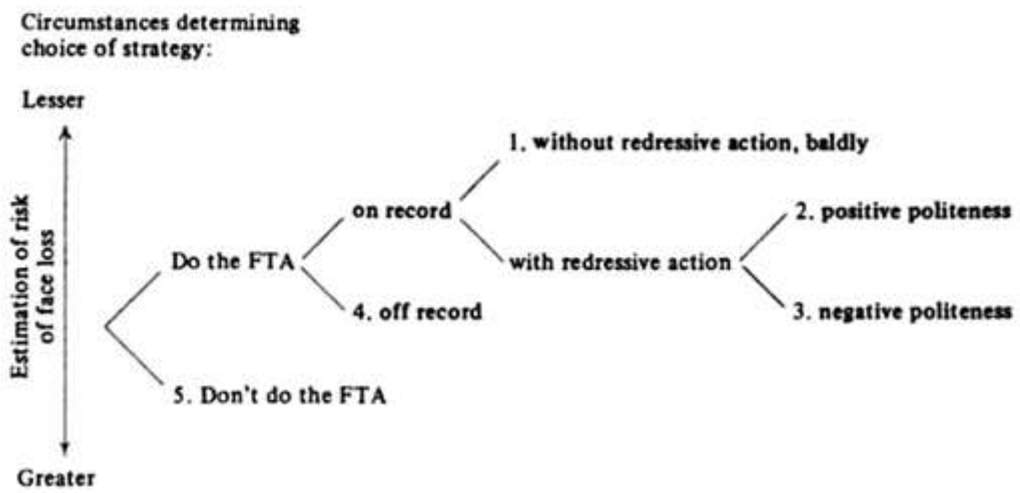

Figure 3: Politeness Strategies as Suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987: 60)

2.2.2. Sociological Factors Influencing Politeness Use.

Over the years, the theory of politeness (1987) has been heavily criticized for its ignorance of the cultural differences in perceiving the social factors affecting politeness strategies choice (Matsumoto, 1988). According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 76), three sociological variables are to be considered when calculating the amount of face threat; these social parameters are ‘social distance’, ‘power’, and ‘rank of the imposition’. As such Brown and Levinson (1987: 76) suggest the following formulae to calculate the weightiness of the face threatening act, and consequently, help the speaker decide on the level of politeness (see figure three above), and thus, the politeness strategies to employ to minimize or avoid the potential face threat. Brown and Levinson (1987) have suggested the following formulae to calculate the weightiness of face threat.

$$Wx = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + Rx$$

The calculation, as stated above, aims to determine the weightiness (W) of face threatening act (x), where D refers to the distance between interlocutors, that is the level of familiarity between the speaker (S) and the (H). The distance is sometimes relative to the frequency of contact. P refers to the power existing between the speaker (S) and the hearer (H), that is the difference in power as who can impose his self/plans on the other. The final sociological factor is the Rank of the imposition, referred to as Rx, that is the degree of the imposition relative to two criteria: expenditure of service (e.g. time taken to do what S ask H to do) and expenditure on good (e.g. Value of the goods asked).

Nonetheless, Brown and Levinson (1987) have been critiqued as these sociological factors and their effect (combined) on the politeness strategies choice suggest that politeness strategies use is pre-determined instead of negotiated in interaction (for further details see Culpeper, 2011). Other scholars (e.g. Pizziconi, 2003) critique Brown and Levinson’s (1987) calculation of the R factor (rank of the weight of the imposition) and claim that it is problematic as it neglects cultural diversity, and therefore, the understanding of social distance and power. Nonetheless, Pizziconi (ibid) seems to overlook Brown and Levinson’s (1987: 76-80) claim that these factors are culture specific, context-dependent and might be expanded to include other factors (e.g. age, gender). According to Brown and Levinson's (1987: 12) view, "any comparative social theory must be at once based on universal principles and yet have culture-internal application". Furthermore, Brown and Levinson (1987: 12) acknowledge their underestimation of other factors (the rights and obligations and the presence of a third party), which can determine the seriousness of face threat. An additional problem with Brown and Levinson's theory (1987) is also the assumption that the sociological factors (i.e. Power, Distance, and Rank of the imposition) are independent of each other and can only be combined to calculate the degree of face threat. In this regard, Culpeper (2011: 18) claims that context is inadequately accounted for in Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, and that the two linguists' assessment of the weightiness of FTA relative to three social variables seem not to reflect the complexity of interaction. Culpeper (ibid) claims that the problem with Brown and Levinson's (1987) is methodological. In other words, while Brown and Levinson (1987) consider the effect of sociological factors, they (ibid) neglect any qualitative analysis of these to problematize their complexity. Culpeper (2011: 18) claims that one way of understanding the complexity of the social factors is by way of considering the metalinguistic description/comments of those behaviours and/or the person who produced them (lay person perspective), and this is what the current research aims at (see section 3.5 and 3.6. for details).

In the following lines, I will briefly explain the social factors (i.e. Power, distance and rank), and review how they can be context dependent. Brown and Levinson (1987:77) do recognize that context is relevant to the extent that the relational factors of power and distance have a bearing impact on the politeness strategy selected/chosen. Similarly, the "ranking of imposition" of the face threatening act, which differs according to the cultural and situational context (Brown and Levinson 1987: 77), is also considered to be one of the factors influencing politeness strategies. Thus, in any encounter, politeness strategies seem to be predicted and determined in what appears to be a rather mechanistic way (by a calculation of the weightiness of the imposition). In this regard, Coupland, Grainger, and Coupland have criticized Brown and Levinson (1987) stating that:

> "Although Brown and Levinson's interest in strategic face-management is clearly and intrinsically dynamic … they are also intent on tracing strategy selections back to apparently preordained configurations of social roles."
>
> (Coupland, Grainger, and Coupland, (1988: 258)

While power, distance and "rank of imposition" (P, D and R) have some explanatory value in accounting for the degree and quality of face-threat in any particular circumstance (as I show in the analysis chapter), a neo-Brown and Levinson approach needs to also recognize that those social factors are not static but rather negotiated as the interaction unfolds. This is the approach taken in the work of Holmes, Marra, and Vine (2012), specifically, in their study of New Zealand workplace interaction. Similar to the analysis in the present research, they adopt what they call a "neo-Politeness" approach, which

> "combines some of the insights and concepts from Brown and Levinson with insights from social constructionism to provide a more dynamic, context sensitive and discourse-oriented framework …"
>
> (See Holmes et al. 2012: 1064 for further details).

2.2.2.1. Power

Culpeper (2008: 33) claims that politeness and power are related terms. Indeed, power in politeness research has been a hotly debated issue by different researchers (e.g. Locher, 2004; Bousfield and Locher, 2008), and its conceptualization in politeness research as static and predominant has been problematic ever since. Researchers argue that power is something we do; and that is negotiated in interaction (Watts, 2003). By Taking the classic approach into account, Brown and Levinson (1987: 77) defines power as the ability of the hearer to impose his/her plans, evaluate him/herself, and control the actions of the speaker. Furthermore, power for them is understood in relation to the speaker's and hearer's faces and how they conceptualize it away from any *sociologist's* perspective (see Brown and Levinson, 1987: 74-76 for details). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), power is seen from *behind* discourse[5] (Fairclough, 2001; 2015) and thus, the term can be interchangeably linked to words like dominance and interlocutors' status. Nonetheless, to have a full understanding of what is power and to grasp such a complex concept, one also needs to consider the different components it encompasses, and how these co-exist. Although, as noted above, Brown and Levinson's model (1987) seems to consider power from *behind* discourse, yet the model seems to ignore different aspects of power *in discourse* and amongst these the different types it might have. In this regard, French and Raven's (1959) typology of power would be a good start to understand power, where they (ibid) claim power to be disguised in our society under different types (e.g. social power, reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power, expert power). Power thus, is multi-layered and fluid. Following the same train of thoughts, Brown and Levinson (1987) contend that power changes from one society to another; where it is regarded differently in egalitarian societies as opposed

[5] Fairclough (2001; 2015) makes a distinction between two major aspects of power relative to language use. He (ibid) defines *power in discourse* as the power exercised in discourse, while referring to the hidden powers governing and shaping discourse as *power behind discourse*.

to hierarchical ones. In simple words, if we compare the power a person from an egalitarian society has over his/her subordinate; and the power a person from a hierarchical society has over his/her subordinate, we find the former much narrower than the latter. Besides, power seems also to be co-constructed in the context. Regarding the latter point, Brown and Levinson (1987: 78) demonstrate how power can be reversed, and therefore, constructed by giving the example of a worker pulling a gun on the manager. As far as the scope of this work is concerned, expression of politeness seems to be inter-relate with power (Locher, 2004; Holmes and Stubbe, 2015). Speakers ought to be more polite to those interlocutors who are more powerful than themselves. For instance, in the asymmetry of teacher-student, students (low power) tend to be polite to their teachers who have higher *expert power* (French and Raven, 1959). Put differently, expert power is about the knowledge that one person has in comparison to another. The asymmetrical nature of this study (communication between supervisors and supervisees) necessitates the existence of this type of power as a factor influencing the use of politeness (for further details see section 4.1.2. and section 5.1.5.).

2.2.2.2. Distance.

Distance is simply defined as the social distance or social ranking between speaker and hearer. In Brown and Levinson’ work (1987), it is considered as the difference in familiarity levels that exist between two interlocutors and the different (either close or distant) relationships that bind them. Brown and Levinson have detailed the conceptual nature of distance as follows:

> D is a symmetric social dimension of similarity/difference within which S & H stand for the purposes of this act. In many cases (but not all), it is based on an assessment of the frequency of interaction and the kinds of material or non-material goods (including face) exchanged between S & H (or

> parties representing S or H, or for whom S and H are representatives). An important part of the assessment of D will usually be measures of social distance based on stable social attributes. The reflex of social closeness is, generally, the reciprocal giving & receiving of positive face.
>
> Brown and Levinson (1987: 76-77)

Yet, this notion of social distance seems to be a complicated notion as it can be determined by different parameters (e.g. age, gender, socio-cultural background) and may also change over the course and length of interactions. Moreover, social distance seems not only to relate to politeness, but it also co-occurs with, and increases by an increase in the power, and the two (i.e. Power and Distance) seem to have direct positive correlation (Thomas, 1995). To illustrate, some research results (Li, 2004) show that we tend to be polite to strangers (+ distance) in comparison to friends and family members (-distance). However, research (e.g. Spencer-Oatey, 1997) into low (egalitarian societies like Britain) and high (hierarchical e.g. China and Arabic countries) distance power societies has proven the linear link between power and social distance to be wrong. Put differently, an increase in power does not necessarily entail an increase in social distance. Social distance seems to be affected by other factors like the frequency of contact, and cultural beliefs. Although beyond the realm of this section, the conceptual understanding of distance as a term seems not to be only confined in the dominance and control. Social distance is negotiated in interaction and between interlocutors. Frequency of contact is one of the ways to minimize the distance (see section 4.1.2. for illustration from current research). Yet, this distance can be maintained because of the individual's understanding of distance, respect and politeness.

2.2.2.3. The Weightiness of the Imposition.

In addition to power and distance, interlocutors tend to evaluate the rank of the imposition (weightiness of the act performed) of their utterances. The rank of the imposition seems to increase in accordance with the increase in distance and power. Yet, some impositions are more face threatening than others depending on the situation as the latter can affect the weightiness of the imposition (e.g. requesting money is more threatening than requesting a pen; requesting feedback on written work from your lecturer is more serious than requesting a book reference), and the interlocutors involved in the speech event[6] (e.g. requesting a meeting with a supervisor is more imposing than requesting a meeting with a friend). Moreover, and in the course of what I highlight in the following lines, the rank and thus weightiness of the imposition seems to be dependent on various factors in addition to power and distance as suggested originally by Brown and Levinson (1987)

In summary, the factors (i.e. power, distance, and weight of the imposition) that Brown and Levinson (1987) posit to determine the level of politeness needed have been at the centre of scholars' debate within the field. It has been repeatedly claimed (Fukushima, 2003; Félix-Brasdefer, 2008) that the effects of each factor are likely to vary across cultures in terms of the social perception and expressions of politeness. In addition to the proposed sociological factors above, others (e.g. Age, gender, proficiency level) have proved to affect politeness usage. Although politeness enactment might be similar across some cultures/subcultures and "communities of practice" (Mills, 2003); the reasons/motives behind the same linguistic choices might be different. In this regard,

[6] Speech event is used in this research to refer to the interaction as a whole; it refers to speaker doing a speech act and a hearer responding to it.

Matsumoto (1988: 404) points out, that “superficial similarity can result from different underlying principles”. To illustrate, some studies (e.g. Farnia and Sattar, 2015) demonstrate that participants (Iraqi and Malay) show similarities in the use of mitigating devices, but their perception and evaluation of the situational factors is different. On the other hand, differences in the expression of politeness seem to be affected by other different contextual, sociological and sociocultural factors like the request type, status, social distance, which seem also to influence politeness strategies usage (Leopold, 2015). Other studies (e.g. Aliakbari and Moalemi, 2015) have found gender to affect politeness strategies use, where the results suggest that males and females demonstrate both similarities and differences when employing politeness strategies. Noteworthy, in a study of an EFL speaker, Zhu (2012) has found the level of language proficiency to affect the use of mitigation devices. In other words, participants with low language proficiency level seem to use limited syntactic and lexical devices as well as more direct strategies. EFL spakers tend also to use their first language syntactic and lexical devices, and I shall, here refer to the notion of “pragmatic transfer”, that is the transfer of linguistic forms and their use from L1 or L2 into L3, and which might have an influence on communication and politeness realization; I shall also note that this notion might lead to breakdowns in intercultural exchanges. In the following section, however, I review the criticism that Brown and Levinson’s Politeness theory (1987) has received and highlight where it is still useful to adapt it.

2.3. Politeness Theory (1987) Applicability: A Critical Overview.

Despite the influence of Brown and Levinson 's theory (1987), studies in the field have problematized their notion of politeness and how they formulated it. It became clear to many scholars (e.g. Matsumoto, 1988; Watts, 2003; Bousfield, 2008; Culpeper, 2011; Song, 2017) that the politeness model of Brown and Levinson (1987) is not entirely infallible and that the study of the phenomenon of politeness is more difficult than was initially perceived. This resulted in questioning the applicability of Brown and Levinson's (1987) model to members of other cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Consequently, the theory has been the target of an intense theoretical debate and empirical investigations, where it has been either supported and/or challenged on different levels. In the following paragraphs, I briefly demonstrate the criticism of the theory reviewing some of the studies that have supported/opposed Brown and Levinson's (1987) claims. Finally, I highlight the advantages of using the theory of politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987) in the current research.

A major criticism to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory is the claim of universality. Early studies in the field set about exploring the applicability of the theory to different cultures and languages. For example, Ide (1989) finds Brown and Levinson's view of politeness in relation to concepts of face and model person inadequate for a truly universal definition as people' perspectives on politeness differ across languages and cultures. In this regard, other researchers (e.g. Gu, 1990; Watts, 2003) have developed localised understandings of politeness in different cultural settings and have argued that a number of the claims made by Brown and Levinson (1987) cannot be applied beyond western contexts. Yet, other scholars (e.g. Blum-kulka and Olshtain, 1984a) seem to not totally counter Brown and Levinson's claims, but rather embrace the existence of face' wants and needs with consideration of specific cultural difference and thus, different manifestations of politeness (cultural scripts/norms). In a nutshell, my position and argument here is that scholars (e.g. Wierzbicka, 1985), countering Brown and Levinson's theory, have overlooked the theorists' acknowledgement, where they avoid any implication of cultural universalism:

> ...the bare bones of a notion of face which (we argue) is universal but which in any particular society we would expect to be the subject of much cultural elaboration.
>
> (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 13)

As I argue in chapter one, despite the similarities in the expression of politeness, there is always room for a wide variation in its linguistic and non-linguistic expression in different cultures and languages with regard to the notion of face. Results from some empirical studies (e.g. Al-Momani, 2009) indicate the existence of a universal socio-pragmatic knowledge that is shared by members of different cultures while the lingua-pragmatic manifestation differs. Other studies (e.g. Kitamura, 2000; Kiyama, Tamaoka, and Takiura, 2012), respectively, aimed at testing the applicability of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory in non-goal-oriented context and to non-western cultures have found it applicable; and urged the conduct of more empirical investigations of politeness focusing on the contents of utterance by non-Western populations. Like Brown and Levinson, these researchers (i.e. Kitamura, 2000; Kiyama, Tamaoka, and Takiura, 2012) believe that interactional systematics are based on universal principles while their manifestation differs systematically across cultures, and within cultures.

Another major criticism relates to the linear relationship Brown and Levinson (1987) have proposed between in/directness and im/politeness, where they have assumed that an increase in indirectness would result in an increase in politeness. In favour of the previous claim, some studies' results (e.g. Chang and Hsu, 1998; Buchbinder et al., 2015; Ruytenbeek, 2019) suggest that in/directness is linked to im/politeness and that the two have a linear relationship. Nonetheless, a re-examination of the assumed parallel dimension between politeness and indirectness cross culturally (e.g. Blum-kulka and Olshtain, 1984a; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989b; Upadhyay, 2003; Marti, 2006; Ogiermann, 2009) suggests that indirectness does not necessary imply politeness, and therefore, the link between the two notions remains vague and inconclusive. Consequently, the bulk of dispute on the connectedness of the two notions (i.e. politeness and indirectness) has been problematic, and thus, needs further research to be conducted. The discussions on the relationship between im/politeness and in/directness have occurred (Leech, 2007) whenever the western/eastern divide[7] is highlighted. In this regard, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) claims that the higher we are on indirectness scale, the more we are perceived as polite, thus, indirectness and politeness relationship is not arbitrary.

Another angle, and probably a central one to the scope of the current study, from which politeness theory (Brown and Levinson, 1987) has been heavily criticized is their assumption that politeness resides in single utterances instead of the interaction. In this regard, and very much like attributing certain illocutionary force to a particular utterance in speech act theory, politeness model (1987) attributes certain politeness values to the sentences/forms, which in explicit performative form can be used with different illocutionary forces from those named in the performative verb[8] itself. In this

[7] Western/eastern divide: a dichotomy that perceives the differences in the enactment of (im)politeness in Eastern vs Western societies. In politeness studies some scholars (e.g. Ide, 1989; Matsumoto, 1990) assert that politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) and their notion of face cannot be applied to an Eastern conceptualization of face and manifestation of politeness and is thus biased by a Western view.

[8] Austin (1962) had distinguished between constative and performative verbs/utterances. The constative verbs are about saying, and therefore, can be true or false; while performative verbs are about doing and thus, cannot undergo true or false conditions. "I write" for instance tells us about the action going on and therefore it is performative (performative verb is write).

regard, Brown and Levinson (1987: 17) posit that applying their model to new data can be problematic as the strategies might overlap and be mixed in discourse. In the following paragraph, I discuss the multivalence and overlapping nature of positive and negative politeness strategies[9], then I expand on the idea in the next section.

Indeed, negative politeness strategies can include positive ones and vice versa (see chapter 4; section 4.1.1. for exemplification). For example, addressee honorifics, that is devices that express deference between interlocutors by exploiting the power deference, work as a negative strategy to redress FTA but in some cultures (Arabic) are used to enhance the hearer's face, and therefore, have some positive politeness value. For instance, addressing a supervisor by 'Dr.' or 'Pr.' implies respect and address towards both the negative and the positive face of addressee. Brown and Levinson view honorifics as

> ''direct grammatical encodings of relative social status between participants, or between participants and persons or things referred to in the communicative event.''
>
> (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 276)

They (ibid) insist that honorifics are motivated by FTA redress and that they carry a constant and static meaning of 'deference'. Nonetheless, what I object in the example above (the use of Dr. And Pr.) is that honorifics (and by this I refer to terms of address and those terms implying higher status) can be co-constructed and re-constructed in societies or cultures where these might have a face enhancement effect on the hearer. That is to say, and contrary to Brown and Levinson's (1987) stratification of honorifics under negative politeness strategies, the use of these can be a redress to the positive

[9] Most of the discussions, within this work, on the multivalence of positive and negative politeness strategies are inspired from supervisory meetings with Dr. Bousfield.

face as well as the negative face. To exemplify, addressing teachers and lecturers by their titles implies praise of the knowledge power they have, and therefore, it is a praise to their positive face as a particular status/rank (Pr., Dr.) is considered as a possession that they have. This brings us to rethink the notion of positive politeness. From Brown and Levinson's (1987) perspective, positive politeness is a redressive behaviour, that is only used between intimates, and which seems to be problematic as it entails lack of politeness. The previous point has been problematized, for instance Culpeper (2011: 209) contends that both Brown and Levinson's (1987) and Leech's (1983) prediction that intimacy signals lack of politeness is questionable. Culpeper (ibid) exemplifies how correlating the two (i.e. intimacy and politeness) renders the interpretation of banter as impoliteness. In the previous regard, he (ibid) refers to Leech's (1983) view that banter leads to intimacy and also points out how Brown and Levinson's (1987) model considers jokes as a positive politeness while totally ignoring banter.

In fact, positive politeness as a concept is independent from intimacy; and can be used in non-intimate contexts as a booster for face enhancement while showing appreciation of the hearer in some cultures. In support for the above, Pizziconi (2003: 40) claims that the 'positive' or 'negative' effects of a strategy are linked to expectations and thus, resulting in a coincidence or clash of the local [or intended] illocutionary goals and general social goals [actual perlocution]". Following this train of thought, Brown and Levinson (1987) seem to inadequately consider the context and, therefore, underestimate the role that the hearer plays in interpreting and evaluating utterances. Contrary to Brown and Levinson's (1987) claim that S uses pre-determined politeness strategies to mitigate and redress FTA, after rationally evaluating the payoffs of each strategy; and in opposition to Mills' (2003) claim that communities of practice seem to resort to the same strategies while expressing politeness; Kádár and Haugh (2013: 18) claim that positive and negative politeness strategies should be regarded as preference rather than rules as people draw differently on their schemata[10]. In a trial to reconsider the use of politeness, however, very few studies (e.g. Coppock, 2005) have investigated the multivalence of politeness strategies (see next section for further details), which is deemed important in the current research in order to see how the phenomenon unfolds across the interaction.

2.3.1. Multifunctionality of Politeness Strategies

Many researchers (e.g. Brown and Levinson, 1987; Kasper, 2005) argue that interlocutors pick from a variety of politeness expressions to achieve their interactional goals. In this regard, Thomas, for instance, claims that:

> It is undeniable to think that experience has taught us that particular strategies are likely to succeed in given circumstances, so we use them.
>
> (Thomas 1995: 179).

I argue that part of claim above it is not adequately structured as these strategies might overlap, that it to say their functions can have different effects and results (perlocutionary) on interlocutors. Indeed, many cross-cultural and intercultural studies (e.g. Vinagre, 2008; Jansen and Janssen, 2010; Tabar and Malek, 2013; Pattrawut, 2014; Ryabova, 2015; Kavanagh, 2016; Savić, Economidou-Kogetsidis, and Myrset, 2021) have investigated the use of politeness strategies, but previous studies seem to ignore the overlapping nature of politeness strategies in interaction. In the present research,

[10] Schemata: according to Merriam-Webster dictionary, Schemata are the mental codification of experience, which include a particular organized way of perceiving cognitively and responding to a complex situation or set of stimuli.

politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987) tend to overlap, while addressing both the negative and the positive face of the addressee (the supervisors/receiver of the email request). Therefore, the results (see chapter 4; section 4.1.1.) have shown that politeness strategies can be used either in combination and/or successively in interaction to attain the desired perlocutionary results (that is the acceptance of the student' requests by the supervisors). In this regard, Culpeper (2011: 12) claims that Brown and Levinson' (1987) model ignores the complexity of facework. He (ibid) refers to the model's (i.e. Brown and Levinson, 1987) separation of face into positive and negative face and points out that this classification has been rejected by several researchers as it ignores the complexity of politeness phenomenon and face redress. Culpeper (ibid) gives an example of *interruption* to explain how mixed strategies might occur in interaction. According to him, an interruption, originally, imposes on the person and might be interpreted as negative face threat as it declines the person's freedom of action, however, interruption can also be interpreted as positive face threat, that implied the hearer's carelessness about what is said. Furthermore, Culpeper (ibid) concludes that impoliteness strategies and acts (can be applied to politeness strategies use here) may address both aspects of face, positive and negative. He (ibid) explains this as follow:

> Whilst an act may primarily have implications for one kind of face, it will often have secondary implications for other kinds. Furthermore, many of the acts that Brown and Levinson list as primarily threatening the hearer's face can have ramifications for the speaker's face. Orders, threats, criticisms and contradictions carry potentially unfavourable, and hence self-face threatening, attributions (e.g. authoritarianism and hostility), that may merit facework attention.

(Culpeper 2011: 12).

In the same vein, Craig, Tracy, and Spisak (1986: 452-453) claim that it is possible for a strategy to involve both negative and positive politeness redress. An example they give from their data is "Do me a favour", which they argue, and as Brown and Levinson claim, is a negative politeness strategy (as there is an admission that the 'favour' will impinge on the other). However, they (ibid) argue that the sentence might be interpreted as a positive politeness strategy, in which case suggesting a close distance between interlocutors. Another example of the multifunctionality of asking a favour (request that is primarily conveying a negative politeness) is the possible interpretation of asking a favour as a face enhancing, thus positive politeness strategy. To illustrate, the researchers (ibid), claim an older or higher power status person asking a younger lower power status person to do them a favour is secondarily positive politeness strategy to enhance their face. Here again, Brown and Levinson’s (1987) suggested politeness strategies seem to lock the interpretation of politeness not only to single utterances in isolation, but also to single strategies. Although politeness has been a central issue in pragmatics and inter/cross-cultural communication studies, a limited number of studies (e.g. Bella, 2009) on how the proposed politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987) can be combined or multivalent in interaction. In the present research, I take *combined politeness strategies* to mean the successive use of two or more politeness strategies, one after the other; while I take *multivalent politeness strategies* to mean one politeness strategy with double function (addresses, simultaneously, aspects of both faces, negative and positive).

2.3.2. The Concept of Face, Politeness Strategies, and Identity.

Central to the theory of politeness, face as a concept has been defined invariably with reference to the concept of self. The most influential definition is the one by Goffman when he claims that face is

> "The positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact".
>
> (Goffman, 1967: 5)

Drawing on Goffman (ibid), other scholars, frequently, refer to the self when trying to define face, Brown and Levinson (1987: 61), for instance, state that face is the "public self-image". Nonetheless, as a reaction towards Brown and Levinson (1987) universality and psychological individuality claims for face, scholars (e.g. Scollon and Scollon, 2001, and Culpeper, 2011) focus on other aspects and components of face (e.g. individual, interactional, and collective)[11] and how they occur in different interactional contexts. The aim of the current section is not to conceptualise face (for a space reasons) but rather to problematize it against Brown and Levinson's (1987) taxonomy of mutually exclusive aspects of face into positive and negative face (section 2.2.); and thus, for future research (including this one) to consider the face aspects and goals and how interactants achieve these by employing linguistic politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987). This section also lays itself as a background to explain the relation between *identity* and *face* that has been one of the present research' results, and which are discussed, respectively, in chapters 4 and 5.

From a discourse perspective, Scollon and Scollon (2001: 45) hold the opinion that although face is negotiated in interaction, certain assumptions regarding status and face are thought of by participants before the start of the communication. They (ibid) refer to those pre-communication assumptions as "unmarked face assumptions". Therefore, study of face necessitates a subtle approach where unmarked face

[11] Individual: belong to an interactant and represents his personality traits mainly
Interactional: like identity, face seems to be negotiated in interaction
Collective, face can expand to include aspects of a national identity to represent others within the same group for instance (e.g. Algerians)

assumptions and how these are negotiated in interaction should be highlighted. On different aspects of face, and similar to what Brown and Levinson (1987) claim, Scollon and Scollon (2001: 46) discuss rigorously the face paradox and the participants' need of being involved in an interaction (positive face), as well as their need to maintain independence (negative face). Nonetheless, these aspects seem to be still problematic when it comes to the analysis of communication. According to Scollon and Scollon (ibid: 47), manifesting involvement and independence is subject to deploying certain discourse strategies. Examples of involvement strategies include paying attention to the hearer and being attentive to their affairs; it can also be expressed through emphasizing group membership; these strategies are like positive politeness strategies predicted by Brown and Levinson (1987). Examples of independence strategies are those moves by the speaker/addresser and by which s/he provides a wide array of options to the listener/addressee; these moves can be formal and similar to negative politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Thus, here linguistic/non-linguistic manifestation of differing degrees of politeness is important to face negotiation in context.

Crucially, the definition of face has not only been influenced and discussed from a discourse approach but also from a communicative one. Some scholars (e.g. Ting-Toomey, 2005; Arundale, 2006; Spencer-Oatey, 2007), while mostly influenced by work on identities and communication, consider self and thus face as a communicative identity. What I mean here is that face is one aspect or a component of identity that we communicate in certain interactions. From a communication and identity perspective, face seems to be applicable to the notion of identity and self, and therefore negotiated in interaction. While Culpeper (2011: 25) claims that face encompasses different aspects that extend beyond the self (e.g. family, school, possession...etc.), Spencer-Oatey (2007) argues for the importance of multi-perspectives (social psychology) on the conceptualization, analysis and understanding of face. She has pointed out the different debates on the concept of face such as:

> the extent to which face is an individual or relational phenomenon, whether it is a public or private phenomenon, and whether it is a situation-specific or context-independent phenomenon.
>
> Spencer-Oatey (2007: 645-647)

While, influenced by Brewer and Gardner (1996)[12] and Hecht, Warren and Jung (2005)[11], Spencer-Oatey demonstrates and exemplifies how Brown and Levinson (1987) analysis of face ignores the complexity of the concept in interaction (i.e. the interactional aspect of face). One of the examples she (i.e. Spencer-Oatey, 2007) has provided is her encounter with a Hungarian student that she has helped to catch a train. See below an extract from their conversation followed by an explanation of how face can be problematic in intercultural communication:

> **Hungarian student:** Thank you very much. You are a very kind old lady.
> **British lady:** No problem. I was catching this train anyway.

In the above examples, I agree with Spencer-Oatey (2007: 645) that Brown and Levinson (1987) analysis of politeness does not account for the complexities of face. She (ibid) refers to their analysis as "blanket analysis"; an analysis that misses the combination of face enhancement (you are very kind) and face threat (old lady); and which she (Spencer-Oatey, 2007) explains under the mismatch of her face claims and expectations (mid aged instead of old) and the claims attributed to her face (old) by the Hungarian student. This mismatch seems to be a result of different understanding and use for the word "old". In the previous example, face seems to be an interactional and relational phenomenon

[12] Brewer and Gardner's (1996) theory of levels of identity

(Arundale, 2006: 193) as interactant(s)' concerns are his/herself/themselves in relation to others. Moreover, another aspect of face in interaction that Spencer-Oatey (2007: 645) has highlighted is the different levels and layers of face and their link to identity. She (ibid) has provided the following example of the Chinese group of businessmen, in which face seems not only to operate at an interactional and relational level but also on a collective one. Spencer-Oatey (2007: 645) quotes from previous work:

> **One member from the Chinese group of businessmen:** One thing is that we should not let people say we are stingy; secondly, we should not give the impression of being too weak; thirdly, we should negotiate in a friendly manner.
>
> (Spencer-Oatey, 2005: 115).

In the above example, and similar to the results of the current research (see chapter 4 and 5), the Chinese colleague not only reflects on his individual face but considers the collective face of the other Chinese colleagues and thus emphasises their face as a group (see Spencer- Oatey, 2007: 645-646 for further explanation). In short what I aim to focus on here is not face and the different frameworks to analyse it, but I focus on how Brown and Levinson's (1987) analysis does not do full justice to the dynamic nature of face in interaction, and which is one of the drawbacks of politeness theory. Consequently, I argue here, and in line with the above explanations, that face is relational and collective phenomena in interaction; I will expand on this argument during the analysis of the results (chapter 4) and the discussion chapter.

2.3.3. Culture as an Explanatory Variable in the Use of Politeness Strategies.

As a concept, that is inclusive to customs, arts, morals, knowledge and beliefs among others, culture has attracted the attention of social sciences researchers, and thus, been discussed from different perspectives. In a nutshell, and as a shared definition of different scholars (e.g. Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 2002; Hofstede, 2003; Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2012), it can be concluded that culture is linked to society, language production and interpretation and that all cultural features and dimensions (e.g. language, beliefs, tradition) are interrelated.

This section does not focus on the different definitions given to culture nor the way it has been conceptualized. The aim of this section, however, is to explore the different cultural facets needed to understand the phenomenon of politeness and responses to it cross-culturally (e.g. linguistic repertoire, understanding of power and distance, educational background, religious affiliation and so on and so forth). The current section, therefore, aims to highlight the cultural aspects that influence the use of politeness strategies. The section also reflects on and reviews how cultural aspects can be relevant to the intercultural communication of Algerian FL speakers of English and their respective supervisors at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Usually, it is the case that members of the same culture tend to behave similarly in some situations, and as evidence of the shared behaviour scholars (e.g. Hall, 1989; Hofstede, 2002) claim that these attributes are a result of a shared culture. For instance, Hofstede (1991: 5) defines culture as *a collective programming of the mind* that renders one group of people different and distinguishable from others (as cited in Swaidan, Rawwas, and Vitell, 2008: 127). The previous statement implies that for a group of people to be distinguishable from others it is necessary that members of that group share similar cultural attributes. Grainger, Kerkam, Mansor, and Mills extend the definition by stating that:

> ‘Speakers of languages develop habits and conventions which tend to be constructed and evaluated as “correct” by dominant groups.’

(Grainger, Kerkam, Mansor, and Mills, 2015: 45)

The above definition, itself, implies and predicts that there are still individual differences regarding the varying degrees to which members of the same cultural group share some aspects. In a similar vein, Spencer-Oatey and Kádár (2016: 81) state that there are individual and contextual factors that might influence how members of the group adhere to social/cultural norms. These preconceptions about cultural groups, although a result of similarity and resemblance of their behaviour, tend to generate a personality profile, which itself assigns certain cultural attributes to groups/ members in intercultural/cross-cultural communication. In relation to politeness this can be explained through providing examples from our perceptions on what is polite or not (lay person perspective). Yet, the perceptions that we formulate are not entirely idiosyncratic but rather informed by cultural expectations (see Spencer-Oatey, and Kádár, 2016: 74). This complexity of culture and the different attributes assigned to different cultural groups renders linguistics researchers unable of choosing a suitable wholistic model to account for and explain the different cultural traits relative to language use.

There are various cultural models that have been developed over the years, two well-known ones (Hall, 1989; and Hofstede, 1991) have attracted the attention of many sociolinguists. However, for the purpose of this study and to unravel the complexity of culture and its influence on communication by closely looking at what might lie behind what people say (or choose as politeness strategies). Consequently, I focus in the following discussion on culture as explained in the iceberg model (Hall, 1976). Hall's model is deemed pertinent to the scope of my study, which is to unpack the ongoing uncertainties about the different cultural beliefs, and to understand the impact culture - as a variable- has on interpersonal communication. As such, I am interested in the perspectives and the deeper aspects of culture relative to language use and practices, which renders it essential to look at culture as a central aspect of politeness manifestation and perception. For this very reason, I incorporate the analogy of culture as an iceberg (Hall, 1976) with the following definition of culture by Spencer-Oatey.

> Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour.
>
> (Spencer-Oatey, 2008: 3)

First, I start by the metaphor of the 'iceberg'. Hall (1976) explains that culture, just like an iceberg, has apparent and hidden dimensions. According to him (ibid), the cultural components that are visible (e.g. arts, customs, language) are the results of the invisible ones (e.g. values, beliefs, preferences). With reference to the icebergs, much of the underlying invisible cultural aspects remain hidden, but they seem to play a crucial role in shaping and determining our cultural visible practices. Second, by looking closely at Spencer-Oatey's (2008) definition of culture above, I conclude that culture is a set of assumptions and values that are shared by members of group/culture but nevertheless might not apply to every individual within that group. The synergy of the cultural iceberg model above with Spencer-Oatey's (2008) definition of culture in the current research aims to provide 1) an understanding of the visible cultural practices and capture their (re)-occurrence 2) a comprehension of the process of understanding variation in cultural practices and finally 3) an identification of the belief, attitudes and expectations that drive certain cultural groups or individuals to use politeness strategies.

In his work, Hall (1976) further claims that cultures can be classified either as a *high context culture* or a *low context culture* according to their communication patterns.

In his terms (ibid: 113), high context (e.g. Latin-American, Southern European, Asian and African countries) cultures' communicative patterns tend to be implicit, and it is up to the hearer to infer what the communicator wants/intends to convey. In high context cultures, people tend to talk around and around the point without being too specific; low context (e.g. Scandinavian countries, most English and German speaking countries) cultures' communicative patterns tend to be explicit and easily understood, and while those from high context cultures tend to talk around and around, those from low context cultures are more direct. In the present research, however, I do not treat culture to be entirely high context neither low context simply because such classifications can be essentialist (Janicki, 1991), according to which reality is seen as fixed and static. To explain the previous point, taking an essentialist approach renders language use (as part of culture) as rule governed and people resort to the rules in specific situations. Indeed, communication patterns tend to change depending on the individual understanding of different parameters (including but not limited to distance, power and interpersonal relationships). While Hall's (1976) theory of high context and low context culture can be beneficial to point out the differences in the cultural, and therefore, the linguistic expression of politeness across different cultures, in the current work, I use his cultural iceberg model. Put differently, the theory of high and low context cultures (Hall, 1979; 1989) seems not to explain the different underpinning background knowledge and the schemata that interlocutors from different cultures might hold. My stance, towards this theory of low and high context cultures, is that we need to consider culture as a continuum, and therefore avoid the absolute predefinition and stratification of individual, communities, or countries as low vs high context cultures. Accordingly, it is useful to approach language behaviour from a non-essentialist point of view, that is we should always consider that language varies from one individual to another. In other words, individuals seem to behave differently from each other even though some of their cultural values are shared; and thus, everyone might be placed at different point within the low-high context culture scale.

Importantly, in the current study, I am confining my subjects[13] to Algerian students and their supervisors at a British University institution (MMU). This decision has been taken to avoid any generalization of the results to the whole population. Indeed, generalization of the results may lead to stereotyping that is the result of emphasizing the similarities one cultural group might have. As a result, the present project, uses semi-structured interviews (see chapter three for more details), to allow more space for the individual differences in the cultural practices of politeness. Therefore, my methodology (chapter three) exploits the different shared and individual manifestations and perceptions of culture as they have been previously described in Spencer-Oatey (2008). The points discussed above are considered while interpreting and discussing the results to see what cultural aspects that are responsible for the participants' politeness strategies choices (4.1.2.) and responses to these (see section 4.2.2.). In other words, taking an iceberg model (Hall, 1976) informed by individuals' perceptions (the perception of the participants in the study) provides an important aspect that is rarely explored in depth within pragmatics (Spencer-Oatey and Kádár, 2016: 86); and which revolves around the underlying perspectives on the interrelationship between individuals and groups. Moreover, the points discussed above also reveal which features of high context vs low context are exhibited in the intercultural and interpersonal communication

[13] Research participants

between the Algerian supervisees (students) and their supervisors (see section 4.3.), yet these are beyond the scope of the current research.

2.4. Studying the Speech Act of Requests.

Numerous empirical studies on speech acts and politeness have been conducted since the 1970's (see last paragraph in section 2.1.), where the vast majority of this research seems to focus on the investigation of requests and their realization in different languages, cultures, and contexts (e.g. Bach and Harnish, 1979; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989b; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a; Chang and Hsu, 1998; Taguchi, 2006; Pinto and Raschio, 2007; Manasrah and Al-Delaimi, 2008; Ogiermann, 2009; Bella, 2012; Farnia and Sattar, 2015; Leopold, 2015; Susilo, 2017; Al Masaeed, 2017; Nguyen, 2018; Hussein and Albakri, 2019). In the following paragraphs, I review some of the studies on speech acts of requests and politeness with a particular focus on their realization in intercultural and email communication contexts, which is the focus of the present research (see section 1.2. for further details). I also argue that, although speech acts of request and politeness have been widely researched and analysed, there is still room for further investigations into how politeness is used in requests and responses to these interculturally. I expand on the previous point regarding the necessity to investigate requests and their responses and explain how research in intercultural communication can benefit from such studies in section (2.4.1.), where I am considering them, respectively, as *pre-event* and *post-event* (Blum-kulka and Olshtain, 1984b).

By way of explanation, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) equate requests with *pre-events* that are used by speakers, and through which they attain different daily life' aims including seeking information and seeking help from a hearer. A request is generally regarded as a face-threatening act to the addressee's negative face (see Brown and

Levinson, 1987:60; Searle, 1976:11). In making a request, as a directive speech act (Searle, 1979), the speaker attempts to get the hearer to do something in response to what s/he asked/said. In this regard, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984: 206) also claim that requests are *pre-event acts* aiming at potentially causing a *post-event act*. For example, the request 'can you open the door, please?' is a pre-event that aims at causing a potential post-event, the one where the hearer opens the door as a result of the speaker's initial request. In a similar vein, Ogiermann (2009: 190) argues that the function of request is to get the hearer to do something for the speaker. Thus, when making a request, the speaker performs a degree of imposition on the hearer's territory by way of threatening his desire for freedom of action. Consequently, speakers resort to several different politeness strategies to mitigate the potential face-threatening act caused by the request initiation in the first place (Brown and Levinson, 1987). For example, instead of saying "pass the plate/give me the plate", speakers tend to soften the potential threat caused by the previous sentence by saying something like "Can you please pass me the plate?" or even in a more polite way "Would it be possible to pass the plate?" (For a detailed account of the different politeness strategies, see section 2.2.1.).

Furthermore, some cross-cultural research on requests (e.g. Blum-kulka and Olshtain, 1984a; Sifianou, 1992) focuses on how culture affects the perception of politeness, and thus the realization of requests. In a study of request realization and perception (e.g. Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010), social power and degree of imposition along other different sociocultural and contextual factors seem to contribute to the degree of in/directness used by British and Greek learners. Results from Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010) show that high-context cultures (e.g. British; German) demonstrate preference to indirectness and link it to high levels of politeness whereas, other low-context cultures (e.g. Russian, Chinese, Arab; Greek) demonstrate a preference for directness when performing requests and link this preference to the avoidance of 'wasting the addressee's time' (see section 2.3.3. above for an explanation of High and Low context cultures). Indeed, the use of in/directness has been a very important aspect of studying requests and politeness (e.g. Grice, 1975; Leech, 1983; Tabar and Malek, 2013; Tabatabaei and Samiee, 2013). The evaluation given to the use of in/directness cross-culturally seems to vary when taking politeness into account (see Türker and Akbarov, 2016). However, the study of (in)directness is irrelevant to the scope of the study as it has been argued by many researchers (e.g. Blum-Kulka, 1987; House, 2005) that indirectness does not equate to politeness. To illustrate how indirectness and politeness cannot have an arbitrary connection, I provide here the example of hints, which are supposed to be the most indirect, thus the less imposing and polite (Brown and Levinson, 1987), yet hints can be interpreted as imposing, and therefore, are not necessarily the most-polite. Hints constitute an imposition in the sense that they may require the receiver/ hearer to process the locutionary and illocutionary acts, thus, can be imposing in terms of time.

Interestingly, a growing body of research on requests has been conducted in interlanguage pragmatics[14] (e.g. Barron, 2003; Yechiam and Barron, 2003; Marti, 2006; Félix-Brasdefer, 2007) where the focus has been mainly on the stylistic features of the request and illustrating the difficulties L2 and FL learners face to correctly convey their messages in the target language. Therefore, research exploring L2 learners tend to either assess their pragmatic awareness (e.g. Zheng and Xu, 2019), or show how this (Pragmatic

[14] Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) define interlanguage pragmatics as the intersection between pragmatics and second language acquisition, where second language learners develop knowledge of the target language.

awareness) can be developed through study abroad (e.g. Barron, 2019; Yang and Ke, 2021) or through instruction (e.g. Halenko and Jones, 2011). In the study conducted by Zheng and Xu (2019), it was found that L2 learners are highly aware of pragma-linguistic features, that is the linguistic resources that a particular language has to convey meaning (Leech, 1983), but they struggle to put these into practice. In other words, they seem to be unaware of the socio-pragmatic, i.e. the appropriate use of the linguistic resources in communication (Leech, 1983). In other words, the participants in Zheng and Xu' study tend to rank from most polite to the least polite (while evaluating different request situations) email requests, where the external and internal modifiers are used as polite and appropriate; however, they do not use those modifiers fully to perform requests in high imposing situations. Thus, the use of modifiers has been linked to learners' proficiency and pragmatic competence/awareness. In a similar study, Félix-Brasdefer (2008) contends that L2 learners have limited linguistic forms to realize requests; and this limitation has been argued to be a result of their lack of pragmatic awareness. Consequently, some studies (e.g. Bella, 2012; Chen, 2015; Wang and Halenko, 2019) tend to investigate the effect of direct instruction on the development of pragmatic appropriateness (socio-pragmatic competence). Results from previous studies show the positive effect of instruction on the development of the participants' pragmatic competence in the target language. Moreover, the interaction between duration of study abroad and development of pragmatic competence and variation in its use (e.g. Soler and Hernández, 2017; Devlin, 2019) has received increasing attention in the last few years. So much so that the overwhelming results from these studies suggest that the more students stay in the input/target culture, the more likely they are to use diverse socio-pragmatic patterns of that language (see section 4.1.2.1. extract 59, and section 4.1.2.2.

extracts 72, 76 for further details). This present endeavor suggests that the Algerian Ph.D. students would acquire socio-pragmatic competence relative to British university culture. By the latter I mean the egalitarian practices in relation to address terms, where lecturers are addressed by their first names and where no titles or surnames need adding.

Another widely researched issue in intercultural communication and interlanguage pragmatic studies is what is termed by Kasper (1992) as “pragmatic transfer”, that is, the influence of language(s) and culture(s), other than L2, on the learners’ comprehension, production and learning of L2. Based on Leech’s (1983) pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic concepts, Thomas (1983: 101) respectively distinguishes between pragma-linguistic transfer and socio-pragmatic transfer. Thomas (ibid; originals in italics) refers to the pragma-linguistic transfer as the transfer of *speech act strategies* from L1 or other languages to the target one, while socio-pragmatic transfer has been defined as the influence that the mother tongue or other languages have on the speakers’ social performance of speech acts in context. In the current research, an example of pragma-linguistic transfer can be found in the expression of pessimism (see chapter 4, Examples 20 and 21 for further details) by Algerian Ph.D. participants. Furthermore, student participants are found to use titles and honorifics (see section 4.1.2.1.), which can be considered as socio-pragmatic transfer from their mother tongue (Arabic) and second language (French T/V system). However, this transfer might result into miscommunication as pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic features from mother tongue or other languages might influence the performance of speech acts in the target language.

Indeed, I argue here that intercultural miscommunication arises from the assumption that the language strategies from L1 or L2 are appropriate to the delivery of the intended meaning in the target language. I argue also that speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Seale, 1979) has an ethnocentric and universal view on speech act realization, where it ignores the different speech act realizations across cultures and languages. Likewise, Kramsch (1998: 70) notes that in intercultural communication interlocutors may transfer linguistic forms from one language to another, and which in turn might be problematic to some scholars in an intercultural context. Despite the above claims, using L1 and L2 forms to convey polite meaning in the target language seems not to be problematic and does not lead to intercultural miscommunication in the current research. For example, while using titles, the participants of this research are conveying a sort of respect and power hierarchy between themselves and their supervisors, but this use of address titles can be only unexpected and might imply social distance, yet it does not lead to intercultural miscommunication. The supervisor participants seem to be understanding and aware of the use of titles by international students. Therefore, transfer of this sort does not affect their perception of the students (see section 4.2.1 for further details).

With technological advances and online communication, intercultural communication research has received unprecedented attention in recent decades. Email, for instance, has been a predominant means of communication (Waldvogel, 2007; Crystal, 2001). Recently, a tendency towards using email is, however, apparent in educational contexts (e.g., Nguyen, Do, Nguyen, and Pham (2015). The use of politeness in email requests has been systematically researched (e.g. Chang and Hsu, 1998; Ho,2011; Motallebzadeh, Mohsenzadeh, and Sobhani, 2014; Leopold, 2015; Nguyen, 2018). Yet, Zheng and Xu (2019: 38) argue that although emails are formulaic, which might make it easy to formulate these, they seem to be, nevertheless, challenging for L2 learners as they encompass *stylistically* (e.g. opening, closings) and *culturally* (e.g request strategies) differing manifestations. Therefore, when embarking on a review of research on email requests, an important starting point has to be the factors influencing the use of politeness strategies. For instance, Duthler (2006) compares Voicemail and email users and the level of politeness they employ to make requests. The results of his study (i.e., Duthler, 2006) suggest that email users employ more polite speech than voicemail users and this is because they can plan, compose, edit, and manage their messages. In short, the asynchronous nature of the email provides the users with time to reflect and think about what they are going to write. Yet in other studies on email communication (e.g., Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011), the absence of openings and closings in non-natives' emails seems to be remarkable. It has been suggested that this is a result of the influence of instant chat influence. In other words, Economidou-Kogetsidis (ibid) correlated the speed taken in instant chat and its influence on the participants' email practices.

Looking at the research conducted on email requests, much of the research has been done on SL and FL speakers addressing faculty members (e.g., Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2016; Savić, 2018; Chejnová, 2021) Few studies (e.g. Wang, 2021), however, have focused on requests and their responses in computer mediated communication (CMC). The study of Yang (2021) focuses on the requests and their responses by Chinese college students on WeChat (instant messaging application in China). This study adopted a discursive approach, that is the analysis of politeness from the participants' perspectives. During the analysis of the data, Yang (ibid) asked the participants to evaluate requests and responses to these. Interestingly, Yang (2021) found that the politeness strategies used by the participants in his study can be associated with the politeness strategies suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987). Studies on email requests and their responses seem to be highly limited currently, and studies on foreign language speakers from Algeria are almost non-existent. Therefore, the current research aims to contribute to this knowledge gap by considering requests and responses to these by Algerian FL of English and their supervisors at a UK university. The following section sheds light on why it is necessary to consider not only requests but their responses, too, when studying politeness to better understand how effective communication occurs.

2.4.1. Requests as Communicative Speech Acts

The focus on request within the realm of the current research stems from the frequency with which they are used, as well as the potential of face threat or damage caused by their performance. When performing the *pre-event* of request, that is the requester asking the hearer/reader (requestee) to do something for them, the requestee, then, finds himself/herself in a position of making a *post-event*, that is a response to the request. By looking at the research that has been conducted on the speech act of requests and their responses, there seem to be limited studies on this topic, thus, research on these remains in its infancy. Brown and Levinson (1987) flag up the importance of analysing politeness beyond the single acts that are suggested in speech act theory. They claim that:

> Another framework that we would now rely less heavily on is speech act theory...for many reasons we think now this is not promising, as speech act theory forces a sentence-based, speaker-oriented mode of analysis.
>
> (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 10).

Although Brown and Levinson in the above claim moving away from the Speech Act Theory sentence-based analysis that they followed in their 1978 work, their politeness model (1987) is still heavily based on one sentence analysis. Highlighting the need to go beyond the sentence level, therefore, motivates the current research to explore the speech act of requests beyond a sentence level to include responses to requests. In this regard, a very limited number of studies tend to verify the *actual* or *achieved perlocution* (see section 2.1.2. for further details) against the *intended* perlocution (e.g. John, Brooks, and Schriever, 2019). Most of the studies on response have been conducted on the speech act of compliments (e.g., Razi, 2013; Sucuoğlu and Bahçelerli, 2015) or the speech act of refusal as a response (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008; Rendle-Short, 2015). Responses to requests, however, have received little attention (e.g., Rauniomaa and Keisanen, 2012). Further, only a few studies (e.g., Fukushima, 2003) have considered responses to requests from a cross-cultural perspective. Fukushima (ibid), for example, provided a model for responses to off-record requests, where she (ibid: 92) proposes 3 ways to respond to off-record requests based on the assumption that the H recognizes that the S made a request. These are summarized as follows:

1) Hearer preempts S's request for instance by offering something

2) Hearer takes an alternative means other than doing something for S (e.g., suggestion or advice)

3) The Hearer refuses a request (e.g., politely/ responds to what S said/ says nothing/ or changes the subject.

To summarize the points referred to above about the investigation of requests and their responses, I shall stress that this type of endeavor is under researched generally, but research on requests by Arabs and their responses in intercultural context is almost non-existent apart from few studies (e.g., Manasrah and Al-Delaimi, 2008; Amer et al., 2020). Given the previous point, Johns and Félix-Brasdefer (2015: 132) have called for more research on politeness in African regions. It, therefore, logically follows that the aim of the current research and the objectives and goals of this thesis (see Chapter 1) is to fill the lacuna that has been identified.

The present research is a steppingstone to the understanding and explanation of how politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987) are used to achieve what Ho (2018) refers to as "request compliance", that is the satisfaction of the requester' needs while sustaining the harmony with the requestee. As such, the requester always has the expectation of receiving a response to his/her request(s). Wang (2021: 46) emphasises that it is important that the requestee keeps his/her responses to requests polite even if s/he is unable to do what the requester asked. Wang (ibid) also stresses the necessity of exploring both requests and their responses to better understand the use of politeness strategies in communication.

2.5. Approaches to the Study of Politeness: A Need for a Hybrid Approach

While examining politeness as a linguistic phenomenon, usually one of two broad approaches are adopted, a classical/traditional approach or a discursive approach. As stated in the introduction above, this section presents a critical and a brief evaluation of the two main approaches and attempts at explaining contrastively their views on the investigation of (im)politeness. The objective of the current section is to highlight the complementary nature of the two approaches (i.e. classic and discursive). Put differently, instead of discussing the two main approaches to study politeness as if they are two opposing stances, the section sheds the light on the intersection between the two. Accordingly, the section, further, highlights the necessity for a hybrid approach

(Bousfield, 2010), an approach that considers the theoretical stances on politeness and their importance (politeness 2)[15] as well as the lay person's (politeness 1)[16] interpretation of the phenomenon (i.e. (im) impoliteness) in interaction. An approach that takes the interaction as a whole by considering both the writer/speaker and the reader/hearer in the process of meaning making. The following paragraphs justify the use of such an approach in the current study.

First, the traditional or classic approach to politeness encompasses those politeness theories (e.g. Lakoff, 1975; Brown and Levinson, 1987) that are built on speech act theory, and which view politeness from the cooperative principle and face-saving perspectives. Put differently, the classical approach to politeness treats communication as rational and its origins stem from Grice's (1975) cooperative principle, Searle's (1975) and Leech's (1983) focus on indirectness and Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of face. Brown and Levinson's (1987) approach, which is the focus of the current research, perceives politeness realization as similar across cultures, and therefore, assumes a universal framework that can be applied across languages and cultures. Within the classical approach, politeness has been perceived as a linguistic device used in interaction based on universal rules. In this regard, the traditional approach provides an abstraction of linguistic politeness, where researchers (e.g. Lakoff, 1975; Leech, 1983; Brown and Levinson, 1987) have deduced, through pragmatic means, the relationship between linguistic forms and politeness. In this approach, the focus has been always on the micro pragmatic level; that is to say on the study of the surface structure of utterances.

[15] Politeness 2: Watts (2003) defines is as the theories of politeness or the theoretical conceptualization of politeness
[16] Politeness 1: Watts (2003) introduced that term to refer to the lay persons (participants, observers, and analysists) perspective and judgment of politeness.

Recently, some scholars (e.g., Terkourafi, 2005b; Hammood, 2016; Edwards, 2016; Baider, Cislaru, and Claudel, 2020) have discussed the two main approaches, and the chronological order of their appearance. Researchers focus their discussions on the advantages and drawbacks of adopting either of the two main approaches (i.e. traditional or discursive). Although the traditional approach has been the prototypical approach of analysis for almost three decades, since the 1990s, it has come under increasingly heavy criticism by many researchers (e.g. Watts, 2003; Bousfield, 2008; Culpeper, 2008; Edwards, 2016). One of the major criticisms of the classical approach is generally related to the study of utterances in isolation and thus, the belief that politeness resides in linguistic forms. In this regard, Bousfield (2008: 66), for instance, claims that studying speech acts in isolation is a major drawback of the traditional approach, as the study of politeness has become 'locked in enshrining single acts of politeness in single utterances. By the same token, Culpeper (2008) argues against the focus on the productive aspect of language by the speaker while neglecting the hearer and his/her uptake; leading to an inadequate account of communication (as cited in Bousfield and Locher, 2008: 19). Consequently, the classical view has been challenged with a discursive approach to politeness where the role of the addressee has been brought into the limelight.

Furthermore, the discursive approach to politeness (Mills 2003; Watts, 2003) challenges the definition of politeness as a strategic face-threatening mitigation tool. Researchers within this approach argue against the assumptions that politeness is used to save face and mitigate face-threats, according to these scholars, politeness does not always equate with positive connotations, it can also be used to cause face damage. Therefore, politeness is seen, rather, as a discursive phenomenon, where politeness' values are co-constructed in interaction rather than being static and fixed into specific linguistic forms. Consequently, within a discursive approach, an emphasis on the macro pragmatic level has emerged, where researchers (e.g. Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003; Mills, 2011; Kádár and Haugh, 2013) focus on the broad societal dimensions and consider the motivations of language use socially, and regard language as a co-constructed in interaction (see section 2.4. above). Besides, the shift from the abstraction that is founded in the traditional approach (e.g. Brown and Levinson, 1987) allows the discursive approach theorists to analyse speech acts from a participants' perspective. In other words, discursive approach theorists advocate a discourse analysis as the thick description obtained from it enables the understanding of the micro analysis of the linguistic features in a specific context.

The discursive approach to politeness has been regarded as an alternative to the traditional approach in regard to politeness analysis (Van Der Bom and Mills, 2015: 181), and although it aims at overcoming the traditional approach' inadequacies but applying such an approach for the analysis of data seems to be difficult and unsystematic. Van Der Bom and Mills (ibid) note that the difficulty of using the approach (i.e. discursive) stems from its *eclectic* nature; as the approach encompasses theorists (e.g. Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003) with a critical research stance to that presented by Brown and Levinson (1987), and who are taking the analysis of politeness beyond speech act theory. For example, discursive approach theorists found Brown and Levinson's (1987) conception and definition of politeness problematic, thus, within the discursive politeness approach, there is a noteworthy tendency to avoid the analyst's judgment of what politeness. Accordingly, researchers within the discursive approach to politeness focus on context-specific understanding of politeness and associated phenomena from a lay person's perspective (i.e. the general understanding of politeness by members of a community or participants within research rather than the theorists' definition of the term).

Nonetheless, the claim that the discursive approach is an alternative to the traditional approach has been challenged. Culpeper (2008) argues that the discursive approach fails to offer the lay person understanding as the researcher depends on his/her implicit understanding to evaluate and indicate instances of (im)politeness in interaction and thus, leading again to the instability of the meaning of politeness, and consequently to a denial of the discursive approach (as cited in Bousfield and Locher, 2010: 20). By the same token, Bousfield (2010: 107) argues against discursive politeness researchers, i.e. those studying im/politeness from the users'/lay person's perspective, who neglect the fact that individuals in a particular community have a socially constructed picture of what is appropriate and what is not in a specific context. In this regard, Bousfield (ibid) argues that the lay person's understanding of politeness is like the "model person" by Brown and Levinson (1987) in that it is grounded in people's minds. In a similar vein, Haugh (2007) questions the possibility of identifying politeness in interaction without the analyst' imposing his/her understanding. Furthermore, Terkourafi (2005a: 102) criticises the discursive approach for its inability of generalization as researchers within this approach only investigate speech acts' realization in context without aiming at identifying the linguistic patterns to perform them. As a result, in recent years, research on politeness has witnessed a return to the traditional approach (e.g. Yazdanfar and Bonyadi, 2016; Qari, 2017; Qian and Pan, 2019). Scholars like Haugh and Kádár, (2013:5) claim that the work on politeness by scholars taking a traditional approach is still influential and continues to exist in recent works, approaches, and analytical frameworks of politeness. Likewise, Watts (2003: 11) claims that none of the discursive politeness could invalidate the conceptualization of politeness provided by Brown and Levinson (1987). Therefore, theorizing and literature about politeness is still problematic.

To this end, I argue that it is necessary to take a hybrid approach to investigating politeness, where aspects from the traditional approach are considered along with other aspects from the discursive approach. In other words, it is important to consider the speaker, the hearer, and the observer or the analyst while exploring politeness in unfolding speech sequences. Haugh and Kádár, (2013:2) contend that as politeness goes beyond the boundaries of language, its analysis requires a multidisciplinary approach, where we need to see politeness as a social practice with language user, and language observer understandings. In similar regard, Locher (2015: 8) points out the necessity to investigate politeness by combining different approaches during the analysis. In fact, the attempt to find a compromise between the traditional and discursive approaches has been continuous. For example, the relational approach (e.g. Spencer-Oatey, 2008), the frame-based approach to im/politeness (Terkourafi, 2005a) and the interactional approach (e.g., Arundale, 2010; Haugh, 2007) focus on specific linguistic forms and presuppose stable meanings while taking into account the context and including both speakers' and hearers' perspectives. Indeed, considering the hearer, as well as the speaker, as full members of the exchanges places him or her in the position of assessors of im/ polite behaviour. Many scholars within the discursive realm to politeness still refer to traditional approach models; Watts (2003: 63), for instance, argues that Brown and Levinson's (1987) seminal work is crucial as it specifies the use of linguistic forms and it allows the researcher to test these against real life data. Consequently, I do apply some of the concepts to the data, when this is deemed useful in describing how politeness unfolds during communication.

As the aim of the current work is the investigation of politeness in an intercultural communication context, adopting a hybrid approach is vital to investigate notions of face negotiation across cultures, the perlocutionary effect, responses to politeness, clash of expectation and thus intercultural communication. Back to Brown and Levinson's (1987) claim that individuals are endowed with "ends-means" reasoning, Thomas (1995:179) claims that people employ certain strategies that they experience and deem successful in certain circumstances to achieve their communicative goals. In a similar regard, Kádár (2017) points out that politeness is often "mechanical", and thus we can consider that it is neutral, not directly intentional. Kádár (ibid) further explains this in relation to the long-acquired moral norms that members of community acquire, and which may explain the variability in the perception of politeness. Yet, and in response, Kramsch (1998: 47) contends that "people from different cultural backgrounds tend to converse...using different discourse styles". Considering misunderstanding, however, Bousfield (2010: 120) argues that socially acquired and thus shared concepts are differently understood by individuals. The previous claim suggests that politeness can be socially acquired, and therefore, its performance can be socially shared yet, its interpretation can be different on an individual level as society is not homogeneous. In this regard, Yule (1996: 87) claims that members of different cultures might experience miscommunication or misunderstanding due to difference in assumptions of scripts. Bousfield (2008: 37) claims that "the type, quantity, strength, and salience of different aspects of face will vary from culture to culture, discourse to discourse and context to context". Accordingly, expectations of both speaker and hearer might not meet. In this regard, Bousfield (2008: 39- 41) further claims that "...we approach interaction with expectations as how would we like our face to be constituted" thus "face is internally expected" yet "externally realized”. Highlighting the importance of the hearer, the current research necessity to investigate the perlocutionary effect seems essential. Therefore, the above claims should be further interrogated to obtain better understanding of how intercultural communication unfolds.

2.6. Conclusion

The current chapter has discussed the plethora of theoretical and conceptual constructs on linguistics politeness. Relative to the theoretical frameworks used within the current research, the chapter suggests and argues for an adaptation of Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962), and politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Therefore, the chapter problematizes notion like ‘face’ and ‘face redress’, where it argues that face in interaction is a complex notion to interpret and understand. The chapter also argues that the politeness strategies within Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model are under-analysed. In other words, the chapter challenges Brown and Levinson’s (1987) claim that politeness resides in single sentences or single strategies. Consequently, the chapter suggested: 1) *combined politeness strategies*, that is, the combination of more than one strategy in a single utterance or over stretches of utterances, and 2) multivalent strategies (see chapter 4 and 5 for more details on the term), that is the politeness strategies within single sentences/utterances, which can be interpreted both as positive and negative face redress.

The chapter also explores the literature on the speech act of requests relative to politeness phenomenon, where it highlights the need to investigate requests as a communicative act (i.e. study of requests and their responses). Finally, the chapter offers a critical discussion of two major approaches to the study of politeness (the traditional approach and the discursive approach) and argues for the need for a hybrid approach

(Bousfield, 2010) to better understand how the phenomenon of politeness unfolds in interaction.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Research Design

3.0. Introduction

The current chapter presents the study design and methodology. In section (3.1.), it sheds light on the epistemology and the ontology within this research, and further discusses the research paradigm and accordingly the rationale for using a Mixed-Method approach (as articulated in subsection 3.2.1.). The overall purpose of Section (3.3.) is to provide an in-depth explanation of how Discourse Completion Tasks (henceforth DCTs) are re-visited. Therefore, while section (3.3.1.) and subsections (3.3.1.1.) and (3.3.1.2.) foreground and review some of the methods used to collect the data in pragmatics and speech act studies with a focus on Discourse Completion Tasks, section (3.3.2) introduces and describes how Informant-based Discourse Completion Tasks (I-DCTs) are employed in this research. Afterwards in section (3.4.), the chapter provides the data settings, which includes participants and participants' recruitment as well as data statistics. Section (3.5.) summarizes the data collection methods and the data collection stages, this section also covers discussions on the language(s) used in the interviews and translation. Sections (3.6.) and (3.7.), respectively, demonstrate the analytical methods employed, and report on the piloting process and how it informed further decisions. Finally, the chapter ends with concluding remarks and ethical consideration in section (3.8.)

3.1. Epistemology and Ontology of the Research

Holden and Lynch claim that:

> ...research should not be methodologically led, rather that methodological choice should be consequential to the researcher's philosophical stance and the social science phenomenon to be investigated.
>
> (Holden and Lynch, 2004: 397)

In consequence, this section introduces the philosophical and the meta-theoretical beliefs that underpin the research project, where I foreground, both in this section and the next one (3.2.), the reasons for the different methodological choices and procedures that have been undertaken within the current project. Indeed, informing the readers about the methodological ontologies and epistemologies of the research help readers put into practice the findings of that project/research. Holden and Lynch (2004: 397-398) suggest that researchers need to adopt certain theoretical assumptions for how to research. In considering social research, the term meta-theory is, however, interchangeably used with paradigm as both refer to assumptions of describing and investigating theories within a domain. In line with the previous claim, Guba and Lincoln (1994: 105) assert that the metatheory of research is essential and is the steppingstone towards the choice of research methods. Back to the point of our section, researchers, before determining on the appropriate methods for their research inquiry, make assumptions on how reality is constructed. Put differently, the researcher needs to identify what forms and kinds of knowledge s/he is committed to (epistemology) as well as being required to identify what it means to exist in the world; put differently how human nature is perceived (ontology).

According to Morgan and Smircich (1980: 492-497), there is an objectivism-subjectivism continuum within social research, where assumptions on ontology, and epistemology are constantly changing as we move from one extreme to another. On one end of spectrum, ‘extreme objectivism of social reality’ is perceived as independent and structured. On the other end of the spectrum ‘extreme subjectivism of social reality’ is perceived as co-constructed by individuals. However, there is what we call relativism, or post-positivism, where reality is not entirely objectivist, but it changes according to change in circumstances (e.g. society, culture). In fact, post-positivism retains some established beliefs and values from positivism while altering others. Put differently, post-positivism maintains ontological belief in the objective nature of reality but recognizes that undertaking to know objective reality will always be deficient due in part to the limitations of our human capacities; meaning that what we come to know is considered incomplete, and therefore should be revised considering new evidence (Phillips, Phillips, and Burbules, 2000). Whereas the positivist ideal of seeking absolute truth is maintained, achieving warranted, and probable explanations of phenomena is the post-positivist aim (Phillips et al., 2000; Fox, 2008). By drawing on these studies to support the current research, and to set the context for the investigation of politeness in requests, it is important to clarify how I am approaching the study of politeness in email requests.

The current study endeavours a contextualised (mimicry of email requests at UK higher education) understanding of how politeness operates. In other words, my inquiry attempts to investigate how research participants negotiate meaning and face using politeness patterns to achieve their interactional goals. For instance, the study looks at the use of certain politeness strategies (e.g., positive politeness) and how these save the face of the receiver (supervisor), while at the same time it looks at how they are affecting the receivers' (Ph.D. supervisors) perception of the email senders (Algerian supervisees). As a result, politeness in this research is not perceived as entirely a rule governed phenomenon as Brown and Levinson (1987) claim but rather it is scrutinized within a context, where I seek to understand how communication unfolds between culturally different participants. So, as Brown and Levinson's (1987) work on politeness has not been immune to critics (See chapter two for more details), conducting the current research contributes to the testing of their theory; and consequently, as Giacomini (2010: 131) states, it either aims to prove or disprove certain theoretical statements within it.

In addition to the epistemological and ontological orientations that a researcher has, s/he needs to be clear about their positionality within the research and how it might influence the methodological and analytical procedures taken, and thus, the results generated from that research. In the following subsection (3.2.1.), I discuss the insider vs outsider researcher issue and how this impacts the current research. Other challenges (mainly related to translation and data analysis) will be articulated respectively in section (3.7.3.2).

3.1.1. The Insider vs Outsider-Researcher

In regard to the research tradition, some scholars (e.g., Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Unluer, 2012; Sattari, 2018; Salamońska, 2018; Dwyer and Buckle, 2018) problematize the positionality of the researcher relative to the influence they have on the research' results. The current project is considered both an insider and outsider-led research; in other words, while I am immersed as an insider researcher with the research participants (Algerian students), I am not highly familiar with their supervisors, therefore, I am considered as an informed outsider. Accordingly, my position is neither totally insider nor entirely outsider but rather, a researcher at "the space between" (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009: 60). On one hand, I am considered (though not fully) an insider as I share language, gender, religion, culture, and social capital (as a Ph.D. student at MMU) with my Algerian student participants. On the other hand, I am regarded as an informed outsider to the data collection, analysis, and interpretation when it comes to data generated by their supervisors. Put differently, I am an informed outsider as I am a member of the university

(MMU) myself and I am a Ph.D. supervisee, thus exchanging emails with my supervisors, nonetheless, I do not share the same language(s) or culture. Indeed, it is impossible for one researcher to be totally an insider or an outsider as the research participants are not homogeneous; thus, differences occur (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009: 56). In the end, discussion of the present research' results remains open for further possible interpretations.

Occupying this position, on the borders of the insider-outsider dichotomy, has been fundamental to the core of the research. In this vein, being at "the space between" facilitated access to participants which was influenced by the position of the researcher as an insider. In other words, being familiar with the language and cultural practices of the Algerian participants has raised the participants' willingness to acknowledge me as a researcher and consequently pave the way for me to contact their supervisors. In this regard, Costley, Elliot and Gibbs assert that:

> "Researchers are insiders, they draw upon the shared understandings and trust of their immediate and more removed colleagues with whom normal social interactions of working communities have been developed".
>
> (Costley, Elliot, and Gibbs, 2010: 2)

Similarly, Dwyer and Buckle (2009: 58) argue that the benefit to be a member of the group one is studying is acceptance. Put differently, one's membership provides a certain level of trust and willingness for your participants to engage in the research project. Being an outsider, on the other end, has been challenging. Acceptance by the supervisors to take part in the study has been a long process. The challenge, however, seems to stem from the responsibilities and the nature of the work they have rather than any differences between them and myself as a researcher who might be unfamiliar with British culture.

Another challenge was the collection of data whilst in a global pandemic (Covid-19), where these supervisors were extremely occupied and not very responsive to emails.

Moreover, the dimension of being engaged and immersed with the research participants is a learning process in itself whereby I have learnt how to be critical and how to reflect on and distinguish between the personal and professional self, and therefore acquire a sense of self-development. Nonetheless, and as any research tradition is open to criticism, being an insider researcher can be problematic. Accordingly, Costley et al. (2010: 4) argue that insider position of the researcher might result in his/her failure to have a critical eye regarding data analysis. Reflecting on the current research, I am an Algerian and a Ph.D. student myself, thus, my Algerian Ph.D. participants tend sometimes to avoid sharing all that they feel. They will assume I am aware of their practices; indeed, many of them told me “aki aarfa/ ak aalabalak” respectively meaning in English “you are aware/you know”. Furthermore, Asselin (Asselin, 2003) has pointed out that the dual role can also result in role confusion when the researcher responds to the participants or when s/he analyses the data from a perspective other than that of a researcher.

3.2. Research Paradigm: Using Mixed Method Approach

Holliday notes that:

> ...one does not begin by choosing a method. Methods can be sufficiently flexible to grow naturally from the research questions. And in turn from the nature of the social setting in which the research is carried out.
>
> (Holliday, 2016: 21)

This section, therefore, introduces and justifies the reasons for the mixed-method approach and explains the choice of this methodological approach in the current work.

Considering the research literature on requests, one can notice that is more descriptive than explanatory. In other words, taking a quantitative approach, where more focus is on describing the politeness patterns used rather than explaining the reason behind using them from the participants' perspective. Thus, to have a deeper and first-hand understanding of what patterns of linguistic politeness the research participants (students) enact in their email requests to achieve social goals and why do they use these and to also understand how their supervisors understand and respond to their requests, a mixed method approach was deemed ideal. By adopting this approach, I am not only trying to answer the questions stated in chapter one, section 1. 3., but I am also aiming to provide a better understanding of how the speech act of requests is realized by English foreign language learners. This approach also provides me, as a researcher, with more in-depth explanations to ensure the validity of the results obtained from the current study. A mixed method approach, defined as mixing both qualitative and quantitative research methods together, provides deeper insights on the phenomenon under study (see Mertens and Hesse-Biber, 2012). In this regard, Brannen (2005) asserts that it is preferable to see mixing both qualitative and quantitative methods as a holistic process where each method completes the other rather than seeing them erroneously as binaries. Put differently, while the quantitative approach helps the researcher to explain the linguistic phenomenon, the qualitative helps him/her to understand the underpinning reasons behind these.

In line with the above paragraph, Creswell, Klassen, and Clark (2011: 2) suggest understanding the nature of mixed method research to realize both the advantages and challenges that might result from using this approach. In this spirit, following a paradigm that encompasses both quantitative and qualitative approaches enables the researcher to overcome the drawbacks of using, separately, either quantitative or qualitative methods. In other words, researchers can answer different research questions that either qualitative or quantitative approach cannot answer separately. In this regard, the practicality of using a mixed method approach stems from the freedom provided to the researcher to address different research inquiries (See Creswell et al., 2011: 13). Indeed, the benefits of using a mixed method approach is explained under the concept of "Synergy". Soanes and Stevenson (2004) define synergy as the combined effect of two options, which is greater than the effect of each individually (as cited in Hall and Howard, 2008: 251). Based on literature review, some researchers (e.g., Greene, 2008; Gelling, 2014; Ivankova and Wingo, 2018) outline the advantages of using a mixed method approach. For instance, Gelling (2014: 5) claims that following this approach (mixed method approach) gives depth while exploring certain topic of interest. Similarly, some researchers (e.g. Greene, 2008) have emphasised that a mixed methods approach provides a holistic image of the problem, and therefore, helps the researchers to answer the different questions they have both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Although a mixed method approach is deemed useful and researchers use it for different reasons (see, Denscombe, 2008: 272), conducting research using this approach is not without challenges. Creswell et al. (2011: 13-15) discuss three of these. They (ibid) stratify them under three subtitles: (a) the question of skills, (b) the question of time and resources and (c) the question of convincing others. Regarding the question of skills, researchers implementing a mixed methods approach are recommended to have experience with the different methods within either qualitative or quantitative approaches; researchers need to be aware of the different data collection and analysis techniques in both approaches. Another challenge that researchers might face is time and resources, they should consider whether this approach is achievable or not in their work. Put differently, following this approach is time consuming in both data collection and data analysis. The last challenge, in regard to convincing others, the relatively new emergence of the term “mixed-method” makes it difficult to convince people on why to adopt such an approach and convincing the reader of this was the core aim of the current section. Accordingly, a researcher’s openness to expanded views of methodologies and methods allows for greater creativity in the research process; a value that may lead to positive innovations. To put it another way, while reflecting on the current research, adopting a mixed method approach has allowed me to consider the disadvantages of using either quantitative or qualitative research tool, and has sanctioned the innovative process I have followed to overcome the disadvantages of using discourse completion tasks (see 3.3.1.1.), and therefore, come up with an advanced way to use them (see 3.3.2), while benefiting from the interviews (as a qualitative method) to explain how communication evolved within the current project. In the following section (3.3.), I discuss the process of coming up with a new way to use discourse completion tasks.

3.3. Revisiting Discourse Completions Tasks

The section splits into two main sections, Within the first one (3.3.1.), I provide a review of the most common data collection tools within pragmatics studies, mainly that of the discourse completion tasks. Different subsections under (3.3.1.) delineate the advantages and disadvantages of using discourse completion tasks for data collection purposes, and how these can be problematic in interlanguage and pragmatic research. Section (3.3.2.) explains and demonstrates how the discourse completions tasks are adapted to match the purpose and the aim of the current study.

3.3.1. Review of Data Collection Methods in Relation to Interlanguage Pragmatics.

Many researchers investigating the numerous methodologies which have been used to study speech acts (e.g., Yuan, 2001; Archer et al., 2012; Jucker, Schneider, and Bublitz, 2018) have demonstrated, in a comprehensive way, the advantages and disadvantages of using some data collection tools (e.g. DCT's, role plays). For examples, in their attempt to evaluate production tasks (e.g. role-plays, oral, and written discourse completion tasks/tests), Brown and Ahn, (2011), Bardovi-Harlig, (2013) and Taguchi, (2018) have compared the use of such data elicitation tests in relation to their reliability to provide accurate results and draw conclusions; and authenticity, meaning the degree to which they represent real life communications. A focus, however, has been directed towards discourse completion tasks (e.g., Kanik, 2013; Cyluk, 2013). Discourse Completion Tasks/Tests, usually abbreviated as DCTs across the literature, are indeed a common tool for data collection in relation to speech act realization (as cited in Archer et al., 2012: 46; see also Kanik, 2013: 624). In relation to this section (3.4.1.) of the chapter, and as a background to the chosen data collection procedure for the current project, I primarily shed the light first on the disadvantages and the number of limitations the Discourse Completion Tasks have in section (3.4.1.1.). Then, I review the advantages of these; where I also focus on works of some, but not all, the researchers that had used them and refer to the limits of their studies in the light of section (3.4.1.2.). Finally, in section (3.4.2.), I first highlight how natural vs elicited data collection tools should be regarded as a spectrum on a scale, where the binaries are "natural" and "elicited". Then, I explain how revisions can be made to Discourse Completion Tasks as an elicitation tool in the current work to make them more authentic and natural; hence, I attach an example of these in appendix A (students' DCT) and B (supervisors' DCT) to exemplify how the innovative use of DCTs work to account for turn taking as for written email requests and responses to these.

3.3.1.1. Disadvantages of Discourse Completion Tasks/Tests

Eliciting data using Discourse Completion Tasks seems to have number of limitations in the literature discussing the issue of data collection tools in interlanguage pragmatics and inter/cross-cultural communication. Indeed, the nature of the data collected using Discourse Completions Tasks has received criticism and been questioned since the 1980's, i.e., since DCTs were first introduced in the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) (for further details on this project; see Blum-kulka and Olshtain, 1984a). Rintell and Mitchell (1989), for example, claim that participants filling in written Discourse Completion Tasks plan what they write. Consequently, they will not provide what they would say in real life but what they think they would say instead (as cited in Pinto and Raschio,2007: 139). Sharing the same concerns, Pinto and Raschio (ibid) assert that Discourse Completion Tasks do not present the speech as it naturally occurs within discourse, and they further agree that the tool presents stereotypical responses. In this regard, Kanik (2013: 627) asserts that Discourse Completion Tasks lack the ability to give direct access to socio-pragmatic competence[17], whereas he (ibid) argues it is a good tool to investigate pragma-linguistic[18] competence. Put differently, while Discourse Completion Tasks prevent testing the participants' knowledge of using language in

[17] Leech (1983: 10) defines it as the social rules that govern linguistic choices of speakers and their interpretation by hearers.
[18] Leech (1983: 11) refers to the linguistic resources a speaker use to encode a given illocution as pragma-linguistics.

proper ways (i.e., socio-pragmatic), they are useful to draw on the language forms and strategies (i.e., pragma-linguistic) employed by the participants.

Another limitation of DCTs, is their inability to account for the interactional aspects of the communication, i.e., they do not allow the researcher to investigate speech in turns as they only account for single speech instances and turns. Indeed, although Discourse Completion Tasks allow the collection of large samples (Ogiermann, 2018: 229) Pinto and Raschio (2007: 139) agree that the tool does not allow for the analysis of "interactional aspects" including discourse moves and turn taking that usually occur in real life speech between a speaker and a hearer. As a result, many researchers note the drawbacks of using Discourse Completion Tasks within their research. For example, Fukushima (2003: 140), while quoting from Cohen (1996: 394), acknowledges the limitation of the data collection approach she was using (DCTs). Thus, while wondering whether that type of elicited data (i.e., DCTs) can provide what would be said in a real situation or not, Fukushima (ibid) argues that Discourse Completion Tasks nature would not resemble real-life discourse, which happens over-turns between a speaker/writer and hearer/reader. Moreover, Kanik (2013: 626) asserts that researchers (including himself) question the validity of data collected using discourse completion tasks. Similarly, Archer *et al*. (2012: 15) question whether Discourse Completion Tasks illustrate what participants will say in natural situations or not. Therefore, there is always a matter of argument on the difference between what the participants of DCTs think that would say, and what they would say in real life situations. Additionally, the agreement extends to how discourse completion tasks confine speech acts and restrict it to single turns.

In regard to the aim of this chapter as a whole, and the current section more specifically, I discuss the major drawback associated with Discourse Completion Tasks, which is their failure to capture authentic interaction or in other words turn-taking/ multi-turn sequences, especially for those researchers studying speech acts beyond sentence level (see Pinto and Raschio, 2007: 140). Nonetheless, and as any other data collection tool, Discourse Completion Tasks have some advantages too. In the next section (3.4.1.2.), I discuss the literature in favour of using Discourse Completion Tasks as a data collection tool to study interlanguage pragmatics and to investigate speech acts and politeness.

3.3.1.2. Advantages of Discourse Completion Tasks/Tests

In the same line with what has been discussed above in section 3.3., Archer *et al.* (2012: 11) claim that two main questions should be in mind before deciding on a data collection method, these being *"what we want to research"* and *"why we want to do so"*. Responding to the first question, the present research aims to probe what politeness strategies are used by Algerian Ph.D. students. Responding to the second question is partially linked to the first one. Put differently, figuring out the politeness strategies choices is important to overcome the criticism that discourse completion tasks have receives, mainly that of not accounting for turn taking, and this is by building on those results to come up with an innovative approach to use DCTs in the present research, and therefore to generate responses to requests. The methodological contribution of the current project resides in the new way of using DCTs as interactant-based discourse completion tasks (see section 3.3.2. below for more details). Moreover, Crystal (1997) claims that

> "The most highly valued forms of data collection should be those that promote the investigation of users' choices, constraints, social interaction, effect on other participants and act of communication"

(as cited in Bardovi-Harlig, 2013: 70).

Considering the two above recommendations, researchers can then find out and decide on the most suitable and convenient data collection tool to serve the objectives of their studies. In the following paragraph, below, I consider the two fundamental groupings of the available data collection tools within pragmatics; first to highlight the importance and significance of each; and second to show how revisited Discourse Completion Tasks (I-based DCTs), as an elicitation tool, are helpful and suitable for the current study to uncover the politeness strategies used by Algerian Ph.D. students and the responses to these by their supervisors (see section 3.3.2.).

In pragmatic studies, Kasper and Dahl (1991) note that researchers are acquainted with a number of data collection tools, which caused “variability”. Indeed, data collection tools in pragmatics are grouped, certainly, into two types: Authentic vs Elicited. Accordingly, Archer et al. (2012: 12) claim that there are two types of data. The first is “authentic”, which occurs without the researcher intervention; and the second, “elicited”, which needs the researcher to stimulate and collect it from respondents, i.e. it needs researcher intervention. Moreover, as any data collection tool has advantages and disadvantages, both “authentic” and “elicited data” have been assigned some (advantages and limitations) too. In this regard, Archer *et al.* (2012: 13) claim that naturally occurring data, even though it can be inspiring and useful, is not necessarily related to the aims of the study undertaken. In other words, they (ibid) regard natural data (e.g. broadcast shows, recorded conversations, field notes) as beneficial because it is conducted usually without participants’ awareness, however, they (ibid) point out that it is biased, and it does not necessarily include the variables/speech act the researcher wants to investigate. Accordingly, in studies investigating the implementation of broadcasting in (im)politeness studies (e.g. Lorenzo-Dus, 2009), the broadcast data is thought to be produced with “double articulation”. For example, if the researcher aims at studying the speech act of *complimenting* among business company members, the naturally occurring data collected is vague, as it occurs spontaneously, and the researcher cannot control it; it could also include more *requests* and very few *compliments*. Put differently, it is hard to guarantee that it will involve the intended speech act under investigation. Moreover, Fukushima (2000: 136) asserts that natural data cannot be always generalized as “one person may happen to use a certain expression on a particular occasion from which it is difficult to generalize”; thus, different participants may not use the same expression (e.g. a particular form or type of speech act) to cover the same propositional content. Another key point that relates to the disadvantage of using natural data is the validity of the researcher’ observation, which is not necessarily accurate as it can be subject to the observer’ paradox (Labov, 1972: 209). In other words, while the researcher is collecting his/her data (be it either natural or elicited); his/her presence can interrupt and affect the interaction process among his population. In opposition to Lorenzo-Dus’ (2009) view above, Archer *et al.* (2012: 12) claim that the most natural data is broadcasting, in the sense that the researcher or “the observer paradox” effect is really decreased/irrelevant. Nonetheless, they (ibid) argue on the other hand that this type of data is affected by its orientation to a particular audience. In the same vein, Hazel (2016: 453) shows how participant awareness of the recording tool can influence their interaction. Put differently, the researchers (i.e. Archer et *al.*, 2011; and Hazel, 2016) defend and confirm Lorenzo-Dus’s (2009) claim, either in full or partially, regarding the double articulation found in broadcast data. In the following paragraphs, I focus on the use of Discourse Completion Tasks as an elicited data tool and how it can be reliable in research on speech acts and politeness.

It is noteworthy that although “elicited data” are unnaturally produced, they address specific and pre-established research aims and questions, and more importantly they have methodologies designed for responses oriented to these aims and questions. For the previous point (i.e. being unnatural), elicited data have been heavily criticized by many researchers (e.g. Fukushima, 2003; Davies, Merrison, and Goddard,2007; Leopold, 2015) for their unnatural data sets. Nonetheless, data collection tools such as Discourse Completion Tasks have proved to be an effective way to gather data in pragmatics. In line with the previous claim, Cohen and Shively (2007: 196) describe written discourse completion tasks as an “indirect means for assessing spoken language in the form of a written production measure” (as cited in Bardovi-harlig, 2013: 70). Moreover, Discourse Completion Tasks are easy to administer and provide useful data in relation to the use of certain politeness strategies and language functions during communication. Furthermore, the use of DCTs for carefully selected groups of respondents brings targeted results; and by modifying the sociological variables within the scenarios the researcher can investigate the influence that certain parameters such as gender, power, age, social distance among others, have on the use of certain politeness strategies. Therefore, discourse completion tasks help in demonstrating the linguistic options used to attain interactional goals. DCTs, as a result, cannot be discounted as a *bona fide* means of data elicitation. Hence, I demonstrate how DCTs can be an alternative to oral forms of speech, and then I explain how they are significant to the different research aims, objectives, and questions by tackling how they allow the researcher to monitor the context and socio-pragmatic parameters that might affect the use and formulation of a particular speech act.

Regarding the importance of discourse completion tasks as a substitute for speech, Susilo (2017: 80) asserts that discourse completion tasks have gained momentum since their use by (Blum-kulka and Olshtain, 1984a). DCTs have been widely used over the years in numerous research projects to investigate the realization of speech acts (e.g., Bella, 2012; Farnia and Sattar, 2015; Deveci and Hmida, 2017; Thomas-Tate, Daugherty, and Bartkoski, 2017). Moreover, some researchers have used them either to compare native and non-native speakers (e.g. Fukushima, 2000; Kasanga and Lwanga-Lumu, 2007; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008), or to investigate how speech acts are realized among L1 speakers (e.g., Sharifian, 2008), Second language speakers/learners (e.g. Sharifian, 2008), or foreign language speakers/learners (e.g., Al Masaeed, 2017; Cedar, 2017). Interestingly, Discourse Completion Tasks/Tests (DCT's) have been considered as an alternative to natural data as they typically allow more focus on the researched entities than does natural data. In this regard, Rintell and Mitchell (1989: 270) claim that discourse completion tasks are similar to role-plays and both of them can be alternative approaches to collecting data than observing naturally occurring speech (as cited in Pinto and Raschio, 2007: 140). As such, the scenarios within the approach of discourse completion tasks include situations and statements, which are like real life situations, therefore, they resemble oral forms of communication. To clarify the previous points, it has been claimed that discourse completion tests results are similar to those occurring in real life especially with respect to the pragma-linguistic patterns (as cited in Billmyer and Varghese, 2000: 518). Thereafter, they (ibid: 517) refer to their importance in relation to getting authentic-like communication and having better understanding of human communication.

DCTs have been a useful tool to collect data in pragmatics, Pinto and Raschio (2007: 139), point out the limitations of using elicited data like DCTs because of their inability to reflect on occurring discourse (turn taking), but they (ibid) acknowledge that they use the approach as it serves the aim of their study. The use of the discourse completion tasks in Pinto and Rachio's study has enabled the researchers (i.e. Pinto and Raschio, 2007) to cross compare the results, and reveal the differences between the three groups of participants in relation to the level of directness used. Moreover, using DCTs reveals the differences between the group of participants in relation to the use and frequency of down-graders. Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) are flexible as they can be adjusted according to the variables under investigation, as well as, allowing the collection of a huge amount of data (as cited in Cedar, 2017: 217). In other words, they allow the researcher to have different samples of a particular speech act or acts by just changing and controlling the social and/or culture-specific factors (e.g. age, gender, power, relation of the interlocutors and so on) within the situations. Sharing a similar line of thought, Kanik (2013: 626) argues that discourse completion tasks are beneficial at two levels. First, they are easy to implement, and second, they allow for the generalization of the results as they can be administrated to a big sample. Indeed, discourse completion task benefits from the advantages of easy administration, mainly, as it has different forms (e.g. written and oral among others). Some researchers (e.g., Al Masaeed, 2017) have used oral discourse completion tasks, while others used the more common written form (e.g. Bella, 2012; Sucuoğlu and Bahçelerli, 2015; Deveci and Ben Hmida, 2017). Other researchers, however, have employed multiple choice discourse completion tasks (e.g., Aliakbari and Moalemi, 2015) to test the participants' levels of in/directness, as well as, to see the options they opt for (in terms of strategies) in relation to the situation outlined in the prompt. Yet others have employed online (written and multi-choice) ones (e.g., Thomas-Tate et al., 2017) to make the administration process easy and generate a large amount of data.

Moreover, Taguchi (2018: 7) argues that although elicited data is not authentic, naturally occurring data has disadvantages too; the amount of data the researcher wants to investigate is restricted as are the contexts in which the data is supposed to be collected. In this regard, Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992) emphasize the advantages discourse completion tasks, as opposed to natural data, have like the collection of large amounts of data and the control the researcher has over what is collected (as cited in Pinto and Raschio, 2007: 140). Furthermore, if comparison is required, Kasper and Dahl (1991) claim that DCTs allow the researcher to have comparable set of results that other data collection methods might not provide (as cited in Pinto and Raschio, 2007: 140). Moreover, depending on what is tested, data collection methods such as discourse completion tasks are generally implemented to assess participants' knowledge of linguistic forms in relation to contextual factors associated with and affecting the choice of language generated by the participants. Correspondingly, a striking advantage of discourse completion task is that the researcher has control over the situations, and therefore, over the kind of the data collected. For that reason, House (2018: 6) asserts that DCT's are set for researcher's goals, as they are alternatives for authentic data. Consequently, Billmyer and Varghese (2000: 517) argue that the 'discourse completion task' is continuously gaining importance within pragmatics related research.

Indeed, many recent studies continue to use DCT's (e.g. Önem, 2016), and this is mainly important to mention as to note for the usefulness of the tool in getting the data they require. As previously stated above, written questionnaires are deemed useful to unveil linguistic knowledge, they are time saving and can provide a large amount of data. In relation to the current study on the realization of requests, Blum-Kulka, Danet, and Gherson (1989) assert that strategies used by senders of request depend on "request goal, age of the addressee, and power of the speaker" (as cited in Leopold, 2015: 3). Hence, and in relation to the employment of discourse completion tasks, researchers (e.g. Leopold, 2015) investigate the effect of these variables (social variables: gender, status and social distance). In the following section (3.4.2.), I discuss how discourse completion tasks are revisited in this study and explain how their main downfalls/disadvantages are challenged in the current study.

3.3.2. Informant-based Discourse Completion Tasks

Fukushima (2003: 136) claims that the use of a valid data collection tool should not be the sole criterion the researcher should consider, for her the use of feasible and practical instruments are recommended. Relating the previous point of view with the previously stated *pros* and *cons* of natural vs elicited methods of data collection (see section 3.3.1.2. and subsections 3.3.1.1. and 3.3.1.2.), I would argue here that tools within each group (elicited vs natural) should be looked at as a spectrum on a scale rather than deciding it belongs to one of the binaries. Therefore, I demonstrate in the following lines how within natural data, there is always a level of elicitation; and how that within every elicited data, there is a level of authenticity or naturalness. Considering this, some researchers (e.g. Fukushima, 2003) argue that natural spoken data can be invalid in instances where it is elicited. To explain the previous claim, researchers using for instance recorded videos, interviews or observation will inevitably request the participants' consent for ethical considerations. At this point, the researcher influences the data collected as the participants may be disrupted by his/her presence. In addition, the presence of any other audio/video recording device might to a certain extent influence participants' speech. Thus, the data are influenced by the observer's paradox (Labov, 1972), and it will be to a certain point less natural as participants are aware of the research taking place. On the contrary, elicited data too can have some instances and entities that are similar to natural speech (i.e. it reflects on at least the pragma-linguistic knowledge that the participants have), and as a result it is more practical; arguably it is therefore more valid. Despite the downsides of DCTs, I decided to use them and through the current research I demonstrate how I design the discourse completion tasks innovatively by overcoming their failure to account for interactional communication by developing my own methodology in the following paragraphs.

Given the aforementioned challenges, some researchers (e.g., Nguyen, 2018) have triangulated the use of discourse completion tasks by the employment of situation assessments tasks (e.g. Questionnaire) to validate the results; while others (e.g., Ogiermann, 2018) have contrasted the results from DCTs with naturally occurring data to see whether they produce natural-like answers or not. Nonetheless, only few researchers (e.g. Billmyer and Varghese, 2000; see also Kanik, 2013) have, respectively, reconstructed and modified the way the tool is used (DCT), either by enriching the content of the situations (scenarios); or by completely changing the way it is used. For instance, participants of the reverse discourse completion tasks or R-DCTs (Kanik, 2013) are not asked to produce responses based on made up scenarios with different variables to test as in traditional DCT's, rather they are asked and required to tell the researcher about the situation in which they think this speech act is appropriately produced. In different wording, participants in R-DCT are exposed to a certain speech act (e.g. request, apology) as a prompt and they are asked to extract and talk about the appropriate situations in which they can produce these speech acts and therefore provide sociological factures and the context. This type of discourse completion task, however, I argue, did not address the major drawback of the tool, as it mainly captures the essence of the participants' socio-pragmatic knowledge rather than their linguistic or interactional knowledge. Accordingly, and at least as far as the present study is concerned, some of the previous reconstructions of the tool do not target the major limitation that DCTs have, i.e. not accounting for turn-taking. Thus, in the following paragraph, I explain how the DCTs are used in the current study as "informant-based DCTs" to account for turn taking or both speaker/writer and hearer/receiver.

Cohen (2004: 317) asserts that in trying modifications to "make the task more authentic", researchers should bear in mind that it remains a task and it is nothing more than a simulation to a real-life situation (as cited in Kanik, 2013: 626). Additionally, Jucker (2009: 1615) claims that, as the researcher is aware of the data collection tools s/he is using, including the advantages and disadvantages they have, s/he can understand the linguistic phenomenon s/he is investigating. From this perspective, the inadequacies and the limitations of discourse completion tasks are quite apparent; and, as such, I, here, aim to develop an innovative way to use discourse completion tasks, and I refer to it as "Informant-based Discourse Completion Tasks". Within that task both the writer/sender (students) and the receiver (supervisors) would respond, successively, to particular and related prompts and situations (See appendix A and B for details). Put differently, I develop a discourse completion task administrated at two phases. The first stage is where the participants (students) respond to particular situations (scenarios), and the second stage is where the other participants (supervisors) respond to other situations, which are based on the students' responses from stage one. Put in a different word, a mimicry of the students' responses collected from the first stage is used as prompt to the supervisors at the second stage.

To simplify the above, the first stage of the task is about situations that work as a prompt for the participants (students) to initiate and formulate a certain type of request; whereas the second stage of informant based DCTs is a mimicry of the responses of the students; the latter is used as a situation or a prompt to generate responses to those requests by supervisors (see appendix D). Accordingly, the first part of the task has seven prompts/situations to generate requests (urgent meeting, deadline extension, feedback, supervision, letter of recommendation, resources, guidance), and these are emailed to students in a document word format so that they fill these in and send them back to the researcher. The next phase of the task starts when the researcher receives emails back from participants (students), hence after the first sets of requests in task one are generated by students. As a researcher, I work on these to generate a new version (mimicry) of discourse completion tasks that will be forwarded to supervisors, and therefore, triggers their responses to the stimulation of requests previously formulated in task one. See below an exemplification of the seven (1-7) situations and prompts that are administrated to student respondents and see below it and exemplification on how Informants-based DCTs work.

1) **Request for urgent supervisory meeting:**

You are sending an e-mail to your supervisor to ask for an urgent meeting in the next coming days because you felt desperate about your own PhD project. What would you tell him/her in the email to persuade him/her?

2) **Request for deadline extension:**

You have a deadline tomorrow and you are sending an e-mail to your supervisor to inform him that you could not finish the work for submission; therefore, you want him/her to give you more time or to extend the due date. What would you tell him/her in the email?

3) **Request for feedback:**

You are sending an e-mail to your supervisor asking him/her to give you a feedback about a recent work that you have submitted less than a week ago. What would you write in the e-mail?

4) **Request for supervisory meeting:**

You are on a scholarship to study abroad, and during the process of looking for a potential supervisor; you have found someone, whose interests fall exactly within what you want to do in your PhD. How would you write an email to demand and ask that person to be your supervisor?

5) **Request for a letter of recommendation:**

You are entitled to work as a teacher assistant at a university level, and you are asked to provide a letter of recommendation written by your supervisor next week. What would you write in the email?

6) **Request for resources:**

You want to work on a particular theory/framework/author/ novel…etc. and you have not found any sources (hardcopy/electronic) available for you; your supervisor is someone who might have these. How will you ask him/her to provide you with these?

7) **Request for guidance:**

You are working on the milestones for your PhD, and you are confused in relation to writing the literature review/ organizing thought and ideas/ which procedures you should take/ or what to start with. As you know that your supervisor/ supervisors are there for guidance, how would you approach them regarding this matter?

After receiving the generated requests by students (see a few examples bellow), I analysed these using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies (see chapter2). The analysis counts the occurrence of politeness strategies used and thus illustrates the tendency of the students to use particular politeness strategies. I, therefore, imitate and mimic these into an email form situation and forward it to supervisors and ask them to respond to these requests. An important step that I have taken, however, here is informing the supervisors that these emails are students' informed data, i.e. a mimicry to students' responses and they are not fully imaginary situations. For demonstration, see below the examples (1), (2) and (3) that were based on three responses from the participants (female students) to phase one of DCTs (request for urgent meeting). The following example (4) is a prompt (mimicry) to trigger supervisors' responses to email requests.

1)

Dear Dr. X
I hope you are doing well. I am having some issues with my methodology, and I was hoping we could meet to discuss it.
Thanks,
best regards,
Jane Austin (pseudonym)

2)

Dear Dr. X
I hope this e-mail finds you well.
I would like to request a meeting with you at the soonest, if possible.
I am in strong need to discuss some issues that I am facing lately with my PhD, and would really appreciate to have a chat with you about it.
Thank you.
Kind Regards,
Yara (pseudonym)

3)

Dear X,
I hope you are doing well.

I am currently worried about my Ph.D. progress and was wondering if it is possible to arrange a meeting for the next few days to talk about the issues I am having.
I look forward to hearing from you soon,
Sarah (Pseudonym)

4)

You are receiving this request for an urgent meeting at a short notice. How would you reply to this email?
Dear (first name),

I hope that you are doing well. I am emailing you because I feel so worried and stressful as I am trying to read and write about my topic. At this point of time, I am facing some obstacles concerning my Ph. D project. If possible, can we arrange a meeting in the coming days to discuss my concerns?
Regards
Amina

In the examples (1), (2), and (3), above, the student responses were imitated based on the politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson's 1987 Theory of politeness) they have used in the DCTs. While analysing the data, I considered the occurrence of these politeness strategies and imitated to formulate a prompt/scenario as in the example (4). I had also considered the opening and closing forms used by the students (for further details see chapter four). Given the examples above, I argue the tool can account for the inclusion of response to request, which traditional and previously modified DCT's have not covered. Therefore, the novelty of these (informants-based discourse completion tasks within the current study) lies in its ability to improve the quality of the data collected from discourse completion tasks and ultimately the quality of research using it. In other words, it will make the task more authentic, as the situations in the second phase of the task, and which has been forwarded to the supervisors (see appendix E), are based on real interactant-informed situations and not on imaginary ones (as previously demonstrated in the paragraph preceding the examples above). The novice way of using the tool, then, enables the researcher to account for communication/dialogue as a whole, as well as, it enables him/her to make the situations more natural. Further details on the distribution of the tool are discussed in section 3.6.

3.4. Research Settings

This section deals with the process/es of participant recruitment within the current project as well as the data collection method, its stages and its statistics.

3.4.1. Recruitment of the Participants

The research participants were recruited randomly, they are both Algerian Ph.D. students and their supervisors at Manchester Metropolitan University. First of all, I distributed flyers to the students as I already knew some of them previously, while I met others at the day of their induction at MMU. In the first phase of the recruitment, a total of 15 female Ph.D. students contacted me indicating their agreement to take part in my study. The age of these students ranges from 25 to 27 years old, and they are either final year students (6) or 2nd year students (9). All student participants had a scholarship and all of them had studied BA and MA degrees in either English literature or Linguistics at Algerian universities; therefore, their English level is advanced (Council of Europe Language Framework). For the homogeneity of the population, it was deemed essential that all student participants should be Algerians and should be on a Ph.D. course at MMU. The two criteria were chosen to exclude other Arab students and also to exclude those who had already study either BA or MA at a UK higher education establishment. In regard to the recruitment of the supervisors, this has been through email invitations. Only 6 out of 12 invited supervisors agreed to take part in the study. Each of the supervisors usually has more than one Algerian Ph.D. candidate. The supervisors were from different cultural backgrounds (4 British, 1 Serbian, and 1 Algerian), all of them work at the MMU and are very familiar with British university culture.

3.5. Data Collection Methods and Its Stages

This section discusses the data collection methods used in the current project. The section develops over two paragraphs. The first paragraph provides a brief demonstration of data statistics and the procedures/steps taken to distribute the written Informant-based DCTs. The second paragraph justifies first the use of semi-structured interviews then discusses the procedures taken to conduct these.

Regarding data statistics and volume, each student (total of 15) has received a discourse completion task to complete, each DCT is composed of 7 scenarios, thus the total number was 105 scenarios collected. The data collected from the students' scenario counts approximately at 4000 words. The six (6) supervisors as well, each has received a DCT to fill in and each DCT has 7 scenarios to reply to. The approximate word count from the supervisors' responses to the seven (7) scenarios was about 2000 words. Following the collection of discourse completion tasks, twenty-one (21) interviews were conducted (15 students and 6 supervisors), where each interview lasted approximately for 20 minutes each. Interviews data transcription has results in approximately 15000 words.

As previously stated in section (3.4.2.), the distribution of the informants' based DCTs went through two stages. In the first stage, I forwarded, via email, 15 written discourse completion tasks to the participants (students). The written DCTs have two parts; in the first part, rich contextual cues within seven (7) statements that resemble email situations (see appendix D for more details) were provided; these were similar to how a traditional Discourse completion task is conducted. The situation was mainly to prompt responses in relation to request realization and to figure out the politeness strategies used while performing these. In the second part of the DCTs, however, I asked the students to assess the situations given in part one of the task from the most imposing to the least imposing one on a scale of five (for details see again appendix D).

After receiving the participants' responses during the first phase of data collection, I generated (based on students' responses) new six (6) written discourse completion task to trigger the supervisors' responses to the different requests. Like the students' DCT, the supervisors' ones consisted of two parts. In the first part, I had forwarded a mimicry of the students answers to supervisors (considering the responses as a more naturalistic data and as a prompt to generate a response to the request) and asked them to respond to the email requests in the different situations (see appendix E). In the second part of the task, I included an assessment question to supervisors; where I ask them to rank the different types of requests from the more polite to the least polite ones (for further details see appendix E). The triangulation of the informants based DCT with assessment task aims at helping the researcher to better understand the students' choice and supervisors' perspectives on the email requests, and this is by taking a pragma-linguistic approach that is informed by a socio-pragmatic one to do the analysis of the discourse completion tasks' results. However, to reach in-depth insights, discourse completion tasks were followed up by a one-to-one interview (see appendix F for further details). The following paragraph deals first with why semi-structured interviews were used, then it discusses the procedures taken to interview the research participants.

Taguchi (2018: 13) claims that the current trend in data collection is the use of a mixed method approach; she (ibid) argues that discourse completion tasks are mainly used to trigger participants' knowledge, however, DCTs need to be shadowed by follow up interviews to explore the participants' perspectives on their language use and practices. Interviews are tools where the researcher listens carefully to the interviewee. In the present study, I use semi-structured interviews, because this lends itself to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of using linguistic politeness. In other words, conducting semi-structured interviews deemed useful to answer question relative to students' motivations and supervisors' perceptions. In line with this, Chadwick et al. (2008: 291) claim that the most common data collection tool for qualitative research. They (ibid) state that interviews are divided into three types: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. While structured interviews are relatively short, quick, and beneficial to clarify and answer questions that need understanding, their nature does not allow for further in-depth explanations. Additionally, (Chadwick et al., 2008: 291) argue that unstructured interviews lack organization and theoretical background; they are time consuming and difficult to control. Therefore, and as far as the scope and the aim of the current study is concerned, semi-structured interviews have been chosen as the qualitative data collection tool. The semi-structured interviews are deemed helpful to answer the present research questions. They also allow both the interviewer and the interviewee to explore deeply a certain aspect by diverging during the conduct of the interview. Consequently, semi-structured interviews provide more details on particular responses, and this is by asking follow-up questions like: "can you tell me more about this". In this regard, Chadwick *et al.* (2008: 292) assert that interviews are useful to trigger participants' "views, experiences, beliefs, and/or motivation on specific matters" (e.g. The use of particular politeness strategies and moves). Put differently, the researchers (ibid) point out that in relation to social phenomena, interviews ought to bring understanding and deep insights to the research. In the current study, interviews with the participants were conducted through two phases as well. In other words, an online interview. Interviews were with both Algerian Ph.D. students and their supervisors at MMU. For more details on the questions asked during the interviews, please see appendix (F).

3.5.1. The Language of the Interviews

During the interviews, participants were allowed to speak in any language or language varieties they wanted; including Standard Arabic, Algerian Dialects, other Arabic dialects, Berber, French, or English as these are the language varieties I can speak/understand. The freedom to choose the language allows the participants to talk about their experiences comfortably without worrying about translation from one language to another. Nonetheless, the use of different languages has had some challenges. The challenges started to appear at the transcription phase and persisted at both the translation and analysis stages too. The Algerian student participants, given their multilingualism, deployed a range of language varieties within one interview and that itself was in some instances difficult to translate. Furthermore, participants tended to code-switch and, in a few instances, they blended English with Arabic (Englabic). Here are some examples of these.

1: Code switching:

Example:

> **Yara:** "For example, I wanna have a meeting with you … /**C'est simple fi rasi**/"
> "For example, I wanna have a meeting with you...it is simple in my head"

Being defined as the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language in conversation, in the above example Yara seems to end her sentence with a French (C'est simple) and Algerian dialect (fi rasi) code switching that has been translated into "it is simple in my head" in the current research.

2: Englabic

The combo of English and Arabic language on a word level. Where the root of the word is English, but the grammar is Arabic. For instance, the English verb "to send" is said as "n**send**iha" meaning "I will send her", see the example below.

Example:

Yara: "I do not want to /**nsendiha**/ an email where she feels that I am ordering her "meet me"

"I do not want to **send her** an email where she feels like I am ordering her "meet me"

To accommodate a wide readership every instance of these (i.e. code-switching or Englabic) were translated into English but that was effort and time consuming. I had mixed both the use of word-for-word translation and sense-for-sense translation. While word-for-word translation favours the linguistic function of the language, sense-for-sense translation favours the transmission of meaning by considering cultural differences (Farghal, 2013: 39). In short, the aim of translating to English as a target language is twofold. First of all, to make the participant feel comfortable speaking in any language variety they would like to express themselves in and second to address the readership. The translation did not aim to demonstrate participants' language choice as this goes beyond the scope of the current project.

3.6. Methods for Data Analysis

Given the various procedures and the iterative approach taken for data collection (see 3.5. for details), the datasets of the current research require a careful analysis, where I adopt an abductive approach, that is to say the approach where researchers tend to use pre-existing theories to interpret data' patterns, while also being open regarding the collected datasets and what it reveals, and therefore, use it to explain and revise pre-existing theories and assumptions. To further explain, an abductive approach, according to Kennedy and Thornberg (2018: 52), is the combination of: (a) a deductive approach, where the researcher tests, through data, a particular theory or hypothesis; and (b) an inductive approach, where the researcher depends on the data and what it might disclose, and therefore, provides a possible explanation that might change the existing understanding of certain phenomena. Using an abductive approach within the current project was deemed important for an in-depth analysis of the data collected, and therefore, for answering the different research questions (see chapter 1; section 1.3.). Furthermore, an abductive approach has been adopted as the results of the study cannot be generalized to the whole population due to the relatively limited number of the participants (15 Ph.D. students and 6 supervisors at MMU), and thus, the conclusions deriving from the data (See chapter 6) might not be verifiable. In the following paragraphs, I explain the frameworks used for data analysis and how these all together function to provide an explanation on how communication requests and their responses unfolded in the current project.

First of all, the data obtained from student' written DCTs was analysed using Brown and Levinson's (1987) taxonomy of politeness strategies. The reason for using this model is twofold: a) to test the applicability of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory of the strategies used by non-westerners and to mainly reveal what we can retain from their model; and b), to account for the occurrence of certain strategies, and thus, to enhance the use of the Discourse Completion task as a data collection tool in pragmatics (for details, see section 3.4.2.). Considering the previous aims above, the theory is tested against the collected data, in other words, a deductive approach is applied, where as a researcher I have been guided by Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness.

The analysis of the data obtained from DCTs underwent different stages. First, I uploaded all of the students' DCTs onto NVIVO 12 Pro, where each file in the software represents one students' response (15 files in total). Second, I familiarized myself, through repetitive reading, with the responses sentence by sentence (including the openings and closings of the requests). After, I highlighted all those that could be stratified under Brown and Levinson's (1987) super-strategies and sub-strategies (see chapter 2 for more details). In NVIVO 12 Pro, at first, I looked for the sub-strategies and put these under nodes, where nodes are equivalent to codes. After the first analysis, I grouped the different sub-strategies under the appropriate super-strategies. This results in having 5 nodes representing the five super-strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Each node stratified into other sub-nodes (sub-strategies). To exemplify the process, see the figures below. Moreover, using NVIVO 12 Pro was beneficial, where the software accounts for the reoccurrence of the politeness strategies across the data sets, this comes under the "references" icon in the software.

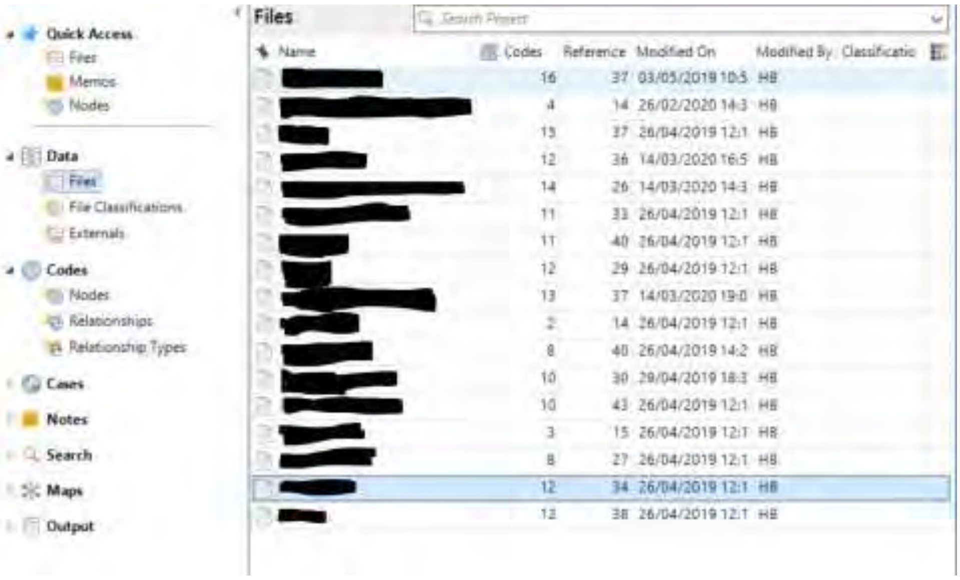

Figure 4: Example of how students' DCTs are uploaded to NVIVO 12 Pro.

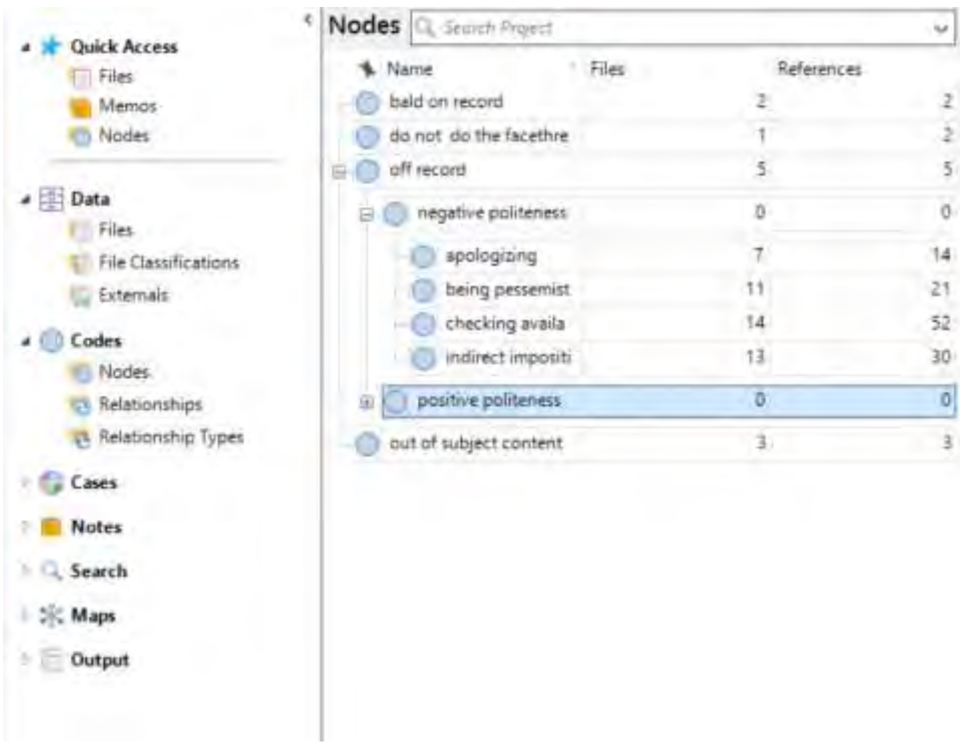

Figure 5: example of initial nodes and Sub-nodes.

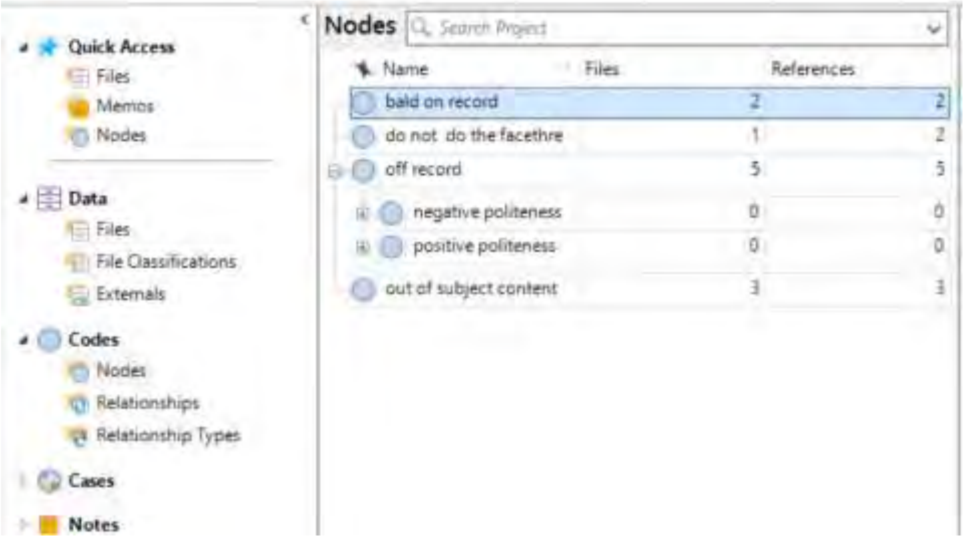

Figure 6: Example of final nodes.

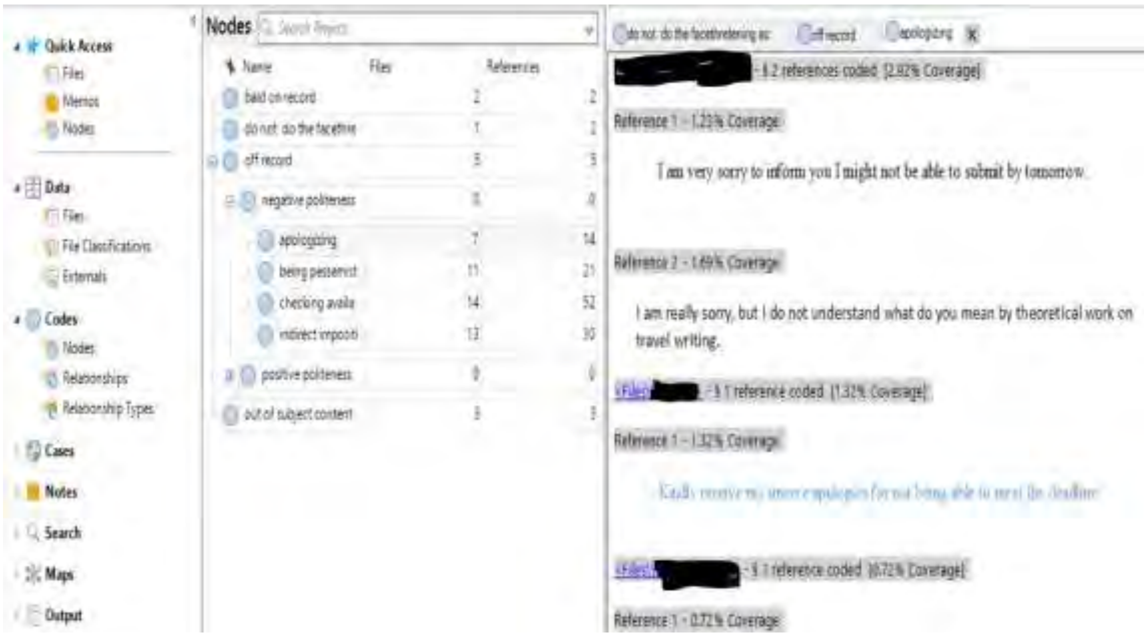

Figure 7: Examples of final nodes and sub-nodes.

Regarding the supervisors' responses to requests in I-DCTs, these had been analysed using an adaptation of Bousfield's (2008) model of responses to impoliteness (see chapter 4 and 5 for further details). While exploring what impoliteness is in face-to-face interaction and how can we analyse it, Bousfield (2008), focusing on military discourse from a reality TV show, suggested a prototypical model to impoliteness responses at a discourse level. In other words, the analysis considered both a speaker and a hearer, thus, instances of impoliteness (by speakers) and responses to these (by hearers). Relative to the present study, Brown and Levinson' s (1987) has been one of the theoretical frameworks adapted by Bousfield (2008) to develop his own model. In this regard Bousfield argues:

> 'Despite the savaging that Brown and Levinson have received in recent years, I still fervently believe that a work of such insights, magnitude and complexity still has a considerable amount to tell us'
>
> (Bousfield, 2008: 67)

In the current study, I am adapting Bousfield model of responses to impoliteness to develop my own model of response to politeness. Bousfield's model (2008; and further in 2010) explains three different face threats or damage (see below):

1) Accidental Face Damage, which can be *unwitting*. In his suggested prototype of im/politeness understanding, Bousfield defines Accidental Face Damage as:

> "a result of rudeness [that is] the inadequate levels of politeness [caused by]: 'speaker insensitivity' and/or 'hearer hypersensitivity', 'a clash of interactant expectations, cultural misunderstanding, misidentification (on either part) of the type of communicative activity engaged in, etc. (see Goffman 1967: 14). Impoliteness is inferred, however"
>
> (Bousfield, 2010: 122)

2) Accidental Face Threat, where Bousfield defines it as:

> 'result of 'rudeness' (inadequate levels of politeness), speaker insensitivity' and 'hearer hypersensitivity' clash of interactant expectations, cultural misunderstanding, misidentification (on either part) of the type of communicative activity engaged in, etc. (see Goffman 1967: 14). impoliteness attempt is inferred"

(Bousfield, 2010: 122)

3) Incidental Face Damage, Bousfield (2010: 123) claims it as:

> 'a result of perceived 'rudeness' (inadequate levels of politeness), 'speaker insensitivity', 'hearer hypersensitivity', a clash of interactant expectations, a cultural misunderstanding, a misidentification (on either part) of the type of communicative activity engaged in, etc. … (see Goffman 1967: 14). Impoliteness is not inferred.

(Bousfield, 2010: 123)

As we can see from the three aforementioned definitions, the difference between accidental face damage, accidental face threat, and incidental face damage resides in Bousfield's meta inference to impoliteness. Inference to impoliteness in the above three categories, however, seems to be a product of a) the hearer's perception/construct of the speaker's intent, and consequently of b) the hearer's face damage or the lack of hereafter. In the current study, I am more concerned with incidental face damage, and more precisely with what Bousfield (2008) refers to as *innocent face threats,* and which occur as a result of the students' inadequate mastery of the language of instruction (English in the current research). Holliday (2011: 19) refers to the same previous concept as 'innocent cases for intercultural communication". Investigating responses to these cases is the focus of the current study, where the student participants employ politeness strategies in their email requests to attain favourable responses (acceptance) from their supervisors.

While Brown and Levinson (1987: 18) claim that responses to positive politeness escalat in interaction; meaning that positive politeness is responded to by positive politeness; Qian and Pan (2019: 22) explain that the interconnection between positive and negative face and its analysis is not applicable in written communication, and therefore, not immediately apparent. In other words, the interpretation of politeness occurring in written communication (e.g. email requests) may be misleading due to the absence of social cues (e.g. tone, facial expressions). Looking at the whole communication process, i.e. taking both interlocutors into account, Leech (1983: 37) claims that "when using language speakers tend to use stretched and complex utterances to achieve their goals". Additionally, Brown asserts that

> "what listeners have understood from what a previous speaker has said is frequently revealed in what they say [do]...next turn at speaking".
>
> (Brown, 1995: 1)

Consequently, Bousfield (2008: 82) notes that future research should be done on the perlocutionary acts that were ignored by speech act theory. Indeed, Bousfield's (2008) model considers the analysis of responses to impoliteness in interaction, yet the suggested model of responses he provided needs to be tested against different data.

Bousfield (2008: 219) suggests 5 response model to instances of impoliteness. The theoretical set of choices to respond to impoliteness are summarized as follows: 1) do not respond and withdraw linguistically from the exchange, 2) accept the opposition, 3) counter defensively, 4) counter offensively, and 5) compromise. What is important in this study, and from which I am inspired to provide a response model to politeness, is the respond options (interactants choosing to respond to impoliteness). Bousfield (ibid: 193) suggests that in counter strategies there is a pairing of politeness and responses to it. Regarding the previous points, interlocutors can have an offensive-offensive pairing or an offensive-defensive pairing. Furthermore, counter strategies (i.e. respond offensively or defensively) are considered the responses to all kind of face damage and threat. However, the previous claim seems to be problematic as it ignores "the innocent cases of intercultural misunderstanding" (Holliday, 2011: 19). Therefore, the current study aims to modify Bousfield's model (2008) to develop a response model to politeness instances (see section 4.2.1. for further details).

Now in regard to the qualitative data from the study, extracts from the semi-structured interviews with both students and their supervisors were reported, analysed, and explained under themes (see chapter 4 sections 4.1.2. and 4.2.2. for further details). Accordingly, after the data was collected and transcribed, emerging themes were abducted (both deduced and induced) from the datasets. Indeed, as a researcher, I was influenced by the theory of politeness Brown and Levinson's (1987) and Bousfield's (2008) model of responses to impoliteness, and consequently followed a top-down/theory driven analytical approach (Hayes, 1997). At the same time, I have been open and flexible about what the analysis of datasets tells, and how it explains the complexity of communicating politeness across cultures and therefore adopted a bottom-up/data driven (Frith and Gleeson, 2004) analysis (Inductive approach). More importantly, the purpose of analysing the datasets from the interviews under themes is twofold: (a) to answer research questions 2, 4 and 5 (see section 1.3.); and (b) to challenge, and therefore, bring nuanced explanations/modifications for the sociocultural aspects that Brown and Levinson (1987) have predicted and believed to influence the use of politeness strategies. In other words, the analysis by themes aims at the engagement with the patterns influencing participants' linguistic choices and practices, both in formulating requests and responses to them.

Although the collection of the interview' data followed "a linear-sequential" pattern (see Thornberg, 2018), meaning that I collected all the data and then I started the analysis, my thematic analysis method broadly followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) step-by-step guide which consists of 6 phases. Nonetheless, the actual analysis did not follow a linear process of moving from one phase to another, but rather, it was cyclical moving back and forth between the different stages. Accordingly, I, in the following bullet points, I describe each phase in relation to the current research (through exemplification from the data sets).

- **Phase 1:** researcher Familiarisation with the data. The researcher, at this stage, is required to transcribe, translate (if data has more than one language) and read the data and listen to it multiple times. In fact, I transcribed and translated the whole interviews, excluding greetings, introductions, and conclusions. To be more familiarized with the datasets, the transcription and translation processes were done by myself. The prosodic features (e.g. tone, pause, stress) were not transcribed as I am focusing, within the current research, on the 'what' rather than on the 'how'. In other words, I have only used the necessary conventions that would fulfil my project purpose (mainly questions 2, 4 and 5). However, the process of familiarization was time consuming, I took time to listen carefully through repetitive listening to the interviews. The interviews (equivalent of 21 hours) were then transcribed using a computer and imported onto NVIVO 12 Pro, which was used as an analytical tool to code the data.
- **Phase 2:** Researcher Generating initial codes. Although the coding was, initially, data-driven by considering the research question and theoretical frameworks, the coding was both theory and data-driven. Moreover, the coding process was neither easy nor straightforward. Put differently, some lines from the data have more than one code, this making the number of references (the co-occurrence of a certain code across the dataset) inaccurate. Furthermore, using NVIVO 12 Pro coding was an appropriate fit to carry on the whole thematic analysis stages. As a result, I combined NVIVO coding

with manual coding. I printed the sources (interviews) and tried to map the different codes under themes.

- **Phases 3, 4, 5:** The researcher searching, reviewing and defining themes, I have read the codes several times and classified these into tables and mind maps. This process aided me, as a researcher, to envisage the relationship between the different existing codes.
- **Phase 6:** The researcher producing the report. During the process of producing the analysis chapter, I selected extracts to support each theme. I also tried to interpret the extract thoroughly to provide a readable account to support my argument.

3.7. Piloting

3.7.1. Piloting Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs)

To check the validity and the clarity of the informant-based discourse completion tasks, and therefore, the participants' understanding of these, I conducted a pilot study with five participants (4 female students and 1 male British Supervisor at MMU). The piloting took in total a period of a month. At first, I distributed one (face to face) and later four (online) written discourse completion tasks to the five participants (pseudonymised as P1/P2/P3/P4 and P5 for ethical and confidentiality reasons). The DCTs were in the English language which is the language used at UK universities. The subjects (4 females and 1 male) were asked to fill in the discourse completion tasks with a note that the task should not take longer than 20 minutes in total, but that they were free to exceed that if they needed to. Thereafter, I asked them to imagine themselves in the different situations provided and respond, based on what would they respond to these. After receiving back, the responses to discourse completion tasks, I asked the participants (students), on the one hand, why they had written the email in such a way and what they were thinking of or what they were reflecting on while writing the email requests. On the other hand, I asked the male supervisor if anything was unclear. In the following paragraphs, I state what difficulties the participants came across regarding the structure of the DCTs, before I proceed to how I addressed these in the section which follows (3.7.3.).

The time taken to finish the task varied among the participants. While Participant P2 and P3 finished the task within 20 minutes, P1, P4 and P5 devoted around 30 minutes to finish the task. As a consequence, a follow up questions around the visibility of the task to figure out any prior inadequacies or complexities was deemed important at this stage. Put differently, asking each participant about the clarity of the task and, the instructions informed me about the feasibility of the task before carrying out the actual data collection with the other participants. In relation to the task' structure and instructions, all participants understood the content of the situations and the instructions given to fill in these. However, in the second part of the DCTs (assessment task), the participants' answers showed their inability to understand the meaning of the word "imposition" nor its orientation (is it imposing on the supervisors or is it imposing on the students). The word "imposition" in the assessment task was mainly used to classify the situations from the most imposing to the least imposing one on the part of the supervisors. The participant, however, finding the word "imposition" written on its own neither with specifications on whom the imposition is nor with an explanation on what it means has hindered classifying the situations (the 7 scenarios). Student participants (P1/P2/P3/P4) thought they needed to classify the situation as which is the most/least imposing on themselves. Put differently, they understood the term "imposing" in relation to the efforts they needed to make to sound more polite and convincing.

After addressing the previously mentioned challenge about the time to finish the task and the "imposition" word (see section 3.7.3.1.), I first distributed (Via emails) the DCTs to the Ph.D. students. The body of the email explains the nature of the task and its length. In these emails, I also asked the participants to send back the responses when they had finished along with an indication of their availability for interviews. Looking at the discourse completion tasks, I noticed a variety in terms of strategies they had chosen; the results obtained demonstrated a different use of email writing styles as well, including the opening (e.g. address forms) and the closings (see chapter 4 and 5 for more details). The following section (3.7.2.) deals with piloting the semi-structured interviews that I had respectively with the five participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5).

3.7.2. Piloting the Semi-structured Interviews

Since it was crucial to check the efficiency of using follow up semi-structured interviews, I demonstrate, here, the efficacy of the procedures I took while conducting the interviews to obtain enough data. The interviews were conducted after individual analysis of the discourse completion tasks which had been collected from each participant. This process was followed to provide me as a researcher with enough time to analyse and reflect on the participants' responses in the first stage of the DCTs, and hence to construct effective semi-structured interview questions. In other words, the interview questions were informed by the analysis of the respondents' DCTs (see appendix C for further details). Consequently, piloting the interview provided me with insights on how to frame my questions to answer research questions (see 1.3.). I planned the interview into 3 sections. The introduction: I explained the reason for the interview and asked general questions on email communication and the communicative style of Algerian Ph.D. students. Then the second section varied in both the students' and the supervisor's interviews; however, in both cases, the section questions their perceptions and their linguistic practices and motivations. The last section differs from one individual to another, and it is concerned with the students' and the supervisor's responses in the previous task the DCT. The answers generated from the previous sections helped me to delve deeper into the motivations behind using certain forms and their relation to politeness or the lack of it. It also paved the way to ask questions regarding how participants use language strategically to achieve their communicative goals.

3.7.3. Corrections Made for the Present Study

3.7.3.1. The Structure/content of the Discourse Completion Tasks

Because of the differences in the time devoted to fill in the task (i.e. DCT), I decided to extend the timing from 20 minutes to 30 minutes. I also considered an online administration of the task (via email) to the participants. Administrating the discourse completion tasks via email has two advantages: First, participants become less concerned about composing the requests as they are not confined by time limits. Second, the online distributed DCTs are helpful to get authentic-like responses as the participants are not under the effect of the observer paradox and are using technology to formulate the requests. Regarding the content of discourse completion task, only one correction was made. As previously stated, during the piloting, participants seem to misunderstand the orientation of the word "imposition" that was written in part two of the students' DCTs, Consequently, and to avoid any further misinterpretation of the word "imposition" (see example a), I clarified (see part two of appendix D) that the word imposition is related to the supervisor, hence I reworded the part two of the discourse completion task as follows (see example b):

a) “Classify the previous situations from the least to the most *imposing”*

b) “Classify the previous situations from the least to the most *imposing (on the supervisor part*).”

Another minor amendment that I made for the informant based DCT is mainly about the presentation of the responses. I put a table, under each scenario, instead of a limited number of lines, where the participant should respond. This amendment were in place to avoid participants worries about the word count or line limits

Moreover, key points that I consider within this section is the choice of situation within the discourse completion tasks. Bonikowska (1988: 170) claimed that for researchers to have results, it is always best to assign the participants with roles related to their “experiences” (as cited in Fukushima, 2003: 147). In this regard, the chosen situations (7) are likely to occur during student-teacher/supervisor interaction either in email or face-to-face. The situations were designed considering three culture-specific variables (power, distance, and weight of imposition) that were taken from Brown and Levinson’ (1987) (for further details on these see chapter 2). However, the second part of the discourse completion tasks, which is an assessment, provides the participants’ perspectives on the weight of imposition in each request situation. Other variables that might affect the realization of requests or the responses to them were scrutinized in the one-to-one interviews. Thus, I structured, as previously mentioned above in section (3.4.2.), seven request types.

3.8. Ethical Considerations and Concluding Remarks

Since the study invited human participants, an official ethical approval required. To this end, I applied for ethical approval via the MMU ethical committee, and a letter of approval was issued (see appendix C). Prior to the collection of data, all research participants signed the consent form which was designed to carry out this study (a copy of the consent form appears in appendix D). In order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality that were central to this research at all stages, the participants' real names were replaced by pseudonyms of their choice (e.g. Jane Austin, Lily, Yara). Furthermore, the data was saved on both a personal laptop and university computer that were secured with a password and could not be accessed by anybody else, but the researcher. For the university computer, the data is stored on MMU H-drive which can only be accessed using the university account.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter summarized the methodological design of this study. It justified and explained the rationale behind the methodological approach which was adopted. The chapter also illustrates the stages followed to obtain the study' findings, including a pilot study that helped adjusting the method of data collection. Thus, the overall chapter aims at justifying and clarifying the procedures taken while conducting a mixed method approach in the present research. The chapter also discusses and exemplifies the challenges that occurred and how these has been overcome by the researcher. In the following chapter (4), I discuss the study findings and results.

Chapter Four: Research Findings.

4.0. Introduction

The current chapter provides analysis of the collected data and the results. The presentation, analysis, interpretation of the data, and discussion of the results are identified under two main sections (4.1. and 4.2.). In order, section (4.1.) deals with data analysis and interpretation of students' emails, and section (4.2.) deals with the supervisors' emails. Each of these sections, however, has two other subsections entitled 'analysis of students' discourse completion tasks' (4.1.1.), 'analysis of students' interviews' (4.1.2.); and 'analysis of supervisors' discourse completion tasks' (4.2.1.), 'analysis of supervisors' interviews' (4.2.2.). Furthermore, in section (4.3.), I present the challenges, while annotating the data sets, of using Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness. Finally, the chapter will conclude with remarks on how requests and responses to these are negotiated considering politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

4.1. Data Analysis and Interpretation of Student Correspondence

As stated above, the analysis of the students' emails is presented in two subsections (4.1.1. and 4.1.2.). In section (4.1.1), the data obtained via discourse completion tasks (DCTs) administered to students is classified in accordance with the adapted model of Brown and Levinson's taxonomy of politeness strategies (1978 [1987]) as well as Woodfield and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010) to extract external modifiers use. (See section 2.2. for further details). The rationale for the classification of the data using Brown and Levinson's analytical framework is twofold as previously stated (see chapter three): 1) to answer the first research question regarding the politeness strategies that

Algerian Ph.D. students use to formulate email requests to their supervisors; and 2) to help construct the interactant-informed discourse completion tasks (I-DCTs; see chapter three for further details). The analysis of Data to extract external modifiers aims at generating and quantifying the use of these and to discover any correlation between external modifiers and supervisors' response to requests. Regarding the second aim (construction of I-DCTs), the analysis of politeness strategies involves accounting for the occurrence of politeness patterns to structure request scenarios to be administered to the supervisors (see appendix D and E for details). The analysis of section (4.1.2.), I discuss the themes emerging from the analysis of the students' semi-structured interview data, mainly to look at the motivations behind the linguistic structures they have used in their email requests and to see what factors influence their use of politeness strategies (further discussion is found in section 5.1.2.).

4.1.1. Analysis of Students' Discourse Completion Tasks.

This section explores, as stated above, the data gathered from the discourse completion tasks, and given the analysis, and categorises utterances according to the type of politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987) they primarily, and when appropriate secondarily, convey, as described in the following section:

4.1.1.1. Acts Conveying Negative Politeness:

In the data obtained, the student correspondents show a high and remarkable use of negative politeness strategies in comparison to the positive ones. In the following sub-headings (annotated below with bullet points), I state and exemplify some of the negative politeness strategies and super-strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson

(1987: 131), which are found in the present study' data sets[19] (students' response to written I-DCTs). The sub-strategies found are mainly: Apologize, Hedges and Questions, being pessimistic, and give deference (see table 1 for a summary)

- Apologizing

According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 187), this sub-strategy of negative politeness urges the speaker/wrter to (pre-facto) apologize for doing, although they might only be potentially doing, a face threatening act (FTA). The apology as a negative politeness strategy can be realized differently, and throughout the data, different sub-strategies of apology have emerged: admitting the impingement (see examples from set1 below) and asking/begging forgiveness (see examples from set 2). Exemplification of the sub-strategies of apology are explained and interpreted with particular reference to the current research context (email requests exchanges between Algerian Ph.D. students and their supervisors at MMU). The complexity of classifying these sub-strategies is explained in the pre/post body of text above or under the participants requests (i.e quotes from the data); these interpretations were further scrutinized and reviewed under section (4.3.). Thus, participants (Students) are found to resort to the following apology techniques in an attempt to preserve the face of the addressee.

Set 1: Admitting the Impingement.

> **[1] Kyla:** "Recognizing your very busy schedule."
> **[2] Nouha:** "I am totally aware of how busy you might be."
> **[3] Dyhia:** "I know that you are busy with your work."

[19] Data sets are representation of examples that can Be classified under the same strategies, therefore, each set contains a number of examples from the data. The numbers of examples are put always between square brackets.

In the above examples (Kyla, Nouha, and Dyhia), the participants show an attendance towards the hearer/ recipient's negative face. In set 1, the participants seem to address the supervisor's negative face needs/demands (although that does not entail the success of their strategy and thus the fulfilment of their intended perlocution). As a result, they take this into account while formulating their requests by acknowledging their awareness of his/her busy schedule. However, a close analysis of set 1 above shows that the sentences not only constitute examples of attempts at negative politeness but also positive politeness, too. Put differently, and if we consider the Arabic cultures, the sentences/forms above do not, solely, convey an attempt towards redress of the negative face of the recipient but they also convey, secondarily, an enhancement of the positive face given the cultural expectations and interactional realities. Bearing in mind the Arabic culture, these forms can be interpreted by the supervisors as a praise to the hard work the recipient (supervisor) does, and therefore, can enhance his/her positive face.

Indeed, and since the late 1960's, the concept of Face has been both pervaded, and at the same time, problematic across the literature on (im)politeness and related phenomena (see section 2.2.1., and 2.2.2. for more details). Based on the dichotomy provided for face, Brown and Levinson (1987: 17-20) have disregarded mixing and multiple strategies' use within single utterances as for them one strategy can only address one face aspect. Nonetheless, the results from research dealing with an assessment of the politeness approach show the contrary (e.g., Craig, Tracy, and Spisak, 1986; Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichmann, 2003; Bousfield, 2008; Bousfield, 2010 among others). For example, Craig et al., 1986 study of the discourse of requests pertains to the argument that it is possible to find more than one strategy within a single utterance. In addition, other scholars (Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichmann, 2003; Bousfield, 2008;

2010) have rigorously discussed the multi/or combined strategies use in relation to facework, accordingly, arguing that it is not entirely unusual to see single-strategy, single-face sentences attempted in the context of their use.

While claiming that what applies to impoliteness can apply to politeness, Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichmann (2003: 1560-1561), in accordance with Lachenicht (1980: 635), claim that it is possible to have an utterance with combined strategies in it. Their data (Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichmann, 2003) seems to have combined strategies within one utterance. For example, according to Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichmann (2003) the utterance "what the fuck are you doing" is face damaging to both, the negative and the positive face of the hearer. On one hand the challenging question "what are you doing" is an attempt at a negative impoliteness strategy towards the negative face. On the other hand, the use of the taboo word "fuck" is considered as an attempt to attack/damage the hearer's positive face and thus, it is a positive impoliteness strategy (for more details see Culpeper, 1996: 355-358 on impoliteness strategies). Like impoliteness then, politeness strategies as well can work in multiple and combined ways. In the following data sets, and when appropriate, I demonstrate (hitherto been discussed regarding set 1 above) how the politeness strategies combine and how they address simultaneously, the two aspects of face.

Set 2: Asking/Begging Forgiveness.

[4] Nouha: "Sorry for any inconvenience this might cause to you"
[5] Lily: "I apologise for any inconvenience"
[6] Ta: I apologise for emailing you about that"

While 10 out of 15 participants have used begging forgiveness, mostly, to request extension to a deadline and feedback, only one participant has employed this sub-strategy in performing the five (5) request scenarios (For scenarios' details, see appendix A). Looking at the examples above, the participants (Nouha, Lily, and Ta) are using the "begging for forgiveness" super-strategy to demonstrate their reluctance to cause a face threatening act (see Brown and Levinson, 1987: 189). Pre-assuming and weighting their request for deadline extension and feedback, the participants seem to be aware of the imposition they put on their supervisors. Thus, they tend to start/end their email requests with an *apology* as noted in the above examples. Furthermore, apologies in the current data sets seem to be also conventionalized in context as expressions of regret. See the examples from set 3 below.

Set 3:

[7] Yara: "kindly accept my sincere apologies for not being able to meet deadline
[8] Jojo: I am really sorry for not being able to submit on time
[9] Dyhia: "I apologise for not being able to get my work finished on time"

Another point that I would like to highlight, within this section, is that while begging forgiveness or apologising in general, some participants tend to supplement and accompany their apologies with an account, or what Brown and Levinson (1987: 128) refer to as "providing reasons". *Providing reasons* is considered (Brown and Levinson, 1987) a redress to the addressee's positive face. In other words, while the addresser is providing reasons, s/he is including the addressee in the activity while implying the reciprocity of wants (that is the want to receive submission on time or within the deadline given). In the following examples from set 4, the students' assumptions and the implication that the addressee can help are apparent and have been further, and directly, stated in the interviews conducted with them while discussing notions like "rights and responsibilities" in an academic context (see the examples of Selma, and Anisa, heading number 4, section 4.1.2. for further details). While analysing the data, patterns of mixing and combining different politeness strategies have emerged. Students, for instance, tend to 1) mix a negative politeness strategy (e.g. begging forgiveness) and accompany it with a positive one (e.g. give reasons) across multiple clause/sentences. In the examples below (10 and 11), the participants (students), while apologizing, attempt to explain and justify their requests for deadline extension or requests for feedback, respectively, by giving some excuses to their supervisors (e.g. *confusion, excessive reading, health/mental well-being*), and which, consequently, have been attempts at softening their requests. See below examples (set 4) of both Selma and Anisa for further illustration. The students also tend to 2) mix politeness strategies (positive and negative) in one phrase. Examples of co-occurring politeness strategies in one sentence or phrase can be found in set 1 above.

Set 4:

> **[10] Selma:** "I am so sorry, but I have **many confusions** about writing literature review, and I am not able to organize my thoughts and ideas/ I needed to make some changes to my work, and I will need more time to finish it"
>
> **[11] Anisa:** "**I have read new resources** and believe that it is important to incorporate them into my research. I was wondering if you could please extend the submission date to 16th April"

In the above example, Selma seems to assume that her supervisor wants what she wants. In stating that she is facing confusions and inability to organize thoughts, Selma seems to stress that her supervisor might not be willing to read incomplete or unstructured work, and therefore, for their interest extending the deadline for submission is a common want between the supervisor and supervisee. In performing her request for deadline extension, and instead of directly requesting it, she (Selma) rather informs the supervisor that she is going to take more time to submit by writing *"I will need more time to finish it"*. In the previous example, Selma seems not to give space to the addressee to act based on her assumptions (during the interviews) that a Ph.D. is different from other degrees and that the relationship with her supervisors is that of collegiality. She (Selma) further refers to previous conversations and agreements that they (Selma and her supervisor) have had, and it has always been the case that, whenever she struggles with writing; her supervisor accepts deadline extensions and encourages her to communicate her needs whenever she wants. The last point can be read as a sign of attempting at distance closeness.

Anisa, in the extract above, assumes the wants of the addressee are like hers by claiming the benefits of having more time and how it would improve the quality of the work that she is going to send by writing *"I have read new resources and believe that it is important to incorporate them into my research"*. An important point to stress here is that Brown and Levinson's (1987) model ignores the complexity of context as it takes a speech act analysis towards utterance (for details see chapter 2) and this might lead to misinterpretation of politeness or the lack of hereafter. By looking at the example above (Anisa), one might not understand how the addressee (Anisa's supervisor) is included in the activity unless s/he has a previous knowledge of any past discussions between the two interlocutors (Anisa and her supervisor) on the possibility of extending deadlines when new and important resources need to be integrated prior to submitting any piece of writing.

Importantly, here, begging forgiveness (as argued above about admitting impingement; Brown and Levinson, 1987: 188) in Algerian culture seems to be functionally bidirectional towards face aspects. To explain, begging forgiveness does not only entail saving the addressee's negative face and his want/will to be free from imposition but also encodes respect for him/her (addressee), and therefore pays attention to his/her positive face too. In other words, and in Algerian (Arabic) norms, *begging forgiveness* can be (intended as) a sign of respect and approval to the addressee's positive face and his want/need to be praised. Begging forgiveness is an acknowledgement to the power, role and status of the addressee (supervisor) within the society. Thus, this is considered as a praise to the addressee's positive face and his wants of approval.

Given the previous analysis, reconsideration of Brown and Levinson' (1987: 61) dichotomy of face and its conceptualization, which has been problematic (e.g., Matsumoto, 1988; Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003; Bousfield, 2008: 241), is vital here, and arguably rethinking it is necessary (See the interpretation of set1 above). Indeed, and throughout the course of this research, I am not only attempting at applying and interrogating Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model, but I am also interrogating some of the fundamental premises on which it has been built (mainly the concept of face). The data sets above (1, 2, 3 and 4) suggest that addressing face using politeness is complex and it needs further investigation. I argue, ultimately, that every single strategy, in different context and cultures, could at least redress the two face aspects (positive and negative) to differing degrees. Put differently, one strategy could at least secondarily enhance the other aspect of face (e.g. positive face) while primarily addressing the other one (e.g. negative face). I further explain and visualize, the duality of face and facework in section (4.3.) of the current chapter and expand on it in the next chapter (chapter 5).

- Question, Hedge.

In addition to the strategy of apologizing above, negative politeness can be performed using another strategy like "Question and hedge". Brown and Levinson (1987:

145), note *question* and *hedge* to be a redressive negative politeness strategy where the speaker ameliorates the imposition on the hearer by avoiding presumption. In the data set (see below) of the current study, student participants seem to resort to *"checking the availability or possibility" as way to* mitigate the *imposition* of certain requests and to avoid the assumption that the addressee is going to do what the addresser wants. In this regard, the students tend always to give space for the addresser to decide his/her actions (his/her reply). Participants of the current study use this strategy in most of the cases/situations, yet it is mostly occurring in situation one (1), which is a request for an urgent meeting; situation (6), which is request for references, and situation (3), which is a request for feedback. The students usually use the following linguistic forms/verbs and if statements (in bold):

Set 5.

[12] Kyla: "*I would really appreciate it* ***if we could arrange*** *for an urgent meeting ASAP."*

[13] Yara: "*I would like to request a meeting with you at the soonest,* ***if possible"***

[14] Yara: "*I am emailing you to ask* ***if I can get*** *some feedback…"*

[15] Yara: "*I am writing to ask whether* ***it is possible for you to provide me with...***"

[16] Sarah: "*I was wondering* ***if it is possible to arrange*** *a meeting for the next few days to talk about the issues I am having."*

[17] Sarah: *"I was wondering* ***if you would be able*** *to send any feedback regarding the recent submitted work."*

[18] Jojo: "***Is there any way for me*** *to extend the deadline for work submission?"*

[19] Selma: "***Can you please send me articles*** *that you think can be helpful for my viva?"*

Noteworthy to mention here, and in support of my argument in the previous sets above (sets 1-4), *questioning* and *hedging* by checking availability -from an

Algerian perspective- not only redress the imposition which the request put on the addressee, but is also considered as a redress to the positive face of the addressee and implies respect to him and his/her time. Thus, hedging here attempts at addressing the negative face of the supervisor and secondarily attempts at enhancing his/her positive face too.

- Being Pessimistic.

Being pessimistic is another negative politeness strategy used by speakers/sender to give options to the hearer/receiver while assuming and/or explicitly doubting s/he will not do the request (see Brown and Levinson, 1987: 173). By using this strategy, the speaker attempts to be avoiding coercing the hearer, meaning that s/he is giving the addressee the choice of not complying with the act (i.e., FTA performed by the speaker in the first place). In the current study, participants from one situation to the other, have differently employed a range of sentences to express their confusion or inability to perform a specific task; and they coupled these by drawing the receiver' s attention towards the doubts they have in regard to the success of their request. In other words, assuming that their request might not have been fulfilled by the receiver of their requests (the supervisors). Examples of using this strategy can be demonstrated using Kyla and Nafas I-DCTs' extracts below, where the two participants are trying to primarily preserve the negative face of their supervisors while secondarily enhance the positive one:

Set 6:

> **[20]: Kyla**: *my apologies to email you about this* ***but I really feel desperate about my PhD project and I cannot make a progress in my literature review;*** *I was wondering* ***if I could lean on your expertise to identify the best way to help me overcome this difficulty"***

[21]: Nafas: "I am a bit confused about what are the procedures regarding this milestone. I am also unsure about how to organize my work and how to write the literature review. **Could you help me regarding this?"**

Nonetheless, closely considering Kyla's example above, a combination (collocation) of negative politeness (being pessimistic) and positive politeness (give gifts to H, see Brown and Levinson, 1987: 129 for further discussion on this strategy is apparent, respectively, where she (Kyla) wrote ***"I really feel desperate about my Ph.D. project, and I cannot make a progress in my literature review"*** and **"if I could lean on your expertise".** Alike Kyla's example, Nafas also begins with being pessimistic (negative politeness) through a linguistic projection of her concerns and worries regarding her Ph.D. process. After that she (Nafas) asked for the supervisor's possibility to help, which is primarily negative politeness (attempt at preserving the negative face of the supervisor and his want to be free from imposition) and secondarily positive politeness strategy (attempt at enhancing the positive face of the supervisor by implying that his/her help is necessary). Regarding the two examples above (Kyla, and Nafas), there are few points that I am expanding on, in the following lines, to better understand the use of "*being pessimistic*" (Brown and Levinson, 1987) by the participants of the current research.

Although scrutinizing the meaning of pessimism is beyond the scope of the current research, yet this concept is, in the current research, more detailed than what Brown and Levinson (1987) allowed for above. Consequently, what is worth considering here and what I aim to highlight is the linguistic differences in the realization of pessimism across cultures from a pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic perspective. Put differently, the realization of pessimism is different across languages and therefore perceived differently by language users, and consequently, what I am arguing here is that although that the suggested politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987) are universally applicable, their realization relative to the propositional content, albeit aiming at the same illocutionary act, might differ from one culture to another, thus, from one language to another. In this regard, I consider Jansen and Janssen's (2010) claim (below) when they suggest that the realization of politeness strategies can be relative to other conditions beyond those (i.e. power, distance and rank) proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). In this regard, Jansen and Janssen claim:

> 'In our opinion, the politeness strategies identified by Brown and Levinson are to be considered as a reservoir or an inventory of resources that may be deployed by language users in specific communicative situations. Whether they will use one or more of the strategies depends on numerous conditions, one of the most important being the facilities offered by the grammar and lexicon of the language they use.'

(Jansen and Janssen, 2010: 2534)

For example, in English Language "being pessimistic" would be, for instance, linguistically realized as follows: "I don't suppose you could send me my feedback?" However, in Arabic context generally and Algeria specifically, such a(linguistic) formulation of pessimism seems not to exist, and might be socio-pragmatically inappropriate, and thus the propositional content of pessimism is rather expressed differently through giving reasons. If we translate the previous example of "I don't suppose you could send me my feedback?" into Arabic, it will imply that the speaker is challenging the hearer and might also imply sarcasm. Relative to the current research, although the meaning of pessimism is similar to that explained by Brown and Levinson (1987: 173), the way in which it has been linguistically realized by the participant, while operating in a foreign language, seems to be different. In these cultures (Arabic/Algerian), people with low power tend to be pessimistic through informing their interactants about the struggles they face and then they place their request for help afterwards. In the above example, Kyla and Nafas seem to be desperate for the help of their supervisors; they then attempt at being pessimistic by explaining the struggles they are facing, and they accompany this with a request for guidance.

What can be concluded, from the above, is that the propositional content to express pessimism within the current research is substantially different from that employed by Anglophone speakers. Thorough discussion of the previous point is beyond the realm and scope of the present research, but it might be vital to future research within politeness and interlanguage pragmatics to consider it. Indeed, by considering propositional content, one unconsciously is referring at one point to the concept of pragmatic competence and its pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic components (Leech, 1983; see also chapter two for further details). It is worth mentioning here, also, the effect of the mother tongue on pragmatic competence in FL usage and how it can be adjusted to accommodate the socio-cultural requirement of the new language (see heading 2 within section 4.1.2.). Another point that I want to highlight, and which is also related to both pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic competence is, respectively, what Bousfield (2008: 237) refers to as 1st order structural preference and 2nd order socio-cognitive/ socio-pragmatic preference when discussing the organization preference (further discussion on the previous point will be expanded on in chapter 5; section 5.1.1.; and further in the limitations of the study in chapter 5).

- Give Deference:

Another sub-strategy to express negative politeness can be performed through giving deference, a Janus like[20] strategy (Bousfield, 2008), where one humbles oneself and at

[20] Janus: In roman mythology, Janus is the god of beginning and usually portrayed as having two faces looking in different directions.

the same time raises addressee's self (see Brown and Levinson, 1987: 178). In giving deference, the speaker's social status and relative power seem to be lower than that of the hearer. In Arabic context generally, and in Algerian context specifically, forms of address are indicators used to mark the social stratum of a person within society, therefore, they work as deference markers and thus, attempt at enhancing the interlocutors' positive face. In other words, by addressing someone as Professor/Pr or Doctor/Dr, here the speaker/writer is abasing himself/herself; and claiming to be of an inferior position/status. Giving deference, in the current data sets, is communicated mainly using address titles (Dr. Pr.) with surnames and/or first names. However, these forms/titles of address seem to be used extensively in situation 4 (request for supervision), which is the first contact with a supervisor (+Distance, +Power), and which implies unfamiliarity between interlocutors. Remarkably, only two participants (Yara and Lily) seem to resort to the use of address titles in all their requests. Yara, for instance, always addresses her supervisor with title+ surname, whereas Lily, always, addresses hers with title+ full name. In the current paragraph, reasons and motivations behind the use of certain address forms are beyond the realm of this section, and therefore, they are discussed in section 4.1.2.

Further discussion on the differences and significance of address forms in Algeria and Britain higher education (i.e. cross-culturally) is discussed in chapter 5. To summarize what has been analysed in the above section (4.1.1.1.), regarding the use of negative politeness strategies by Algerian Ph.D. students, I implement the below table, where I details the sub-strategies of politeness exemplified along with the number of students performing them and their reoccurrence across the data set.

Negative Politeness Sub-Strategies	Number of Students Performing It	Occurrence of the sub-strategies	Examples from the research data
Being Pessimistic	14	24	-You could not explain more, or at least give me example, could you?
Apologizing	7	15	-I am very sorry to inform you I might not be able to submit by tomorrow.
Hedge, Question: Checking Availability/Possibility	15	49	-I would like to request a meeting with you at the soonest, if possible -I was wondering if it is possible to arrange a meeting for next few days to talk about the issues I am having.
Give Deference	16	60	
Dear+ Title+ full name	6	13	Dear Dr. Kevin MOORE
Dear+ title+ surname	10	27	Dear Dr. MOORE
Dear+ title+ first name	4	20	Dear Dr. Kevin

Table 1: Negative Politeness Sub-strategies used in the Discourse Completion Tasks.

4.1.1.2. Acts Conveying Positive Politeness

In the light of Brown and Levinson's work (1978/1987), positive politeness is mainly the successful use of those redress strategies used by the speaker to preserve the addressee's positive face (see chapter two for more details). In other words, it is a "Social accelerator" (see Brown and Levinson, 1987: 103), and a "sugar coating" strategy (see Culpeper, 1996) used to satisfy the addressee's wants, which should be thought of as desirable. Therefore, the role of positive politeness is not solely redressive to face threatening acts, but it is an exaggerated redress to the addressee's face in general. Positive politeness, like negative politeness, includes different sub-strategies (for detailed discussions, see Brown and Levinson, 1987: 101-129) that the speaker chooses from to convey his/her message. The following subheadings (in bold bullet points) demonstrate the various positive politeness strategies/sub-strategies that have emerged from the present research data and obtained from Algerian Ph.D. students formulating email requests to their supervisors.

- Use in-group identity markers

According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 107), address forms are in-group membership markers that attend to the addressee's positive face wants. Therefore, they operate as an enhancing positive politeness strategy. According to Brown and Levinson (1987:108), terms of address are proactive politeness strategies to soften a particular FTA. For instance, in "bring me the basket, darling"; the word "darling" acts as a diminutive to the weight of the imposition, where the addresser is considering the relative power/distance between him/herself and the addressee to be small. In other words, using *endearment markers/terms* is a way to decrease the power and social distance between interlocutors and thus, the FTA of the request. Considering the example "bring me the basket, darling", this expression is less threatening then just "bring me the basket" as the latter is interpreted as an order.

Yet, the functions of terms of address like titles (Dr. Pr.) may vary across languages, cultures, and means of communication. Many studies (e.g., Bunz and Campbell, 2004; Bou-Franch, 2011; Lorenzo-Dus and Bou-Franch, 2013; Chejnová, 2014) have investigated the use of email openings and closings, for instance. In the previously mentioned studies, openings and closings have been regarded as structural politeness forms that convey increased levels of respect and formality (Bunz and Campbell, 2004). Considering the sample of this study, it is noteworthy to highlight that the participants (i.e. Algerian Ph.D. students) have employed a range of formal (e.g. Dear Dr. Kevin Moore/ Moore; see table) to informal ways of addressing (e.g. Hello Kevin). Although, some of the results demonstrate that almost all participants have used formal terms of address while requesting supervision (the very first email to be sent to a supervisor; see situation 4 in appendix D for details), only one participant (Sarah) has opted, constantly, for the use of informal ways of addressing her supervisor in all scenarios. The results from the rest of the situations (1-3 and 5-7 in appendix D) suggest that the participants' choice of email request openings differs from one participant to another. The data collected from Algerian Ph.D. students demonstrate a range of address forms/titles when sending request to supervisors (for further details/examples see the table 2). Results have shown that the most frequently occurring form of address is 'dear+ first name' (e.g. Dear Kevin/ Susan, these are made up names for the purpose of anonymity). Nearly 59% of the participants (students) used this informal way to address their supervisors.

Consequently, while generic forms like “dear” have been explained by Brown and Levinson (1987: 107-108) as to convey in-group solidarity markers by means of diminishing the relative power between interlocutors as stated above in the first paragraph. Considering the Algerian culture these forms may convey levels of formality and respect. Albeit the similarities in the principles regulating the use of honorific devices by Brown and Levinson (1987) and the current research results in that they both address the positive face of the interlocutor, there is a substantial difference in their use relative to the power and distance. In other words, while terms of address and generic forms, according to Brown and Levinson (1987: 107-108), minimize the weight of the request by shortening the distance between interlocutors, formal addressing within this research is used to acknowledge the distance existing, and thus the power, between interlocutors (supervisors and their supervisees), where students could not address their supervisors just with their names but rather used the titles, or tile and a surname, which is very formal way of addressing in UK university student-lecturer/supervisor interaction. (Further discussion on the function of these is discussed in section (4.1.2.)

In relation to the informal way of addressing, only four female participants (4) opted for these in most of their emails by using either “Hi” or “hello” followed by supervisors’ first names (e.g. Hello Kevin,) and which entail less power and less distance between interlocutors. As an insider researcher (see Dwyer and Buckle, 2009), which can lead to a bias within data interpretation, I nevertheless expand the discussion (see section 4.1.2.) on how these Algerian participants keep/change/adapt to a new way of addressing, which is considerably different from the one they are used to back in Algeria. Put differently, I am problematising this change of address etiquettes, as Algerian norms of addressing within educational setting are always culturally expected to be highly formal (e.g. Good Morning/Good Evening/ Dear + Sir/Madam/ surname of the addressee) in comparison to the forms of address and model of communication in Britain. In British University culture, usually, students tend to be invited to call their lecturers by their first names be it in face-to-face communication or online; in other words, the British model of communication at university is informal in comparison with the Algerian one.

In the light of the collected data, the Ph.D. participants seem to be accommodating to the British norms of expectations in email communication. Although Algerian Ph.D. students seem to maintain the title occasionally to emphasise the differences in power status, and therefore to show respect; this might result in a clash of expectations as supervisors within British culture are expecting students to use informal ways of greetings in emails. The table below demonstrates the use and occurrence of different address forms as performed by student' participants of the current study.

Terms of address	**Number of participants who used it**	**occurrence**	**Examples from the research data**
Formal (dear+ first name)	10	48	-Dear Kevin
formal (dear+ title+ surname	9	26	-Dear Dr. Moore
formal (dear+ title+ full name)	6	13	-Dear Dr. Kevin Moore
formal (dear+ title+ first name)	4	20	-Dear Dr. Kevin
informal (hello+ name)	4	20	-Hello Kevin -Hello Susan
missing address	1	1	None

Table 2: The form of address used in Discourse Completion Tasks.

- Presuppose/raise/assert common ground

According to the present data sets, the participants (students) employ what Brown and Levinson (1987: 117) refer to as "small talk". According to them (ibid), small talk is a mechanism used by speakers to minimize and therefore redress FTA that involve *unrelated topics.* In other words, small talk (see also Coupland, 2003) enables the speaker to stress his/her interest in the hearer and to minimize the FTA by showing it is not the only reason why the hearer is approached. According to the data obtained from the students in the current research, using openings (address forms+ any other greetings), pre-thanking, and closings work as small talks. The participants tend to use opening expressions such as "I hope this email finds you well". "How are you?"; they also tend to use pre-thanking "e.g. Thank you in advance".

While closings are regarded as an expressive speech act (Searle, 1976), i.e. they attend to the recipient's face by expressing warmth or distance, Waldvogel (2007: 457) asserts that closings are stylistic features working as prompts for future encounters, as they work as a base for further interactional relations (e.g. *looking forward to your email*). Nonetheless, the previous example "looking forward to your email" can, in turn, be considered Face Threatening as it confines the addressee's want of freedom of actions. Waldvogel (ibid: 458) asserts that closings are used in emails to show consideration for the recipients, and moreover, to construct and sustain relationships with them. Similarly, Hallajian and David (2014: 86) note that greetings, like closings, are interactive elements to maintain politeness and show respect. In regard to greetings, this manifests itself (throughout the present research students' data) in the noticeable re-occurrence and overuse of some linguistic patterns like *"I hope my email finds you well/*

I hope you are doing well/I hope everything is ok", and also the use of expressions like *"good evening and good morning"* to open the email.

Moreover, the participants have employed a range of overly polite expression (see Whatt's 2003) that take the shape of *pre-thanking,* which occurs frequently in almost of the I-DCTs. An example of these overly polite expressions is mainly found by the end of the email, where participants have employed sentences like: "thank you in advance/I would highly appreciate your response". These expressions seem to be an excessive politeness that can be intended to attend to the addressee's negative face. However, considering the Algerian/Arabic culture, 'Thank you in advance', and although they think it is polite to thank their supervisors while making a request, this expression can be interpreted as an assumption for the acceptance of doing the request and thus, can be interpreted as an FTA as it implies an imposition on the recipient's face. I agree, here, that the use of all the previous expressions (small talk) is formulaic (see section 4.2.2. for more details), yet, in intercultural communication small talk can be interpreted in multiple ways.

Another important point to highlight is "pragmatic transfer" (Kasper, 1992). According to Kasper's (1992: 207) point of view, pragmatic transfer is "the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 [FL] on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 [FL] pragmatic information". In the present research, data shows the transfer of some expressions, mainly, those transferred from the French language (second language in Algeria) and the Arabic one. Usually, when Algerians formulate emails, these are mostly in French; they use English only if they study English related fields/majors, thereafter, most of them start the email by *"Bonjour"* translated as [good morning] followed usually by

"J'espère que vous allez bien" translated as [I hope you are doing well]. These expressions are used, generally, in both email communication and face-to-face interaction and they are considered the highest forms of politeness to be employed.

Recent Literature on L3 transfer (e.g., Puig-Mayenco, González, and Rothman, 2020) shows the complexity of the sources of pragmatic/language transfer. Unlike L2 transfer, which is the result of only one language system, L3 transfer can be a result of more than one and thus, the possible sources of this transfer are various (yet this is not to claim that the Transfer in L2 and L3 and further languages is fundamentally different). In L3 transfer students tend to use different language registers and vocabulary that they use either in L1 or L2 or in both and transfer it to L3. Most importantly, the L3 learners' brain seems to have various choices when it comes to syntactical structures; where, I argue they employ these from L1 or L2 or both and perform these while communicating in L3. My last argument here can be linked, and therefore, support my claim in regard to the interpretation of "being pessimistic" cross culturally, and how it can be expressed differently on a propositional level. In the present research, the participants seem to fail (on a pragma-linguistic level) in providing similar propositional forms to that of English speakers when expressing pessimism (for further details see section on pessimism in 4.1.1., and Puig-Mayenco, et al., 2020).

Additionally, the data collected from the supervisees demonstrate the employment of formal closings (e.g. *kind/kindest Regards, Best Wishes, Many Thanks* and *others*), which reoccur in every email and used differently by every participant (student). The students always sign off their emails by employing different closings and a signature, which are basically, pairing of: closing formula (e.g. best regards) and the students first names (e.g. Yara) to show respect and to signal their lower status and power (for details see section 4.1.2.). The results in relation to closing sequences suggest that they are formulaic and reoccurring; nonetheless these were scrutinized during the interviews to delve into their functions and to look at any differences of politeness degrees associated with them (See section 4.1.2. for further details). Put in different words, as not all respondents are used to email communication within an educational setting both back home (Algeria) and in the UK, and as they are not used to employ prototypically British English expressions like *kind regards, best regards,* and so on, considerations for the various and preferred forms of closings should be under scrutiny to know the underpinning reasons behind using these (see 4.1.2.).

Accordingly, to understand how student correspondents change their language choices during their stay abroad, I consider Waldvogel's claim (2007: 474) when highlighting that the role of openings and closings is not only to negotiate *interpersonal* relations but also to create close or distant relationships. In the current study, the participants' use of "*kind regards"* along with their signature is highly noticeable. Put differently, each participant either constantly uses '*kind regards'* for instance, or changes from '*regards'* only to '*best regards'* among other similar signs off (e.g. Kind regards) in each situation (1-7) within the Interactant-based discourse completion tasks (I-DCTs). Indeed, this change in forms of closing has been investigated during the semi-structured interviews (see section 4.1.2.). The variation in the use of closings is triggered by different motives (e.g. relativeness to politeness value, politeness register, and the social distance change between interlocutors). The table below demonstrates and summarizes the student participants use of various closing formulas (Yara is a pseudonym used for one of the student participants).

Closings	Number of students performing it	Occurrence of this form	Examples from the research data
Name only	3	5	Yara
Thanks+ name	3	10	Thank you, Yara
Thanks+ formula+ name	4	8	Many thanks, Best Regards, Yara
Closing formula+ name	15	74	Best/kind Regards, Yara
Closing formula only	3	20	Best Regards,

Table 3: Closing formula used in Discourse Completion tasks.

The table above demonstrates the occurrence of the closings and signs off and the number of Algerian Ph.D. students using them. Most participants tend to use different closings formulas (e.g. *Best/Kind regards, Best/Wishes, Regards*) and add their names to sign off the email. Regarding the use of closing formulas like "thanks+ names", and "names only", three (3) participants have performed these. The occurrence of each of the previous closings is, respectively, 20, 10, and 5 times relative to the overall students' responses to I-DCTs. Some participants (4), however, tend to add "thanks/ thank you" to their signs off. The use of this closing formula has occurred eight (8) times in the whole data sets. Further explanation on why this use varie is demonstrated in section (4.1.2) that discusses students' interview results.

- Convey "x" is admirable and interesting

In addition to the positive politeness strategy that has been demonstrated in the paragraph above, another way to enhance the hearer's positive face is claiming a common ground with him/her and through conveying that "x" is admirable and interesting (see Brown and Levinson, 1987: 103). This super strategy is, indeed, realized through three (3) different sub-strategies: 1) Notice, attend to H (his interests and wants), 2) exaggerate, and 3) intensify interest to H. Put differently, and in general, the speaker needs to highlight his/her interests in the hearer by conveying that the hearer's wants, goals, possessions are interesting to him/her. The previous point can be realized in different ways (notice, exaggerate, and intensify interest). Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that demonstrating "notice" is done through attending to the hearer, and this is through approving what H would like the S to notice. Interestingly, the data from this study indicate that the use of this strategy mostly occurs in situation four (4) (see appendix A); where participants are asked to write an email requesting a supervision. It is generally, in a British university culture, appreciated if the supervisee attends to the qualities that the potential supervisors have in terms of expertise and publications as this shows interest in being supervised by him/her. The followings are some extracts from the data to exemplify how participants attend to the addressee's supervisors wants in their I-DCTs, and which operate as an indirect way to request supervision and *intensify the interest* in the supervisor and his/her academic interests

Set 7:

[22]: Jane Austin: "I am highly interested in a book section you wrote entitled X which I believe might be related to my topic. Another thing I strongly appreciate is your involvement in Y programme, which makes you the most suitable person to supervise me." Looking at your profile and areas of interest made me think that my research might likely meet your expertise which includes African and Middle Eastern Studies.

[23]: Yara: "I had the chance to read one of your articles that I really enjoyed, which gave me many ideas for my future research theme"

[24]: Sarah: "I had on one of your articles that you wrote in 2008, I really enjoyed reading it. Reading it gave me the opportunity to widen my research realm through thinking and looking at the phenomena from different perspectives."

[25]: Selma: "I have read through your profile, and some of your publications and they are very informative and interesting, therefore, I believe I share with you the interest in blended and flipped learning"

[26]: Nafas: "It was then that I read your article "Sociolinguistic Approaches to X", and I was motivated to read more about the field of Sociolinguistics of Orthography. I particularly enjoyed the article's emphasis on how scripts are powerful markers of identity difference or belonging. I was also interested in the sociolinguistic issues raised in relation to the development of new writing systems."

[27]: She (Nafas) adds: "I have consulted your profile on the University website, and it seems an excellent fit for my project because besides being interested in the Sociolinguistics, you are also interested in Corpus Linguistics and have set up a corpus of written X and Y, something that may be similar to what I intend to do in my research on the Algerian Arabic dialect."

[29]: Bissan: "I have seen your academic profile and I am very interested in research concerning X and Y for its significant role in education."

The examples above (Jane Austin, Yara, Sarah, Selma, Nafas, Bissan) operate as a way of requesting supervision through intensifying interest in the supervisor and his/her academic interests. The examples, therefore, suggest that the participants (students) are attending to the supervisors' positive face by expressing an interest in their supervision and expertise. Thus, the participants, while highlighting that they had read either their (the supervisors') profiles or article/books they had authored, are intensifying interests in the Hearers' wants. Interestingly, however, the participants coupled the attend and notice for the H (hearer) by intensifying interest in their supervision by employing the followings expressions/ intensifiers in bold (I have highlighted in bold):

[30]: Kyla: "I would be **grateful** if you would consider taking me as a supervisee."

[31]: Nina: "I would **appreciate** to hear from you if you are interested in the project."

[32]: Dyhia: "It will be **a great honour** for me to do my PhD under your supervision."

In the above examples, words written in bold are used as a booster to emphasise the interest in the supervisor and his/her academic achievements. According to Brown and Levinson's (1987 [1978]: 101) politeness theory, exaggeration is what differentiates positive politeness from day-to-day *intimate language behaviour.* The participants seem to use exaggeration to intensify their interest and to show consideration for the addressee's positive face and serve its wants and needs. In the three data excerpts above, the students (Kyla, Nina, and Dyhia) performed a redressive politeness strategy by establishing common ground with their addressees. In this regard, Brown and Levinson (1987: 103) explain that one of the ways that the speaker claims common ground is through conveying notice and this is through attending to the addressee's face. Establishing common ground is a way for the speaker to enhance the addressee's face by saying something s/he would want the speaker to notice or approve (see Brown and Levinson, 1987: 103-104). Moreover, using the strategy of intensifying interest and its sub-strategies is a way for email senders (Algerian Ph.D. students) to convey that "I want to satisfy and enhance your positive face needs and wants."

Moreover, the participants kept using the positive politeness redressive strategy of intensifying interest in other situations; and that was mainly to request feedback, information, and references or guidance from their supervisors (respectively see situation 3, 6, and 7 in appendix D). Examples of these are presented below where Algerian Ph.D. students at MMU (Sarah, Rose, Taa, and Nina) try to intensify their interest in the supervisor through emphasising how important their feedback and support will be. Although the examples below, on the surface, can be interpreted either as an indirect request which would benefit the speaker (e.g. Sarah) or as an expression of indebtedness (e.g. Rose, Taa, and Nina), these can be a redress toward the positive face of the supervisors, too. In other words, while Algerians use the expressions in bold (below), they tend to tell the recipient that "they are interested in receiving feedback or guidance". They seem here to convey a positive politeness redress and enhancement by highlighting the supervisors' qualities (more precisely their academic expertise and knowledge in this context).

[34]: Sarah: "I would **greatly benefit** from any feedback you could provide"

[35]: Rose: "Any feedback from you in regard to the work would be **enormously appreciated**"

[36]: Taa: "Any comments on my work and writing would be **enormously appreciated**"

[37]: Nina: "I would really appreciate your help" and "Your cooperation is **highly appreciated**"

Nonetheless, and a point to raise here is on the functionality and the correspondents' intentions of using expressions that intensify interest in the hearer/addressee. In other words, are these expressions used for a function, which is convincing the email receiver; or used to politely express interest and thus, politely redress the face threatening act the participants initiated by their requests? Answers to these questions are explored in section (4.2.1.) dealing with the analysis of student correspondents' interviews; and these questions are, further, discussed in the next chapter (see chapter 5). The table below, however, demonstrates the use of *establish/claim common ground* and more precisely summarises the two sub-strategies of a) *convey X is admirable and interesting, B) claim common point of view, knowledge*.

Sub-strategy	Number of Students Performing It	Occurrence of the sub strategies	Examples from the research data.
Convey 'X' is admirable (intensify interests/ exaggerate)	15	42	-Looking at your profile and areas of interest made me think that my research might likely meet your expertise.
Claim common ground	14	47	-I am working on x, I think I have heard you talking about it. -I hope you are doing well

Table 4: Using the sub-strategies of "establishing common ground".

The two following strategies (providing reasons and be optimistic) are concerned with the cooperation that exists between a speaker and a hearer. Brown and Levinson (1987: 125) claim that interlocutors opting for this class of positive politeness are conveying their cooperation in the activity at hand. They (ibid) claim that interlocutors using strategies under the class of cooperation (e.g. offer, Promise, concerns for H) share goals and mutual aims.

- Providing/giving reasons/accounts.

It is one of the strategies that Brown and Levinson (1987: 128) propose, and by which the speaker includes the hearer in an activity. Using this strategy, the speaker assumes that s/he can help/obtain help from the addresser. In other words, the speaker might provide reasons for why he is asking H to perform X, whereby an assumption of H being able to help S is made. The speaker, in this case, informs the hearer of why s/he wants what s/he wants but with consideration of the face threatening act, thus s/he has knowledge and sensitivity towards the hearers' face wants. Nonetheless, while Brown and Levinson (1987: 128) explain this strategy, they (ibid) only resort to examples of asking reasons in the form of a demand; and claiming these to be conventionalized positive politeness in English language. E.g. “why don’t we go for a picnic!”.

In Arabic culture, however, providing reasons can be multifaced. It can be either demonstrated via asking question like “why don’t we do x?”, or through giving accounts of why the speaker was not able to do X, and therefore, why the speaker is asking the hearer to do it. For exemplification, see the following excerpts from the data, where the Algerian Ph.D. students attempt to preserve the supervisor’s face, where they tend to express their failure to perform particular actions to justify why they are asking the addressee for what they have asked (e.g. request for extension, feedback, letter of recommendation...etc.). Using these strategies is multifaced, in this case, it can be, on one hand, an enhancement to the addressee’s positive face by including him/her into the activity and thus not wanting him/her to take offence. On the other hand, it can be an enhancement to the addresser positive face and his/her wants to be approved and not thought of as lazy or unserious (see further details on this point in section 4.1.2.; face and identity issues, however, are beyond the realm of the current work).

Set 8:

> **[38]: Nouha:** “I received a job offer for a teacher assistant role at xxxx University which will help to get me more integrated into academia, can you provide me with a recommendation letter?”
>
> **[39]: Rose:** “I faced some difficulties concerning the methodology. It turned out that the previously used method in analysing the selected texts was not the right one, which makes it inconvenient for me to carry on the rest of the research, can I have your feedback on my last written chapter?”
>
> **[40]: Lily:** “I am writing to you to request a meeting in order to discuss some unclear aspects in my research that I have been struggling with recently.”

[41]: Nafas: “I am writing to you to ask for an extension for submission. Unfortunately, I could not finish the work within the deadline because of some health issues.”

[42]: Jane: “I am having some issues with my methodology; thus, I need more time to finish the chapter.”

[43]: Kyla: “I am writing to you concerning serious doubts I am having regarding my work at this stage, I find it very difficult to draft some parts within my literature review chapter. Can we meet for a quick chat?”

[44]: Yara: “I was expected to submit my work by the end of this week but due to an emergency I had, I was unable to finish on time.”

[45]: Safia: “I emailing you concerning my research progress, I really feel lost and the more I read the more I get confused especially at the methodology part. Is it possible to have a supervisory meeting this week?”

In the above examples of Nouha, Rose, Lily, Nafas, Jane, Kyla, Yara, Safia, “providing reasons strategy” (see Brown and Levinson, 1987: 189) occurred mainly while requesting an extension to a deadline and asking for resources/a meeting. The three (previously mentioned) request types seem to be partially, and to different degrees, impinging on the supervisors’ freedom of action (for more details see section (4.2.2), and therefore, the students tried to address the negative face of their addressees to lessen the weight of the imposition. In the above examples, the participants justify doing the face threatening act by claiming their inability to finish the work on time and to find the needed resources, while knowing that their request might affect the supervisors’ schedule. The strategy also seems to be primarily oriented toward the supervisors’ positive face. It is a way of including the supervisor in the activity while assuming his/her ability to help. For validation and more details on how the participants addressed both the positive and negative face of the supervisor, see section (4.1.2.).

4.1.1.3. Acts Conveying off-Record Politeness

The last strategy stated in Brown and Levinson's book (1987) is off record or indirect strategy. This strategy is used to disguise the imposition that the speaker might exercise while using language. In other words, it helps to hide the speaker's potential to be imposing on the hearer, and therefore, his/her performance of a face threatening act with different levels of "plausible deniability"[21] (Leech, 1983). According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 211); doing an act off record encompasses the speaker's avoidance of responsibility for doing a FTA. The off-record strategy can be performed differently; either by 1) inviting implicatures or by 2) being ambiguous and vague (for more details see Brown and Levinson, 1987: 213-227). Within the data collected from this study, the off-record use is almost non-existent. As opposed to the use of positive and negative politeness strategies, only two participants, one instance each, have used off-record strategy (e.g. hints, association clues). For instance, in requests for reference/information (see situation six (6) in appendix D), one of the participants requested (see below) indirectly that her supervisor provide her with references/book by writing the following to him/to her (in the email).

> **[46]: Mariah:** "I really want to read one of the articles that you wrote in 2012 but I struggle to find it".

The example above, Mariah is performing an off-record request while hedging and hinting to the addressee (supervisor) to recognize her request for finding/giving (if owned) the article. Furthermore, in situation five (see appendix A), where participants are asked to perform a request for a recommendation letter, another participant (see Bissane's excerpt below) seems to minimize the imposition by

[21] According to Leech (1983) it is the denial of the utterance's implicature.

giving an association clue. Put differently, she mentioned that she has been asked to provide a recommendation letter, and therefore, has been implicating that she needs one written by her supervisor.

> **[47]: Bissane:** "I am emailing you because I have been accepted on a job recently, however, I have been asked to bring a recommendation letter from my supervisor"

4.1.1.4. Acts Conveying on Record FTA (without redress)

When performing the task directly without redressing or taking the hearer/addresser' face into account, this strategy is called bald on record. According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 69), bald on record, is a way to say things in the most direct and concise way without any minimization to the imposition that the speaker/addresser puts on the hearer/addressee. Usually, this strategy takes the form of orders such as do X, do Y. In the current study, however, this strategy (i.e. bald on record) was only used once, when the student participant performed a direct request to meet the supervisor. In link with the previous point, the participant writes the following:

> **[48]: Safia:** "I am available all this week except Thursday, **<u>select</u> a date and time suitable**."

The use of the verb "select" categorizes (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1976) the speech act as directive therefore, the participant here is highly imposing on her supervisor without any redress strategies to mitigate the Face Threatening Act (FTA). Yet looking at the start of the utterance, Safia is giving her supervisor a number of options as she is available all week.

4.1.1.5. Do not do the FTA

This strategy is about not doing the act and not saying anything. In regard to the current study results, only one participant claims not doing the situation (situation seven: request for guidance). The participant states that she would rather ask for a supervisory meeting first, where she hints at her need for face-to-face guidance. The participant has justified (in a written form beneath the scenario) her refusal to perform the act by claiming that this (requesting guidance in face-to-face circumstances) would provide her with more space, support and more time to deal with detailed areas of needs.

4.1.1.6. External Modifiers used in the students' DCTs.

To support requests, external modifications (supportive moves) can be used either before or after the main requests to set its context (Woodfield and Economidou-Kogetisidis 2010: 91). External modifiers are statements used to either soften or emphasise the illocutionary force of the request. Therefore, correspondences collected from the students DCTs in the present study has been analysed quantitatively for external modifiers use. A total of 105 requests were collected and analysed for external modifications, the classification adopted here for coding the external modifiers of the collected requests rests on Woodfield and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010) taxonomy, which was adopted from Blum-Kulka et al., 1989. The following tables summarises the external modifications typology applied to the current study' data.

Name	Definition	Examples
Grounder	a clause which can either precede or follow a request extension and allows the speaker to give reasons, explanations, or	"I would like an assignment extension **because I could not deal with the typing time**"

	justifications for his or her request.	
Disarmer	a phrase with which 'the speaker tries to remove any potential objections the hearer might raise upon being confronted with the request' (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 287)	**'I know that this assignment is important** but could you…?
Preparators	The speaker prepares the hearer for the ensuing request.	I really need a favour…
Getting a precommitment	The speaker checks on a potential refusal before. performing the request by trying to get the hearer to commit.	'Could you do me a favour?'
Promise	The speaker makes a promise to be fulfilled upon completion of the requested act.	'Could you give me an extension? **I promise I'll have it ready by tomorrow.'**

Imposition minimiser	The speaker tries to reduce the imposition placed on the hearer by his request' (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 288)	'I would like to ask for an extension. **Just for a few days.'**
Apology	The speaker apologises for posing the request and/or for the imposition incurred.	'**I'm very sorry** but I need an extension on this project.'
Discourse Orientation Move	Opening discourse moves which serve an orientation function but do not necessarily mitigate or aggravate the request in any way	'**You know the seminar paper** I'm supposed to be giving on the 29th ….'

Table 5: Woodfield and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010) Taxonomy of External Modifications

Grounder:

As stated in the above table, mitigating supportive moves may take the form of linguistic strategies where writers/speakers give explanations and justifications as well as excuses for their request(s). Grounders are used in order to get the addressee's positive response (Brown and Levinson 1978:133). In the below examples from Kyla and Maria, both students provided some specific reasons on why they needed, respectively, an extension as well as an urgent meeting request. While some student participants have used other explanations mainly related to poor health or other emergencies and this is mainly for an extension request, others claimed (in the interviews) avoiding the use of health concerns as an explanation for why they requested an extension as this may affect their image with the supervisor, therefore, they highlighted the importance of honesty and transparency in students-supervisors communication. The grounders were mainly used in requests for extension, urgent meeting and which are not a highly imposing requests according to the students' classification of the weightiness of the request. In example of Kyla, an attempt is made to negative as well as positive politeness. Negative politeness is conveyed through the speakers/writers' expression of non-imposition where they question the ability of the supervisor to offer an extension. Positive politeness in example 49 below is, however, conveyed by assuming that the supervisor may co-operate.

> **Kyla:** I would like an extension of 5 days as I am unable to finish my work by the deadline because I needed to make some changes to it, and it will take some more time to complete.
>
> **Maria:** I should like to bring to your attention that I feel at crossroads as far as my PhD. is concerned, and I would like to arrange a meeting as soon as possible.

Disarmers:

Indicating the speaker/writer awareness that an imposition can be performed towards a hearer/reader and the trial to prevent any refusal, disarmers have been employed in this study to soften the imposition requests for urgent meetings, or requests for feedback might have on the supervisors. Disarmers in this study are used to convey negative politeness and to soften the weightiness of the imposition occurring as a result of certain requests. Examples from the data are presented below where student mostly apologise then recognise the supervisors' busy schedules.

Yara: I know you are very busy, and I am so sorry if this is too much to ask but I really need to schedule supervisory meeting with you so I can discuss few points that I am confused about.

Nafas: I know you are extremely busy and might be unavailable, but I really hope I can get some feedback on my last piece of work.

Preparator:

One of the external modifiers used by student participants is preparator, where longer statements are used to prepare the hearer/writer for the request. In the current research these were mainly used in request for recommendation letter or request for resources. Students' data from DCTs show that the use of preparators is mostly linked with favours, according to the students these are of a low imposition on the supervisors as they have the freedom of either accommodating these requests or not. Rose's and Bissane's examples below demonstrate the use of preparators and from which we believe positive politeness is conveyed as students are asking a favour, which emphasises the asymmetry between themselves and their supervisors and thus can be praising for their supervisors and their need to be approved.

Rose: I am emailing as I need a favour for a recommendation letter, as I have been asked to provide one as part of my job application. (Recommendation letter)

Bissane: I am unable to find few resources and I need a favour from you if you have any of these and can send these to me as they are very important to the current section I am writing.

Getting precommitment:

Getting pre-commitment is one of the external modifications used to reduce any potential refusal when performing the request by trying to get the hearer/reader to commit. In the present study, only two students out of 15 used this external modifier and this in two instances, one to request feedback and the other to request letter of recommendation. The examples below illustrate how Yara and Bisane are getting their supervisors to commit to their requests. Getting pre-commitment can be interpreted in relation to negative politeness as it adds more imposition to the initial request in the sense that it puts pressure on the supervisors to get back to the student with feedback. The use of pre-commitment, however, in Bisane's can be associated with positive politeness as it stresses the power asymmetry as well as the value of the letter of recommendation if written by the student' supervisor. Pre-commitment in the current study seems to be one of the least used external modifiers.

Yara: I am not fully satisfied with my recent piece of work in literature review chapter, could you do me a favour and let me know what you think before I move to writing the next chapter?

Bisane: Could you do me a favour and provide me with a recommendation letter?

Imposition Minimiser:

The imposition minimiser category of external modifiers, where speaker/ writer makes effort to reduce any imposition placed upon the hearer/reader by their request action. In the current study, the students seem not to over rely on this strategy. The imposition minimizers were mostly used in extension request. The examples below illustrate the use of imposition minimiser as an external modifier, and which can be both positive as well as negative politeness-oriented strategy. In both examples below, Lily and Ta seem to convey negative politeness by questioning the possibility of getting an extension for few days.

Lily: Given some circumstances, I could not finish my work on time, and I was wondering if I could ask for 2 days extension to submit?

Ta: I have read new resources and I believe that it is important to incorporate them into my research, I was wondering if you could extend my submission due date till the end of the week?

Apology:

Apology is the most used external modifier within the current study by students whilst. All participants used apology either at the start or at the end of their different requests.

The overuse of apology might be the result of pragma-linguistic transfer from French language as a second language for Algerian students. Like in English, expressions of apologies are widely used in making requests as they fulfil the society's emphasis on individuality and tact thus on negative aspects of face. Apology is used mostly in meeting request, deadline extension request, supervision requests, and resources help. Below is an exemplification of apologies used in the present study.

Dyhia: I apologize for not being able to finish my work on time, I was wondering if we could extend the deadline?

Ta: I apologize if this is too much to ask but I was wondering if you could send me any feedback on my recent work?

Discourse Orientation Move

This category comprises opening utterance in an attempt to direct the speech, in order to retrieve the shared background knowledge for both speaker/writer and hearer/reader. The results of the study revealed that 6 students used this modifier in supervision request while two other students have used it in requesting resources. Some instances of this modifier are exemplified below and are supportive of positive politeness strategies as they shed light on the supervisors position and the students' interest in the research they are doing.

Ta: we have met in canterbury Christ church university where you gave a talk and I approached you already for my project idea, I am now interested in your supervision and I would like to know if you are interested in supervising me

Bisane: I was wondering you have access to the novel of Farida Belgoul: Georgette as you recommended it last time and I struggle to find it.

In summary, students in this study have used a variety of external modifiers, these modifiers were used in order to convey positive and/or negative politeness. In regard to the correlation between the rank of the imposition and the use of external modifiers, the study reveals the use of apologies in highly ranked impositions (request for feedback, request for urgent meeting), while other external modifiers were used almost in every request type. The data shows absence of using certain external modifiers like promise. For quantification see the following table that shows number of students and percentage at which each external modifier has been used in the current study data.

	Grounders	Disarmer	preparators	Getting precommitment	Imposition minimiser	Apology	Discourse Orientation move
Urgent meeting	3 students 20 %	5 students 33.33 %	5 students 33.33 %	0 students 0 %	0 students 0 %	5 students 33.33 %	0 students 0 %
Deadline extension	6 students 40 %	0 students 0 %	5 students 33.33 %	0 students 0 %	2 students 13.33 %	12 students 80 %	0 students 0 %
feedback	0 students 0%	2 students 13.33 %	5 students 33.33 %	0 students 0 %	0 students 0 %	1 student 6.6 %	0 students 0 %
Supervision	0 students 0%	0 students 0 %	5 students 33.33 %	0 students 0 %	0 students 0 %	0 students 0 %	5 students 33.33 %
Guidance	0 students 0%	0 students 0 %	0 students 0 %	0 students 0 %	0 students 0 %	2 students 13.33 %	0 students 0 %
Resources	0 students 0%	0 students 0 %	0 students 0 %	7 students 46.66 %	0 students 0 %	5 students 33.33 %	3 students 20 %
Recommendation letter	0 students 0%	0 students 0 %	0 students 0 %	9 students 60 %	0 students 0 %	1 student 6.6 %	0 students 0 %

Table 6: External Modifications used in the research.

4.1.2. Analysis of the Students' Interviews

This section presents the qualitative aspect of the study, the data for which has been collected through individual semi-structured interviews with students (See chapter three and appendix F for further details). This section introduces the main findings under themes, and engages with the collected data to identify the participants' aims behind the use of certain linguistic politeness strategies. The analysis of the findings under themes, using Braun and Clark's (2006) model of thematic analysis, also aims at exploring the underpinning factors influencing the respondents' choice of linguistic politeness patterns. Findings are presented sequentially and are demonstrated in accordance with their reoccurrence. In other words, the findings are ordered from those which were referred to most to those were referred to least to provide a readable and engaging narrative. Therefore, throughout this chapter, I describe the results thematically and I provide excerpts from the dataset to provide examples, illustrations, evidence, or clarifications.

Throughout the conduct of the interviews, consideration of any potential language barriers that would prevent participants from expressing their opinion were dealt with (See chapter three, section 3.6.1. for more details). Accordingly, and with reference to the language(s) used during the interview, the participants were asked to choose any language (from those they were known by the present author to speak/understand) that they felt comfortable using. Furthermore, they were also informed about the possibility to codeswitch languages (dialects) as the researcher is an expert user of standard Arabic, Algerian Arabic, French, and English; and can also understand Berber dialect to a great extent. Indeed, during the interviews instances of using different languages/dialects appeared. In effect, participants could draw upon their rich linguistic repertoires to express their opinions and feelings, and that helped me to maximize the benefits from their interviews. Besides, the use of a language of their choice served to reduce the impact of the observer paradox (Labov, 1972) and, hence, served to put the participants at ease. Consequently, fifteen interviews (approximately 30 minutes each) were conducted with female respondents, their ages ranging from 26 to 28 years old. All participants have been to the UK for periods ranging from one (1) year and a few months, to almost three (3) years; and they are currently pursuing their Ph.D. study at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), England. Ten (09) of the participants are in their second-year academic degree, while the other five (6) are in their third (final) year. The reason behind asking the participants about their length of stay in the UK during the interviews was to ascertain any influence this might have on their style and language use in emails. In other words, to see if the acculturation process (see chapter two for more details) might have an influence on their socio-pragmatic competence, and thereafter their practices in email requests. The interviews were thus translated (when necessary, see chapter 3 for more details on translation) and transcribed by the researcher, where references to the interviews' length, timings, and interviewer interviewee name' initials were stated at the start of the transcription. Moreover, following Braun and Clark (2006), the data was analysed (for further details on the steps of deducing themes using Braun and Clark (2006) model, see Chapter 3, section 3.7.) and hence the main findings of this study have been classified under the following themes:

1- Cultural background influence on linguistic politeness practices (cultural differences and clash of expectations).

2- Developing socio-pragmatic competence while study abroad.

3- Effect of the mean of communication (email anxiety).

4- Factors influencing the politeness strategy use (scaling the weight of the imposition defined under the umbrella of rights and duties within the academic context, power imbalance and social distance).

5- Motivations to use linguistic politeness

Given the chosen methodology (use of I-DCTs mainly), it is by no means intentional to conflate what the students think they do (folk pragmatics) with what they actually do in real interactions with their supervisors. However, it is worth mentioning that in addition to addressing question one of the present research regarding the politeness strategies used by Algerian Ph. D. students, Interactant-based Discourse Completion Tasks have also provided some indicative responses that are in line with the results generated from the semi-structured interviews. In effect, some politeness strategies used during the discourse completion tasks demonstrate a degree of consistency with what the participants have answered during the interviews, while others, interestingly, do not. In terms of the consistency, the one-to-one semi-structured interviews aimed to answer questions two and five of the research project; respectively. They are stated here as:

2. How do Algerian Ph.D. students strategically formulate email requests in asymmetrical context?
5. What are the sociocultural factors influencing their language practices and choices?

In the following paragraphs then, I explore and explain the responses under themes to answer and discuss, in the next chapter, the research questions listed above in the light of the interview findings by demonstrating where and to what extent these are in line with findings from the discourse completion tasks. Thereafter, as the semi-structured interviews broadly covered the themes previously stated above; I attempt to explain each and support my claim with excerpts from the students' interviews.

1. Cultural Background Influence on Linguistic Politeness Practices (cultural difference and clash of expectations)

Under the realm of this theme, I discuss the data obtained from the interviews conducted with student' correspondents. The discussion unfolds to showcase how culture and its different aspects affect the participants' practices and understanding of politeness and thus the choice of linguistic politeness strategies. The section also highlights the cultural differences (Algerian vs British) and clash of expectation expressed by the students in an academic setting (and supervisors later in section 4.2.2.). In the following paragraphs, I, respectively, discuss how the participants' cultural background influences and affects, mainly, the use of address form/titles and email openings; I also shed light on how this relates to pragmatic transfer (Kasper, 1992). Finally, I highlight how power and social distance coupled with the cultural background influence the student's practices of linguistic politeness in emails.

In line with the interview instructions, the participants were first asked about the ways they address their supervisors via emails, specifically at a hypothetical point when an interesting reflection on the stages of their Ph.D. has occurred. Indeed, the participants show differing attitudes and reasons for either using or dropping address titles (See chapter 5 for further discussion). The data obtained in regard to the use of address forms illustrate the complexity of many cultural dimensions (e.g. power and social distance) that come together in the participants' choice of language to convey politeness. In what follows, I show excerpts from the interviews conducted with different student participants; moreover, I try to explain these with reference to their performances in the DCTs. In the following examples taken from two third-year female Ph.D. students - pseudonymised respectively as Yara and Lily - the participants constantly retain the use of titles and surname while addressing their two (2) British supervisors in the DCTs (non-British supervisors in British universities are discussed in Nafas [57/58/59], Nina [60/61], Ta [62], and Safia's [63] examples). To validate the accuracy and the reliability- i.e. the degree to which a data collection instrument produces stable and consistent results- of their performance in the DCTs, I have interrogated both Yara and Lily in the interview to reflect on the way/ways they address their supervisors while formulating email requests. Below I present how both students reply to the previous question that has been communicated using English language.

> **[63] Yara:** "I am very formal myself…although they asked me at the very first to avoid the title and just call them by their names but keeping up the titles and surnames is a personal choice… I find it very positive and I want to keep it but not for keeping distance but just to acknowledge each person status."

> **[50] Lily:** "now I am by no mean able to drop the titles, even in meeting I tend to say Dr. I do that consciously"

In the examples above, Yara [49] and Lily [50] explicitly mention their continuous, and conscious use of titles (e.g. Dr.) while writing emails to their supervisors. Interestingly, that has been validated by their performance in the DCT's. in other words, and throughout all the data obtained from the previous participants, they always tend to start their email requests with "Dear Dr. X" (Where "X" is the surname of the supervisors). Yara in example [49] explained – as is evident from the example above – that this is a personal choice, and Lily in example [50], similarly, claims to use address titles and surnames consciously and willingly. Further to this claim, the participants were asked to expand on this idea. I, as a researcher, question them on why they cannot drop the titles and surnames. The following extracts provide reasons given by the participants regarding this query.

> **[51] Yara:** "I come from a cultural background where we must respect our professors and teachers since childhood…it is by no mean acceptable to drop titles or surnames while you are communicating with your teachers at school".

[52]: “though in emails they (British supervisors) address me by my first name, and they sign off with their first names, but I prefer to reply in a very formal way because I come from a cultural background where we must respect out professors and teachers”

[53]: She adds “I had previously very friendly relationship with my master supervisors back home …I kept the titles and that did not affect our relation so I do not think it would harm in this context…I feel I can be friendly with my professor but at the same time it does not mean I should omit everything”

[54] Lily: “I strongly believe that the educational background we come from has affected the way we write emails”.

Then she expended on the idea by stating the following
[55]: “back in Algeria we used to call our teachers sir and madam so when I email my supervisors now, I cannot just write down hi and their first names like what they do here…it feels weird to me and this is because of the way we have been educated and raised up”

In a trial to compare what the participants think they are doing against what they actually do, and to argue for the reliability of the situations I provided within the I-DCTs (see appendix D and E), I apply 1) what Jansen and Janssen (2010: 2532) refer to as ‘*framing effect*’, i.e. enquiring about the participants’ polite (linguistic) behaviour where they tend to activate a folk theory on what is politeness and its different constituents; and 2) what Kádár and Haugh (2013: 61) refer to as ‘interpersonal evaluation’, i.e. an assessment of the interactant and their relationship, thus, how they think of these (persons and their relationships) and what they do to retain/dismiss these. In the above data extracts, for instance, both Yara (extract 51 and 52) and Lily (extract 54) refer, directly, to their cultural background and explain how it has influenced their use of address forms in email conversations with their British supervisors. Yara [53] for example, highlights how it is unacceptable to drop titles in the Algerian educational context, and she explicitly links this to the culture. She further explains how dropping titles seems to be impracticable for her even though she is noticing how her supervisors address her by her first name and sign off the emails with theirs. Yara [53] in the third excerpt draws on ex-supervision experience during her master's degree; where she claims that there is no link between the high formality that might exist in emails and the social distance between interlocutors in real life. Although Yara [53] seems to employ terms of address with her ex-supervisor she was still able to have close and friendly relationship with him. Thus, for Yara using titles in her own culture is rather a way to communicate deferential politeness, and hence show respect to her supervisors.

It is noteworthy that both Yara and Lily seem to struggle to omit the title of address because of the way they have been brought up back in Algeria. Indeed, they are not alone in this. All the other participants also seem to draw on and understand the effects of their cultural background, and to one degree or another, display an understanding of how it affects the actual address forms they use. However, the rest of the participants also seem, to a certain degree, to have further developed and fleshed out their pragmatic competence (See chapter 2) while studying abroad (UK). Below, I illustrate how the students reflect on the change in the address forms used.

> **[56] Nafas: "**To be honest this academic culture (Algerian academic culture) has affected me during my first weeks here (Manchester); I felt I do efforts to sound polite and I manifested this through the use of titles and using family names to address my supervisors"

Nafas (second year), in the above, starts by describing how her cultural schemas regarding the use of address titles have an influence on the way she starts writing emails to her supervisor during the first weeks of her arrival to Manchester. The difficulty that Nafas encountered was also a result of the cultural background of her supervisors. In the following excerpts she explained how she feels about it and why she could not drop titles with both supervisors, respectively Algerian and Palestinian, while she could with the third one who is British (added to the supervisory team at a later stage).

> **[57] Nafas:** "it took me a while to step out of my comfy zone and start using names. It felt always a lack of respect to call them Spencer and Natalie; it was a psychological state that I cannot understand, and I cannot explain. It is something inside me something that I grew up doing while I was a student"

For Nafas, the use of address titles and surnames is deeply engraved in her culture, she demonstrates how she feels uncomfortable addressing her supervisors by their names. As she claims, dropping titles and using surnames took her a while (approximately one year). For her, like Yara, the use of titles is a way of showing respect (differential politeness) and therefore, omitting them is a sign of disrespect. In the next excerpt, Nafas talk through her experience and how she felt about dropping titles for each person in her supervisory team all of whom are originally from different cultures, and one of whom is originally from the same culture (Algerian).

> **[58] Nafas: "**For Spencer it was quite hard to drop the title...I know it is not appropriate in our culture to do so...he is Algerian and so do I; so, we both know how our culture works and I do not want to seem disrespectful or impolite. It took me a while longer to drop titles for him in comparison to other supervisors"

Being from the same cultural background, Nafas seems to draw on the cultural schemata that she herself shares with Spencer, and thus expected, as both are Algerians. She disregarded the fact that Spencer has been here (UK) for more than twenty years (that might imply Spencer has a higher degree of being integrated in the British society and thus accepts and internalizes being addressed by his first name) and emphasized the similarities that they both have. Nafas has been worried that dropping titles might affect the way Spencer perceives her; as both of them are Algerians and thus, they are aware of the inappropriateness of omitting titles and calling one's superior by his/her first name. Nafas found it challenging to drop titles for Spencer, but she did so in the end. The following quote, however, illustrates Nafas' other experience of dropping titles with Natalie and Kevin:

> **[59] Nafas:** "later and based on her (Natalie; Nafas' director of study) recommendation I started to use hi and hello in addition to her first name. Sometimes I use good morning and good afternoon. For Kevin (British supervisor) to be honest I started right away addressing him with his first name as he was in the supervisory team recently where I had already dropped titles for both Spencer and Natalie and I knew it is totally fine to call them like so, British people do not mind"

As you can see in the above extract, Nafas [57] seems to struggle to drop titles with supervisors like Natalie and Spencer, with whom she has the same cultural background (regardless of the supervisors' length of stay abroad, and precisely in the UK). Nafas [59], after her first year, and on recommendation from her supervisor Natalie, started to drop titles but that took a while (as she stated in excerpt [58]) to happen with the Algerian supervisor (Spencer). Nonetheless, this shift from formal addressing to a less formal one helps her to address Kevin later on without worries, especially after a one year stay in the UK, where she comes to realize that using names without titles in the UK university context is acceptable.

Like Nafas, Nina (third year Ph.D. students) also struggles to drop titles as Natalie and Spencer are in her supervisory team (Nafas and Nina share the same supervisory team), and they share a similar cultural background to hers (see the examples 60 and 61 below). Hence, according to Nina, they expect her to retain using titles and surnames to address them:

> **[60] Nina:** "I am afraid of dropping titles as two of my supervisors have Arabic backgrounds and they must be expecting me to use it"

[61]: "when I first come to the UK, I come with this idea in mind (using titles) and despite the fact she (Natalie) told me to drop the title and just address her by her name, but I still could not... or recently I do it with a real difficulty and always a second thought. This is the effect of a long-life upbringing ...it is difficult to drop a lifetime habit"

Other participants also (see Taa and Safia below) claim to use titles in first email instances as a matter of cultural background influence. Taa and Sofia, however, dropped the titles for different reasons. Taa claims that she kept using titles for a whole year; she has been, however, constantly observing the way her supervisor addresses her in email using "hi" and "hello". Consequently, Taa's understanding of her own use of addressing forms has been shaped by her supervisor's practices of these. Put differently, Taa understands that the supervisor use *of hi* and *hello can be* interpreted, indirectly, as asking her (Ta) to drop formality. On the other hand, Safia used to be very formal during the few first months, she kept using titles and full names to address her supervisors. A few weeks after her arrival, she received an email from her supervisor telling her to just use his first name.

[62] Taa: "during my first year I had never used hi or hello. In second year, I started to use them but I use 'hello' and not 'hi' as 'hi' is less polite I guess although my supervisor always uses it. When I see her always addressing me like that, I feel like she is telling me to the same"

[63] Safia: "I used to write down his full name and the title and he sent me back an email saying that I don't need to address him with all these formalities. Just use hi or hello and my first name...don't be formal that was in the first few weeks of my arrival"

In the follow-up questions during the interviews, participants were asked about how they decide on the structure, organization and content of their email requests. The results demonstrate how some aspects of the participant's culture and language are transferred into the target language (i.e. English) while formulating email requests. Reference to some cultural practices were mentioned during the interviews; these included the openings of the email and the different politeness patterns used in the email content. Therefore, I discuss here the effect of the pragmatic transfer (Kasper, 1992). In other words, I discuss how the participants employ aspects and patterns from their home culture into another different one. In the following, Yara explains her genuine use of the expression “how are you doing” as a linguistic practice from her culture and from speech.

> **[64] Yara:** “I always use ‘I hope you are doing well/good’ to start my email and this is to check on the person...it is the very normal thing that one needs to do before starting the conversation. That exists in every language.” she adds “in either Arabic or French we use the equivalent of ‘I hope you are ok’ to start a conversation”.

The other three participants, Dyhia, Safia and Sarah also highlighted the fact that their email writing is influenced by some practices from their home culture. In the following, Dyhia claims that she tends to use details and explanations to provide excuses and thus to persuade her British supervisor of whatever she requests from him. She further adds that this practice is a habit that she acquired throughout her upbringing in Algeria.

> **[65] Dyhia:** “I give so much reasons and excuses, so they become convinced that I really need them and their help. To request a leave; I tried to give so much excuses of why I am going, and I insisted on the fact that this will not affect my progress” she adds “in Algeria if you do not give that much details you will be by no means given extensions...it is a habit now I tend to say a lot in English”.

Like Dyhia, Safia refers to the influence of cultural practices on the way she performs requests in English. Safia, however, highlighted the use of circumlocution, which is mainly saying a lot of words instead of few, given that indirectness is prized in Arabic.

> **[66] Safia:** "In our culture we do not get straight to the point; we like to play around the language". She further gave the name of the strategy in Arabic "In Arabic it has a name "itnab / circumlocution" and it is basically to talk and talk and the other person needs to know what I want from that talk".

Sarah (see below), and in a different fashion has been referring to the concept of "white lies" that she is bringing, according to her, from her Arabic (Algerian) practices. On the slip side of positive politeness, Brown and Levinson (1987: 115) claim that the speaker can avoid having a disagreement with the hearer by the employment of a white lie, where both (i.e. speaker and hearer) are aware that the reason provided might not be true, but the hearer's face is saved. In the extract below, however, white lies seem to be an account given to preserve the speaker's face too.

> **[67] Sarah:** "I believe this is Algerian and Arabic thing but here at a certain point I understand that they have different mentalities they are not like us. For instance, now I tell them I need an extension because I am sick because I don't want them to know that I could finish on time because I struggle and that would affect my image."

Another important result from the interviews is encapsulated in the effect of the negotiated power imbalance and social distance. The results from the interviews, thereafter, shed light on the occurrence of social distance (Brown and Levinson, 1987 [1978]) between the supervisors and their supervisees, as well as, the *expert power* (French and Raven, 1959; see also section 2.2.1.1.) that the student participants ascribe to the supervisors. Yara, for instance, has expanded on how and why she needs to be formal in the way she addresses/writes emails to both supervisors. In her answers, she seems to link the use of titles with her cultural background and more specifically the practices of politeness within ex-educational settings. She has also been referring to the amount of knowledge her supervisor has in the field of Literature (see example 68 and 69 below). This brings our attention to the role of "expert power" and how people with this power should be treated with high respect in certain cultures. Indeed, Yara explains a very specific type of power that had an influence on her politeness practices. Yara refers to the expertise and the knowledge one has over another.

In addition to the impact of expert power, the participant referred to some religious verses from Quran (see example 69). Yara seems to link her understanding of the importance of "expert power" to its importance in the Islamic religion which is part of her cultural background. See the following extracts to understand how the participant has explained the link between the way she used to address her ex-teachers, expert power and religion. Expert power for Yara (and from an Islamic perspective) stems from religion.

> **[68] Yara:** "I feel because they are doctors … they have a certain knowledge more than I do…I feel like I need this…. I need to be formal. For them I think they do no pay attention to these details and they would not mind me calling them Dr. + surname just to show them that I respect their position and that I am still your student...I think it does not harm to be formal and they (referring to supervisors) are very understanding. She asked me once to call her by her name and she never did again".

> **[69]:** "we need to respect and consider those whose status is higher than us, the elderly people, and our teachers. From a religious point of view, we need to respect those who have more knowledge than us" she further illustrates this with citing a verse from the Coran "Are those who know and those who do not know alike? Only the men of understanding are mindful." Chapter (39) sūrat l-zumar (The Groups). I use this a lot in my everyday life because it makes sense and therefore it is logic to me."

Yara in the above extract (68 and 69) states how teachers/lecturers and educators in general are superiors in rank and position, who need to be praised by the students, who are considered to have inferior power. Yara here highlights the inappropriateness of dropping titles and the use of surnames in her culture; and considers this to be unacceptable. Although she has been aware that in the UK university culture, using first names is acceptable but she could not do it and she kept using titles regardless of the expectations within a British academic context. Lily, similarly, explains this power imbalance in terms of hierarchies that exist in the Algerian Educational system where teachers are always regarded as seniors and students should always show respect to them regardless of their background

> **[70] Lily:** "because we see things in hierarchies, so the teacher is like a master. Also, it is about the way we brought up in a society where respect is highly required for those older than us and those whose social status is higher, simply we are expected to respect our seniors ...I cannot imagine myself calling them by their first names to be honest"

Moreover, the cultural background seems also to shape the other participants and their perception of power in Academic settings, nonetheless, to differing degrees. Bisane (see the excerpts below) hesitated at first to call her supervisor by her name and she thinks that being an Algerian and being a student is what made her choose to use titles. In other words, by highlighting the position that the supervisor has, Bisane considers herself in an inferior position which urges her to be considerate of the way she addresses her supervisor. One consequence of this is a general expectation that formality is kept to a maximum.

> **[71] Bisane:** "in relation to her position as my supervisor … also as I came from Algeria, I thought it is not appropriate to call her by her first name"

Although in the above example Bisane claims the existence of power and thus, social distance but she further adds (see the excerpts below) that throughout her journey abroad she came to realize, and therefore, negotiate concepts like power and social distance where she considers herself as an equal to her supervisor.

> **[72] Bissane:** "it is strange to see student here calling their superiors with first names but after one year of my stay in here [Manchester], I start to understand that using first names is ok and expected...by then I start to reconsider my addressing forms and the level of politeness I employ in my email...I start to consider myself more as a colleague."

2- Developing Socio-Pragmatic Competence while Study Abroad

During the length of their stay in the UK, the participants (students) develop an awareness towards the proper language use or what is referred to as socio-pragmatic competence (Leech, 1983). As stated in the section above, most of the participants claim to use, during the first months, formal address terms in a similar manner to what they have been employing to address their Algerian teachers/lecturers. Nonetheless, some of them were confused (see Rose and Kyla's examples below) on whether they are using an appropriate language or not. One participant (Rose), while explaining the process of writing up the email, she refers to different pragmatic (pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic) properties of language where she attempts to be socially acceptable.

> **[73] Rose:** "while writing my first email, I have been trying to tackle so many things at once. I have been making sure my sentences are grammatically correct, I have been checking spelling and most importantly I have been looking on the internet to see whether what I am writing is similar an appropriate or is it too lengthy".

Similar to Rose, Kyla explains how the process of writing an email in English was a daunting task as she is an English foreign language speaker, and therefore, she might not have the appropriate pragmatic competence.

> **[74] Kyla:** "I know my English Spelling and Grammar are to a certain extent are correct, I have been learning English since the age of 11 or 12 and English has been the language of instruction in my university course since 2011 but to say that I am fully competent this is not a fair thing to say...I remain Algerian and English is a foreign language, and thus it is impossible for me to use it properly 100%. While writing my emails or even when speaking I always try to be socially appropriate and say nothing that can be misunderstood but I cannot be sure of that simply because I am not a British".

Further to Rose and Kyla examples above, Jane Austin (see below) also refers to the attention that should be paid to appropriate language usage. She has been talking through the process of writing her email where she mentioned that she avoids being rude or socially unacceptable by being clear and respectful. In the extract 75 and 76 below, Jane Austin (for more details on the anonymity of the participant, see chapter 3 section 3.9.) discusses what she considers when writing an email and how that has changed over time.

> **[75] Jane Austin:** "well, I always make it clear from the begging on why I am emailing her. Equally important is the way I write it, where I try not to be rude or socially unacceptable after all she is my supervisor not my friend, so I have to be formal"

> **[76] Jane Austin:** "when I first contact her I used her title (DR.) and her surname, after some misunderstanding, I changed the supervisory team and thus I was addressing the new supervisor by her first name directly…I knew after a period of time that here it is ok to use first names. It is the way everybody calls everybody at UK universities I guess you know. Maybe I took the courage as she also told me to call her just Deborah"

Yara also commented on how the length of stay here helped her to operate properly in a British society in general and at university in particular (see extracts below). She claimed that her stay and contact with British people provided her with insights on what is expected and thus what is in/appropriate to say/do. Yara, however, did not only rely on contact with natives to develop her language use but also has relied on internet resources (see extracts 78 below) to see the proper ways of writing emails.

> **[77] Yara:** "I think being here helped me to know how they think and what they expect. I appreciate that there is no big deal on the way of addressing between tutors and students."
> **[78]:** "I kept as I told you checking the best appropriate words and forms from google... I wanted them to always think that I am demanding and not commending them to do things for me... now, it is very spontaneous, I feel kind of development as I am here for almost three years and I know a bit how things go via email and even email type is more about submission, so I rarely do requests"

3- Effect of the Means of Communication (Email Anxiety)

Email anxiety is a recurrent theme throughout the data, where all participants regularly referred to the dilemma of using email to communicate with their supervisors at UK higher education. Most of the participants manifest an interest in face-to-face communication rather than email when asked about their preferences in terms of means of communication. In the following excerpts, the participants discuss their preferences and the reasons behind these. The participants, further, attempt to justify the dis/advantages of using emails by claiming that they are asynchronous in nature (See Jane Austin' extract below; in bold to be translated in brackets), others (Yara) claim that email culture is not popular or almost rare in Algeria (at the time they were students in Algeria), other point of views on email communication were related to the inefficiency of communicating in comparison to face-to-face (see Jane Austin 2 and Sarah). The anxiety of using emails to communicate with supervisors seems to stem not only from the previous unfamiliarity, but also from the absence of social cues. For instance, Nina' extract [83] at the end of this section illustrates how misunderstanding with the supervisors might occur in email because of the absence of social cues absence (facial expressions; tone of voice). Note that the next excerpt contains numeral transliteration (numbers: 3 and 9), mainly to represent some sounds from Arabic into a Romanised version.

> **[79] Jane Austin: "**I prefer face to face as I have the opportunity to ask questions and expand on my ideas. Emails are fine too **mais k mayraj3ouch lih lih nat9ala9** (but they (supervisors) do not reply quickly so I worry and get stressed). usually, I get annoyed when it is something urgent like a milestone you know at least at these periods I expect them to consider checking their emails. However, the email is good in the sense that it allows me to think beforehand of what I say"

In the following example Yara, and similar to what Jane expressed, explained her frustration about the use of emails and that is stemming from earlier unfamiliarity with the mean of communication.

> **[80] Yara:** "to be honest in the first year I was very anxious about it…I was very confused on how to write an email because we are not used to this back home (Algeria). I was so stressed about how to write an email and make it understood the way I want it to be understood."

Further to the point that Yara has claimed above (make it (the email) understood the way she wants it to be understood) Jane Austin [81] and Sarah [82] (see the examples below) have stated that when writing emails, it is not easy to convey meaning as clearly as the way we do in face-to-face communication. The two participants highlight that the email is restricting them relative to the expansion on their ideas.

> **[81] Jane Austin:** "during my ethical approval application, I sent them (supervisors) an email as I really felt confused. My DOS was on leave and the first supervisor replied by saying that I need to do it online through ethos although my point in the previous email was that I did not know how to apply via ethos. I felt pissed at first as she did not understand me but this is the problem of the email…the lack of face-to-face interaction that hinders my ability to explain and re-explain if needed …she expected me to know all these as student and maybe was comparing me to her ex-students who are familiar with ethos where I have not even heard of it before."

> **[82] Sarah:** "well I prefer face to face communication…because in emails you cannot express yourself and at the same time, I do not prefer long emails I find them really boring and not interesting…so it is always better to meet them face to face. Usually what I write in emails is just few hints about what I want to discuss face to face and hence my supervisor fulfils this during the monthly meeting where he allows me to discuss in details my worries and my thoughts."

Further to the two examples above, Nina, in the following excerpt [83], mentioned how the absence of facial and tonal cues had led to the occurrence of misunderstanding during the early stages of her Ph.D. journey. These misunderstandings were a result of language use or absence of reply generally. For example, Nina claimed that she felt offended by one of her supervisor's emails where she (the supervisor) states that Ph.D. students need to reply within 48 hours. Although the previous statement by the supervisors seems to be informative and states the university regulations, yet Nina considers it offensive and face threatening. Also, the following excerpt by Nina highlights how the time taken to respond to emails by her supervisors is frustrating. This can be related to the power status existing, where students are required to respond within two days-time and the supervisors are not restricted by any timeframes.

> **[83] Nina:** "it is sometimes tricky to understand and interpret the content of the email. For example, me and my supervisor are apart and cannot see each other and all what we can see is written words. For me, and for several times, at the start of my Ph.D. I experienced a lot of misunderstanding instances where I either felt offended or when I felt I have been rude to the supervisors... once I did not reply to her email as I had a technical problem and she (Nina's supervisor) sent me an email saying that Ph.D. students need to reply to their emails within 48 hours...it felt horrible at that instance. Other time I sent her a request to meet urgently, and she did not reply, and I kept sending emails, but she did not reply at all and there I felt as if I was rude but by the end of the day, she was just busy that week"

4- Factors Influencing the Politeness Strategy Use (scaling the weight of the imposition defined under the umbrella of rights and duties within the academic context, power imbalance and social distance)

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the weight of a face-threatening act is determined by considering the combination of three variables. These three variables are: power, distance, and rank (for further details see chapter two). Relevant to this section is the rank. 'Rank' refers to the cultural ranking of the subject, i.e. the degree of sensitivity of the topic within a particular culture. In this regard, the participants (students) had to classify (in their views) the situations they responded to in the DCT's from the most imposing on the supervisor to the least imposing, and later on were asked about these to see the factors influencing their ranking. The classifications differ from one participant to another but were all categorized based on the realm of the rights and the duties of both the supervisor and supervisee, and on the time required from the supervisor to provide what is requested. In regard to the right and duties, some of the participants tend to classify the situation of asking for references and resources as the most imposing on the supervisors while the urgent meeting was the least imposing. Yara, for instance, claims that asking for resources is within her duties and obligations and that by asking her supervisor for certain resources is very imposing as it is not the supervisor's first place to look for these. She (Yara), on the other hand, claims that requesting an urgent meeting is within her rights, and thus the imposition is reduced. See the following excerpts [84] for exemplification, where Yara is requesting resources, and Yara [85] is about requesting an urgent meeting.

> **[84] Yara:** "for references and resources I feel like it is my job and usually I never ask them for references and if I do so I will feel that I am not doing my job."
> **[85]:** "For meeting I feel it is less imposing because I am in urgent need of meeting first...I need them to guide me and I and they also Know it is totally my right to request meetings and they confirmed that for me, so I see no imposition in that if I am asking to meet them politely while urgently"

Contrary to what Yara has claimed, Sarah (see excerpts below) has classified the urgent meeting and feedback request, equally, as the most imposing by claiming that 1) requesting an urgent meeting from the supervisors might be interpreted as inconsiderate as the supervisors might have busy schedules; and 2) requesting feedback is imposing in terms of time. For her, requesting feedback after a week of sending the work to the supervisor is imposing as the supervisor might not be able to provide feedback as the latter requires times (see the extract 87 for further expansion).

> **[86] Sarah:** "I feel so hesitant to request sudden supervisory meeting …I know that I have all the right to do so as fully funded Ph.D. student but I find it rude because I am not considering this way how much the supervisor is busy."
>
> **[87]: "**requesting a feedback ahead of your meeting or let us say after a week of sending the work is very imposing and it is too much to ask …after submitting the work, I believe I need to give the supervisors some time to read the work …I know this is their job but at the same time I feel like this can take a lot from their time. As they gave me time to write, I should not by no mean impose on them to give me the feedback; it is now their right to have time."

Requesting extension has been classified as the most imposing to some other participants. For example, Jane Austin (see below) claims requesting an extension to submit a piece of writing to be challenging and demanding. She has stated that the supervisors have busy schedules and asking for an extension would, so, result in a delay in the plans of the supervisor.

> **[88] Jane Austin:** "we always make a plan and we have always a deadline to send different piece of work, if I opt for an extension, I feel like I am the one off the plan and this is why I feel embarrassed and pushy if I ask them to give me more time and I start to apologize in the start of the email because I want to tell them that I am not imposing on them but sometimes plans get in the wrong direction. Also asking or providing extension can ruin their plans too as they plan everything ahead and they have different responsibilities and not just me"

Jane Austin has also classified, in comparison with some participants like Yara and Sarah above, requesting feedback as moderately imposing. In the interview, Jane Austin claims that asking for feedback is totally her right and it is the duty of the supervisor to provide this.

> **[89] Jane Austin:** "I feel it is their job to give you the feedback…I do not feel like I am imposing in that sense as they are supposed to do that."

Other requests like letters of recommendation, supervision, and guidance seem to be unimposing according to the participants (students). For instance, Sarah, below, states that requesting, respectively, a letter of recommendation, supervision and guidance is not imposing at all as the receiver (supervisor) has the choice for either accepting or rejecting the request. The previous requests seem to be unimposing as they do not impinge on the supervisors in terms of time, efforts nor in terms of response. See the example below for exemplification.

> **[90] Sarah: "**well because it (requesting recommendation letter) is nothing, I find it so casual … he knows me and there is no harm in recommending me for that work especially that I am doing well…I think it does not even take time as he will only recommend me for the employer. Additionally, as we say it in Arabic **"Mzeia"** (a favour) so he is not really obliged to do it."

Bearing in mind that the rank is culturally and contextually defined (see Brown and Levinson, 1987: 77), what can be concluded from this section is that the weight of imposition or the rank is a result of deferring, and often combined, factors that Brown and Levinson (1987: 76) had paid little attention to. That is to say they differ from one culture to another, which Brown and Levinson's model explains and, presumably, claims applicability to all cultures. Following Brown and Levinson's explanation of the weightiness of a FTA, the participants of the current research (as exemplified above) rank certain situation (e.g. feedback) in accordance with 1) the expenditure of service (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 77), i.e., the time that that will be devoted to performing the request initiated by the speaker. 2) the rights and obligations that the interlocutors have. The ranking of the situation, similar to Brown and Levinson's (1987) claim, seems not only to depend on the culture but also on individuals and their assessment of face threatening acts, and therefore their redress to these.

5- Students Motivations (face saving and identity)

The following examples from the present research showcase how the participants (students) consider the different aspects influencing students' choices of politeness strategies. Yet, the section focuses on the influence of aspects of their faces relative to aspects of their identities in interaction against those belonging to their supervisors. In the following excerpts (91 and 92), Jane Austin and Yara illustrate how students decipher the relations between themselves and their supervisors relative to power and social distance (see chapter 2 for further details on the concepts of power and social distance). Based on the previous perceptions, the students in further examples/excerpt expand on their motivations for the use of particular politeness strategy and these begin to relate to further concepts as 'face' and 'identity'.

> **[91] Jane Austin:** "...Equally important is the way I write it, where I try not to be rude or socially unacceptable after all she is my supervisor not my friend"
>
> **[92] Yara:** "it is for me a form of respect rather than putting distance or complex of oh he is a professor, and I am a student. They just asked me for once to address them by their names and I did not and they never asked me again, so I guess they do not mind."

In the above extract, Jane Austin [91] acknowledges the social hierarchy (in terms of power and distance) that exists between her and her supervisor, and this is by stating that her supervisor is not her friend. Yara [92], however, argues against the use of politeness as an attempt at putting distance, for her it is more a sign of respect. Like the extracts above, results from interviews with the remaining student participants show different views on social order/hierarchy existing in a higher educational setting. In other words, and while, some participants, like Jane Austin [91], support the idea that every individual seems to hold a certain place in the social hierarchy; others, like Yara [92], negotiate these notions of social orders while sending email requests to their supervisors. The negotiation of power and distance seem to extend to include negotiation of students' face as an identity aspect against those of their supervisors. In the following extracts, I exemplify, while referring to the previous discussions on face and identity (see chapter two for further details), and how face is related to identity and how face is negotiated in interaction.

> **[93] Yara:** to be honest here in the UK I feel whatever I am doing is a crap and it is not enough...I feel inferior because I am not a native speaker and I seek their sympathy sometimes and this is why I apologize a lot.

> **[94] Yara:** if it happens regularly and without giving reasons here, I believe they would see me as someone who is rude and not serious... I think this is a legitimate fear and it is shared by everyone.

> **[95] Yara:** I want them to get the idea that I am a polite person because I want to be someone polite, and also as I am in different country with a different cultural practice; I feel like I am obliged to reflect on my politeness behaviours as Arabs and as Muslims.

In the above extracts [93], [94], [95] from Yara, different aspects of identity can be identified. In reference to what has been, previously, discussed in section (2.3.1.), face in the above examples seems not to be a psychologically individual phenomenon as Brown and Levinson' have suggested. Face in the above extracts seems to extend to and include aspects beyond the self (Culpeper, 2011: 25) and that can be, initially, explained by Yara [93] when talking about her linguistic affiliation. In the previous extract, Yara seems not only to discuss her face in relation to her linguistic identity but face in that example seems to be an interactional phenomenon that is thought of and negotiated in relation to others based on the set of differences; and more precisely the cultural backgrounds they have. Yara [93] seems to apologize to obtain her supervisors' sympathy because she feels inferior as a second (English) language speaker.

Moreover, in extract [94], Yara seems, again, to refer to face as a negotiated identity/image rather than a fixed individual image. She (Yara) claims that if she requests an extension without giving some tangible reasons, that will somehow affect how her supervisor would perceive her, and thus, would associate her face with some negative attributes, mainly those of not being serious and being rude. The previous excerpt, again, shows that face is an interactional phenomenon that depends on our expectations of face and how these are perceived by our interlocutors. In the last extract [95], for instance, Yara explains that she is in control of managing her face, and thus image as she is aware that she represented different cultural practices from those existing in Britain. She further, explains that it is her responsibility to project polite ethnic (Arab) and religious (Muslim) identities. The last point is important as it suggests that face extends to include aspects from the collective identity (mainly that of an Arab and that of a Muslim) that Yara seems to project while using politeness strategies to formulate requests and send these via email to her supervisor. In support of the above, it is relevant to quote Goffman's definition of 'face' as:

> The showing that individuals give for themselves, their religion, their job...or other groups to which they belong.
>
> (Goffman, 1967: 5)

Like in Yara [94], Sarah also (see extracts 96 below) thinks that there should be a tangible reason for requesting an extension to submission. Sarah claims that she uses white lies to cover up her writing struggles and to avoid being seen as unserious. Sarah in the below excerpt seems to assume (unmarked face assumptions) that as a Ph.D. student she needs/expected to be serious, and this can be implemented through regular submission of written work.

> **[96] Sarah:** For instance, now I lie telling them I need an extension because I am sick because I don't want them to know that I could not finish on time because I struggle and that would affect my image as a supposedly serious PhD student.

Other student' participants (Nafas, Safia, Kyla, and Nouha), while discussing their motivations to use particular strategies and expressions, have discussed the relation between language choice and personality traits, identity, and face. In Nafas [97], for instance, it has been assumed that the supervisor is serious based on the language that she (the supervisor) uses. Nafas considers her supervisor as friendly because she promptly responds to emails. Nafas claims that an image of a person can be formed while reading what s/he writes. According to the excerpt, Nafas seems to relate and explain the concept of image in relation to personality traits (being serious).

> **[97] Nafas:** from the language she has used in email...you know different people write emails differently. You feel it or in other words you can form an image about that person; for instance, if the person is not serious you will find some kind openings at the start, they do not get directly into the topic....do you understand? They might give you recommendation; ask if you need further help...so s/he gives you more than what you expected. My supervisor, however, she is serious I see her friendly because she always responds to my email sometimes immediately, but her emails are straight to the point.

In other interviews, Safia [98], Kyla [99] and Nouha [100] claim that the way they write their first emails and the language they use is very important when contacting supervisors whom they have had no previous contact with. All participants refer to the first impression that receivers of the email (supervisor) may have about the student, and which are based on assumptions about specific language use. For example, Safia [98] assumes that if she does not use polite language, her prospective supervisor will not consider her supervision request seriously. Similar to Safia, Kyla [99] and Nouha [100], respectively, refer to how they needed to be formal (e.g. using address forms) when contacting the supervisor for the first time. Tailoring their (students) language seems to be a must to leave a good impression, which they explain in terms of personality traits (motivated, serious). Nouha [99], however, has provided a more thorough explanation of her linguistic behaviours in email. Nouha tends to use combined politeness strategies that save and enhance her supervisor's face (claiming awareness of the inconvenience her request might have (negative politeness strategy) and enhancing the supervisors' positive face by claiming she is the only person that Nouha knows, who is able to help). Her (Nouha) use of these strategies seems to be strategic and purposeful as she [99] claims that she is attempting at orienting the supervisor's perception towards seeing her as serious, responsible, and non-imposing. Nouha adds that using some expressions and politeness help her to save her own face (herself) so she (her supervisor) understands that it is beyond Nouha's capacities. Therefore, Nouha's example confirms that the use of politeness strategies can be multifunctional (for further details see section 4.2.1.)

> **[98] Safia:** we should be careful about the way we write the first email as it is their (supervisors) first impression on you and based on it, they either accept or refuse you. I think if I go too direct and I do not tend to be polite in the very first email exchanges, the supervisor will not take me seriously.

> **[99] Kyla:** I used Dr. and full name in the very first email; I mean supervision, and this is to show politeness and respect. I needed to be formal as I did not know the person in real life, so I wanted to give a good impression. The first email is the only virtual image you have in front of the supervisor. I wanted them to compose an image of a serious and motivated Ph.D. candidate.

[100] Nouha: I always tend to tell her that I am aware that my request might be inconvenient or behind her abilities, but it is also behind mine and I have no one but her to help me sort it out. I think this way will make her see me as a serious and responsible person and someone who cares about others freedom to act **machi wa7da 3andha lamoubalat w ahder bark (not someone careless and says anything)**. this is also a way for me to save myself and not to sound too imposing **Nkharaj ro7i menha b la politess ta comme quoi c'etait un truc hors de mes capacities (I get myself out of it with politeness as if to say it is beyond my capacities).**

Another important point that I must highlight from the data is the student participants' reflections on their first experience in the UK (at Canterbury Christ Church University), and from which this research has stemmed. Almost all participants refer to the same scholar (Scholar X) when talking about their very first emails with their supervisors. Rose [101], for instance, and quoting from scholar X argues that FL speakers need to devote more attention to the way they write emails as this might affect how they are perceived by the supervisors at British universities. Quoting from what the scholar has said, it seems that politeness forms have specific functions and effects on the hearer/recipient if used strategically to build an image of the Speaker/sender. Using politeness strategically seem to result in acceptance of the requests and vice versa. Safia [102] refers to the refusals she had received from previous email contacts with previous supervisors, and she explains/assumes the refusals are the result of the unstructured and inappropriate use of politeness. Importantly, in the excerpts below (101, 102), both participants, Rose and Safia, refer to the relation between first impression or the image that the supervisors (recipients of supervision requests) might formulate based on the language used in the email.

[101] Rose: I remember when we were at Canterbury, scholar x has showed us some emails and refer to one example and said that if someone sent him this email, I would not even consider him or her for a future supervision because the language is poor, and the person seem to be impolite and not strategic. He said that there are some formalities that we need to pay attention to as speakers. Most importantly, he emphasised the point of being smart and being strategic to demonstrate a good image of yourselves as researchers.

[102] Safia: I have received so many refusals at the start of applying for a Ph.D. placement. I think this is because I was too direct and my emails were not well structured, so this is maybe one of the reasons that the supervisors did not take me seriously.

4.2. Data Analysis and Interpretation of the Supervisors' emails

Following the same steps of data analysis and organization that are presented in section (4.1.) above, this section, too, is divided into section (4.2.1.), where an analysis of supervisors' DCTs is undertaken, and section (4.2.2.) where the data from their interviews is categorized into themes.

4.2.1. Data Analysis of the Supervisors I-DCTs

Although the approach taken by Brown and Levinson (1987) is concerned with politeness residing in single utterances, the two linguists (ibid) strongly highlight the importance of taking the whole conversation into account. Nonetheless, and although they (ibid: 10-11, original in italics) claim reconsideration of relying *less heavily* on speech act theory -they have been criticized for in their first work (1978)- yet the two scholars' (i.e. Brown and Levinson, 1987) analysis of politeness instances still heavily relied on speech act theory (Austin, 1962). In line with their suggestion (of taking the whole conversation into account), Bousfield (2008), for instance, undertakes research on impoliteness but unlike Brown and Levinson (1987), Bousfield (2008) focuses on long stretches of discourse to investigate how impoliteness pans out and unfolds in interaction instead of focusing on isolated utterances (see also Culpeper, Bousfield, and

Wichmann, 2003). Having, previously, justified the need for a politeness response model (see chapter 1) and thus, shifting from the sole emphasis on speaker production (which has been the characteristic of previous research on politeness) towards the inclusion and incorporation of the hearer by focusing on and analysing his/her reactions/responses to politeness instances. In the current study, I, precisely, consider responses to mitigated requests by taking a sender and a receiver-oriented approach, I mean taking both the sender and recipient into account when analysing the utterances. Like Fukushima (2003), I consider responses to requests; yet, unlike Fukushima' s focus on responses to indirect requests, the current research extends to include responses to requests in general (see chapter one for further details). therefore, when requests are made, the hearer always recognizes that the speaker is making a request.

The top-down analysis, within this section, aims at finding out the response options taken by the supervisors (receivers of email requests) to manage the potential face damage/threat caused by the supervisees' requests. Yet, this management seems to be invariably 1) a management of face threats to themselves and 2) a face management of face threat in their responses to their supervisees (like students' management of face damage to themselves as well as to the face threat in their requests to their supervisors; further details see section 4.2.2.). It is important to consider the responses to requests in the current research as the participants belong to different cultural groups, where allegedly, a clash of expectations might occur as individuals within the two cultures, to a certain extent, operate differently in linguistic interchanges. Therefore, I take, critically, Bousfield's (2008) model of responses to impoliteness as the underlying point in departure to my own work on responses to politeness interculturally. In other words, this section, in its entirety, concerns itself with expanding on the responses model provided by Bousfield’s (2008: 219) work (for further details on the models see section 2.6.1.) to suggest options for responding to politeness.

As stated above, Bousfield’s model (2008), on the contrary to that of Brown and Levinson (1987), takes context into account while analysing interaction. In other words, Bousfield’s (ibid) model transgresses that of Brown and Levinson’s (1987), where he (ibid) opposes the analysis of utterances in isolation. Nonetheless, while the model by Bousfield (2008) provides responses to impoliteness, it pays little attention to the responses options that might be available to 1) unintentional impoliteness that might be a result of cross-cultural/intracultural difference and 2) linguistic politeness in general. Put another way, due to the nature of data collected from purely offending contexts, Bousfield’s (2008) model pays little attention to the theoretical set of choices related to ‘accept opposing position’ and ‘compromise’ as responses and possible strategies to resolve the impolite interaction, be it intentional or not. In the current research, I argue, and in accordance with Bousfield’s (2008: 263) suggestions, I provide an extension to the response's options as I am exploring a different interactional activity (requests and their response in an asymmetrical/educational context). Thus, I am unpacking, in this work, how politeness and responses to it unfold in a polite and/or mitigated face-threatening context. Here, I take face-threatening context similarly to what Bousfield (2010: 122) refers to as ‘Accidental’ Face threat that is -or can be a result of- speaker’s insensitivity, hearer’s hypersensitivity, clash of expectations, or cultural misunderstanding. Consequently, there is a possibility to provide a biopsy by expanding on the response options made in the summary of Bousfield (2008: 219) to incorporate (by deduction from the data) a wider array of responses (options) to politeness by adapting the model to a different (polite/ mitigated) context. Yet, it is also deemed important, in this section, to re-explore Bousfield's (2010) prototype model to understand politeness as outcomes for the receiver. In his model, Bousfield (2010:123) defines politeness as: a result of communication, where the speaker, on one hand, does not intend any face damage or threat towards the addressee's face but nevertheless, s(he)- the speaker- recognizes/perceives the possibility of its occurrence and consequently attempts at mitigating it. In the case of politeness, the hearer, on the other hand, does not perceive any intention of face damage, and therefore his face is not damaged or threatened (see figure 4 and 5 below for details on the different communication outcomes suggested in the model).

Scenario	**Speaker** (Producer) intent to threaten/damage face?	**Speaker** (Producer) aware of possible face-damaging effects of utterance?	**Hearer** (Receiver) perceives/constructs speaker's *intent* to threaten/damage face?	**Hearer**'s (Receiver's) face *actually* damaged according to hearer?	Outcome for the receiver(s)
1	+	+	+	+	**Impoliteness** is successfully communicated.
2	–	+	+	+	**Rudeness: Inadequate levels of, or Inexpertly used Politeness** which is interpreted/inferred by the receiver as **Impoliteness**
3	–	–	+	+	**Accidental face damage** as a result of **Rudeness: Inadequate levels of, or Inexpertly used Politeness**, 'speaker insensitivity', 'hearer hypersensitivity', a clash of interactant expectations, cultural misunderstanding, misidentification (on either part) of the type of communicative activity engaged in, etc. (see Goffman 1967: 14). **Impoliteness** is inferred, however.
4	+	+	+	–	**Impoliteness attempt fails** but is recognised/acknowledged.
5	–	+	+	–	**Rudeness: Inadequate levels of, or Inexpertly used Politeness** which is interpreted as an attempt at **Impoliteness** (actually as failed **Impoliteness**) **or patronising behaviour.**
6	–	–	+	–	**Accidental face threat** as a result of 'rudeness' (inadequate levels of politeness), 'speaker insensitivity', 'hearer hypersensitivity', a clash of interactant expectations, cultural misunderstanding, misidentification (on either part) of the type of communicative activity engaged in, etc. ... (see Goffman 1967: 14). **Impoliteness** attempt is inferred.

Figure 8: A Prototype to Understand (im)Politeness and Rudeness (Bousfield, 2010: 122)

Scenario	**Speaker** (Producer) intent to threaten/damage face?	**Speaker** (Producer) aware of possible face-damaging effects of utterance?	**Hearer** (Receiver) perceives/ constructs speaker's *intent* to threaten/damage face?	**Hearer**'s (Receiver's) face *actually* damaged according to hearer?	Outcome for the receiver(s)
7	+	+	–	+	IMPOLITENESS **attempt fails** as it is interpreted as **RUDENESS**.
8	–	+	–	+	**RUDENESS: INADEQUATE LEVELS OF, OR INEXPERTLY USED POLITENESS.**
9	–	–	–	+	**INCIDENTAL FACE DAMAGE** as a result of perceived 'rudeness' (inadequate levels of politeness), 'speaker insensitivity', 'hearer hypersensitivity', a clash of interactant expectations, a cultural misunderstanding, a misidentification (on either part) of the type of communicative activity engaged in, etc. … (see Goffman 1967: 14). **IMPOLITENESS** is not inferred.
10	+	+	–	–	IMPOLITENESS **attempt fails** and is *not* recognised by the receiver(s).
11	+	–	–	–	Producer's **HOSTILITY** or **AGGRESSION** is not communicated – it is successfully masked by **POLITENESS** or a 'non-communication of the FTA' for example.
12	–	+	–	–	**POLITENESS:** in that the speaker has recognised and attended to (e.g., mitigated) the potentially face damaging comments sufficiently so that face-damage is not recognised or at least, intentionality is not inferred or taken.

Figure 9: A Prototype to Understand (im)Politeness and Rudeness (Bousfield, 2010: 123).

In addition, and by following Bousfield's (2008: 264) suggestion that his model of responses to (im)politeness could be extended and applied in other types of discourse and interactional activities, I present, in the following subsections, a stratification to the responses deduced from my data in the following section (4.2.1.1.), where data stems from an intercultural context. In the next section, and while taking a deductive approach, I mean identifying and stratifying the response options taken by the participants (supervisors) to reply to politeness as well as accidental face threat, I present the politeness payoffs from this study in figure 12.

4.2.1.1. Towards an Extended Response Model

As stated above, following a data driven approach to explore responses to accidental face threats and politeness, this section aims to expend on the responses to politeness, which Bousfield's (2008) model does not cover, due to the nature of his study, which is focusing on impoliteness, especially in respect to responses options like *accept opposition* or *compromise*. In his model, Bousfield (2008: 193), while looking at (beginnings, middles, and ends of) impoliteness in discourse, is interested in whether people go 'offensive' or 'defensive'. He (ibid) claims that the counter strategies presented in his work are potentially the response to all types of face damage including *intentional*, *incidental* and *accidental,* but these cannot be generalized as his data sets are small (see Bousfield, 2008: 263 on the limitation of his work). Yet, while providing a five (5) overarching response options to impoliteness (do not respond, respond, accept, counter offensively, and counter defensively), Bousfield (2008) fails to make a distinction between whether his response options to impoliteness address the propositional content, or the face construct in interaction. In other words, accepting a request does not guarantee that the damage to face is mitigated/accepted. To explain the previous point, I use the following example from the interactant-based Discourse Completion task where A is the student request and B is one of the supervisor's responses to the task.

[A]
I am writing to ask you for an extension for submission. Unfortunately, I could not finish the work within the deadline because of some health issues. Therefore, I need some more time to finish it.

[B]

Thanks for the update on your submission and I am so sorry to hear this news regarding your health. I will liaise with PGR team about extending the submission date, so please do not worry about this. Most importantly, I hope that you are ok and do not hesitate to get in touch if there is anything I can help with.

In the above example B, the supervisor accepts the propositional content of the supervisee's request, but this does not guarantee that s/he accepts the potential FTA behind it, and which can be time and effort consuming to the supervisor as it needs him/her to liaise with the post-graduate team. The supervisee's request in example (A) seems to require an action to be done by the supervisor, and the latter acceptance of the request does not entail an acceptance of potential face threat the proposition content of (A) might have. The acceptance of the request might be interpreted in relation to the supervisor's understanding of his role (supervising), as s/he is aware of his responsibilities and role in not only guiding but also supporting students to apply for extensions. The question of whether the supervisor accepts the potential face threat or not, however, seems to be a hard one to answer and beyond the realm of the current section.

The reason I have distinguished between responses (*acceptance*, *negotiation*, *refusal*) to 1) propositional content and 2) face construct stems from the above examples A and B. To explain, although the propositional content of the response to the request (see B above) is beneficial to the supervisee, looking at the supervisor's ranking of the imposition the request (deadline extension) as the most imposing one (further discussion on the previous point is in section 4.2.2.). Therefore, I put forward the responding strategies that I have found in the data and categorized them, considering their propositional content, under "accept", "negotiate/compromise", and "refuse". These categories are not discrete categories but rather a continuum where each category can co-occur with one another and can be also one form of another (e.g. compromise is a sort of acceptance; negotiation can be both; a form of acceptance as well as refusal).

a. **Acceptance** (accept): is the consent and the direct acceptance of the request. The addressee, in this case, does not consider the participant to impinge on him/her and therefore complies with his/her request under rights and responsibilities. In other words, it is the acceptance that results in the fulfilment of the request, and thus, the enhancement of the receiver's face. i.e. by accepting the request, the recipient is saving the speaker/ producer's (student's) face. However, acceptance here does not entail acceptance of the potential face threat of the speaker/sender request in the first place. Therefore, the hearer/addressee seems to ignore (on a prepositional level) the potential threat that the addresser' request might have via showing consideration and attentiveness by overtly accepting the requests.

b. **Compromising and Negotiating** (compromise and negotiate): is the action of partial fulfilment and acceptance of the addresser request. The addressee tries to negotiate the request by providing, for instance, suggestions or alternative solutions. This type of response urges the receiver to take another turn as the communication unfolds asynchronously (given the settings of the current research). Examples of this strategy will be giving advice, guidance and suggestions. Consequently, the hearer shows concerns for the addresser; however, s/he tries to negotiate his response by providing alternatives to what the addresser asked. And finally,

c. **Refusal** (refuse): is the action of hinting that the request is imposing and that it is outside the addressee's responsibilities to perform it. It is understood as a failure to fulfil the request initiated by the addresser. This category as a response to requests can be an indication for the end of the interaction. In such a response option, the addressee considers the weight of the request to be high, and therefore, changes the subject or refuses to perform the action or comply with the addresser (student request).

The following figure, 6, (on the next page) exemplifies and visualises the response options deduced from the present data. The stratification has been made for requests that are direct and recognized for the addressee (in the DCTs forwarded to the supervisor; it has been mentioned in the prompt what the student is requesting exactly). The figure primarily provides the payoff of requests, which are summarized under three categories (as explained above in a, b, and c).

requests	**Response options to requests**
	a) Accept ➔ the addressee does the desirable action that the addresser wants as a result for his/her initial request. - examples of this response option can be direct acceptance and/or encouragement. **b) Negotiate and Compromise** ➔ instead of fulfilling the addresser initial want, the addressee can suggest advice and guidance **c) Refuse** ➔ the addressee rejects the addresser initial request, this response can be performed through changing of the subject, expressing inability to perform the desired task.

Figure 10: Summary of politeness payoffs.

As stated in 4.2.1.1. introduction above, and while Bousfield (2008: 219) provides five (5) options for the interlocutor in response to impoliteness, which were extracted from intentionally impolite contexts (e.g military training and clampers), his model does not suggest responses to unintentional FTA nor to inadequate/inappropriate levels of (im)politeness. Yet, Bousfield's (2010) work extends from that of Bousfield (2008) in the sense it suggests, by identifying different scenarios, that impoliteness is not the only possible outcome of communication. Bousfield (2010) does extend on his response option to those, which were initially suggested in his (2008) work. In the current work, the strategies suggested above (a, b, c) are deduced from the collected data to summarize the supervisors' responses to politeness and accidental face threatening acts, which are explained in Bousfield (2010) model above (see figures 10 and 11). Indeed, by reflecting on the data, a set of choices has emerged (see the diagram above). Although the analysis of the data sets indicates that the supervisors respond almost identically and in a beneficial way to the different request situations within the DCTs, two supervisors' performance seems to be slightly different. In other words, taking the overall data, supervisors' responses to requests seem to be attentive and beneficial to the supervisees in general, therefore, polite, and only few instances indicate that the responses might be face damaging to the students. In the data obtained from the six (6) supervisors, 42 responses to requests have been generated in total. In the following lines, I exemplify and explain how certain responses are beneficial (accept, negotiate) and how others might be face damaging (refuse).

1. **Beneficial Responses**

These have been initially responses to the least imposing requests (as ranked by the supervisors in task 2; see appendix B for further details), where they (supervisors) either accept or negotiate the request. Analysis of these stems always from the content of the supervisors' response to the provisional email requests. Beneficial responses are divided into accept and negotiate as it is exemplified below (bullet points).

- **Accept:**

25 out of 42 responses have been classified under "accept". As explained above, this acceptance is almost linked to the requests classified as non-imposing except for few, which were highly imposing. To exemplify, see the following extracts below, where the examples are predominantly, representing the responses to request for: urgent meeting, letter of recommendation, supervision (for details on the requests scenarios see appendix A)

> **[103] Kate: Request for urgent meeting' response**
> Thanks for your email and for letting me know how you're feeling. Please try not to feel stressed- coming up against obstacles is an inevitable part of doing a PhD, and reading and writing in the ways required are skills that take some practice. And my role is to help you with all of this- **so, of course, we can schedule in a meeting** to discuss in more detail.
> **I am available tomorrow afternoon, any time after 12 PM, if that suits you?**
>
> **[104] Zoe: Request for urgent meeting' response**
> Thank you for your email. **Of course. I have some availability tomorrow at 2pm and on Friday at 1pm. Would any of these times suit you?** Please let me know I will send you an invite
>
> **[105] Kevin: Request for urgent meeting' response**
> Thank you for getting in touch and for letting me know how you are feeling. It is quite usual to have concerns every now and again about a Ph.D. and to encounter challenges along the way. **Would you like to meet tomorrow at 3pm to discuss this? Does that suit you?**

In the above, Kate [103], Zoe [104] and Kevin's [105] responses entail the acceptance of the students' requests. The supervisors posit their acceptance for an urgent meeting at the end of the email where they suggested meeting the next day while at the same time checking if this is appropriate for their supervisees. Interestingly, Kate and Zoe and Kevin start their emails by thanking the supervisee for contacting them, and which can present a sign of establishing trust and closeness. Thanking the supervisee for contact can be interpreted, here, as a future invitation to contact the supervisor if ever any confusion would occur again. In addition to thanking, Kate and Kevin in the examples above seem to be more attentive to the student's concerns expressed in the email requests for an urgent meeting (see situation 1 in appendix E). Writing the responses with consideration to the whole content of the initial request can be constructed so as to be face enhancing to the supervisee. It is enhancing in the sense that the supervisor is showing consideration to the (in this case) the mental state of the supervisee and how s/he feels. For instance, both Kate and Kevin, successively in examples 103 and 105, explain that the feeling of anxiety and confusion are part of the PhD journey, and thus a normal thing to encounter. Explaining that it is normal to feel anxious during a PhD is face enhancing to the students as they may understand that this is an individual struggle and thus might result in low self-esteem. In the above examples I should highlight that I am not focusing on the organization preferences conducted by the supervisors but rather, I am looking at the different strategies they take to satisfy the request of their supervisees and consequently how they address their faces. Thusly, in the remainder of the analysis, I provide meaning and classification to the options and moves that the supervisors resort to when responding to the students' different requests.

[106] Diana: response to urgent meeting request
I'm very sorry to hear you are feeling this way. **Please let me know a suitable time for us to meet via skype as soon as is convenient, to discuss your worries.**
In the meantime, do take care.

[107] Kevin: request for a recommendation letter
Well done on being accepted for the role and, yes, I can certainly provide the letter of recommendation. Is there anything specific that I should address in the letter? I will make sure that you receive this in good time.

Diana’s response, above, to an urgent meeting request seems to be short in length when compared with Kate’s and Kevin’s extracts above. This may signify the supervisor preference for short responses as a matter of email functionality. The short email response can also be interpreted as an urgent, considerate redress to the student email request; and thus, can be face enhancing to the students as the supervisors is straightforwardly responding in a beneficial way. In comparison to the responses in examples 103-105, and instead of thanking the supervisee for the contact, Diana starts the email by showing sympathy (I am very sorry to hear you are feeling this way) about the confusion that the student has experienced and expressed in the request for urgent meeting. Expressing sympathy can be interpreted as attentiveness to the students’ emotional state (as an expression of stress and confusion that has been expressed in the I-DCT scenario 1). After expressing sympathy, Diana, above, questioned the student’s availability for a chat (in the utterances in bold), which can be taken as an acceptance with further negotiation about the meeting time/s (agreement on suitable time). Questioning the availability (see 106), pragmatically, is polite and less restrictive to the student and, therefore, may be potentially face enhancing. Yet, considering Algerian culture, this may be more stressing to the Algerian students as it transfers the decision, and thus the power from the supervisor to the supervisee. This transfer of power may, however, be imposing on the supervisees (Algerian Ph.D. participants) if we take their educational background. The supervisor responding in the way she did is an invitation for a follow up email (response) by the supervisee. Put differently, the student is to make a decision on the time that suits her/him and respond again to the supervisor’s email. Consequently, more benefits are to the student as Diana is giving the student a wider range of optionality to decide on a suitable time to meet.

Although examples 103-105 above are considered an acceptance to meet, and thus beneficial to the student, they constrain his/her (the student's) choice of a suitable time to meet with the supervisor. Diana (106) followed different politeness strategy in response to the student request. Therefore, there is a tacit assumption that Diana's response might be more enhancing in terms of face needs in comparison to Kate, Zoe and Kevin's responses as these, although polite, might increase the student's frustration. In other words, the responses might be imposing as 1) the supervisee (Algerian Ph.D. student) might not be available at the time slots suggested; 2) the schematic understanding of roles and power is different. In regard to the second point, students are likely to understand that the supervisors have busy schedules, and accordingly, that increases their frustration when replying back to provide further suitable time slots (this is in case the time slots suggested by the supervisor at first are not suitable).

Like those examples above, Nelly (see extract 108 below) responds favourably to the students request for supervision, yet although beneficial, it cannot be considered a final acceptance as it is conditional (further discussion of the Ph.D. idea to see if it fits the supervisor's expertise).

[108] Nelly: Response to supervision request

Thank you for your email and for your kind words of interest about my work. **I am currently accepting new PhD students and would be delighted to discuss your ideas with you to see if there is a good fit.**
I have office hours every Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 1PM and 3 pm. Do any of these times suit you over the next week or so? We can discuss your ideas by email, telephone, in person or by videoconferencing. If you are not available on those days and at those times, please do let me know when would suit your schedule best.
I look forward to hearing from you and discussing your ideas.

Nelly in her response to a supervision request above seems to be negotiating her acceptance of fulfilling what the student requested. She, in her response, informs the potential supervisee (the student) that she is willing to supervise new Ph.D. candidates. Yet looking closely at her response, her acceptance is conditional and subject to further discussions between herself and the supervisee prior to any final decision (acceptance). Put differently, Nelly is demonstrating an initial compliance with the student request for supervision by stating that she is accepting new supervisees yet writing the utterance "to see if there a good fit" above can be face threatening as it entails the probability of not accepting the candidate (supervisee) after discussing the ideas.

Nelly's response above, and from a politeness perspective, addresses both aspects of face. It addresses the positive face of the student (potential supervisee) and his/her wants to be approved. Using the word "delighted," above in 108, may have a positive effect on the student (Algerian potential supervisee) as it implies the supervisor's interest in his/her Ph.D. Project. Nelly also, and like Diana's example above, addresses the students positive face by providing different options to choose from to meet her (email, telephone, videoconferencing and in person). She at first provides the times she is available at; this can be also interpreted as Nelly's want to save her negative face and her want to be free from imposition.

Moreover, Nelly's response above includes also, and thus can be interpreted as, address to the student's negative face and his wish to be free from imposition. By suggesting that the student (Ph.D. candidate) can choose other times than those suggested by Nelly, this satisfies the supervisee's negative face wants/needs. The following example by Spencer can be interpreted as, both, face enhancing and face threatening.

[109] Spencer: Response to urgent meeting request

I thought I gave you a list of sources to consult before our scheduled meeting. From what I gather you have either not followed instruction or if you have, not

understood the concepts whose aims were to put you on track for your research start
How about meeting you on Thursday at lunchtime. If not convenient, pop in at 5 when I finish final year class today.

In the extract above, Spencer seems to *criticize* (Culpeper, 1996), and *challenge* (Bousfield, 2008: 240) the sender (student) of the request for urgent meeting by questioning the source of his (student) confusion (for further details see appendix B) as he (Spencer) has already provided her with a list of resources. Although Spencer suggested and demonstrated willingness to meet, the criticism he started his email with, seems to be threatening to both the supervisee's aspects of face (positive and negative face) in the sense that face damage and threat are likely to be an anticipated by-product of the action he has performed. In other words, face threat/damage to the recipient (student) is anticipated by the criticism and challenge forwarded towards the student's prior expression of confusion and the request for urgent meeting. In this regard, challenging has been defined by Bousfield (2008: 240) as the linguistic impoliteness strategy where a producer/speaker is challenging and critically questioning the hearer position and stance. Bousfield (2008) has further suggested two types of challenge: 1) "response seeking challenges" and 2) "rhetorical challenges" (for more details see Bousfield, 2008: 241). In this case the challenge that Spencer initiated seems to be a response seeking challenge, which has been implied, and which means that it needs the addressee (student in this case) to respond to it. Furthermore, Spencer's suggestion of meeting times, above, seems to be imposing on the supervisee want to be free from imposition. He (Spencer), address for the students' need of an urgent meeting, is restricting the student's options to choose a suitable time.

[110] Spencer: response for recommendation letter' request
This is very good news. This is going to broaden your knowledge and you need to look at it as an enrichment. I am sure you will be able to manage both teaching and your research. I appreciate it's going to be tough at the beginning but given your dedication you will manage both tasks.
Let me know if you require tips for your first classes and keep me informed of progress.

In the above excerpt (110), Spencer seems to express solidarity and encouragement to the student on the new role she/he (the student) is going to undertake as a teacher at a university level. In the above example, and although there is no direct acceptance to the request at a locutionary level, yet the acceptance is sequentially expressed in the supervisor' s encouragement and the expression of solidarity with the student. In other words, the acceptance in the above excerpt is implied and it is the student role to unpack its intended illocution (acceptance of the request). As an additional element, Spencer has suggested help through providing teaching tips at the end of the email when he wrote "let me know if you require tips for your first classes...". These strategies, from a politeness perspective, are face enhancing.

- **Negotiate and compromise:** To exemplify this response option, fifteen (15) instances have been found across the data, mainly in responses to the following requests (extension, guidance, feedback, sources). Negotiate and compromise seems to be used by the supervisors (receivers of email request), predominantly, when there is a level of imposition within the students' initial requests. The classification is based on the extracts that are neither acceptance nor refusal and thus, as a researcher, I could not classify under any of the previous response' options.

[111] Spencer: response for deadline extension request
last time I saw you, you were full of bounce and excitement to finish the chapter agreed. This has come to me as a surprise. **Can you give me some tangible reasons as to the delay caused in the submission of that work?** I see you mention health issues, but what exactly are they so we can direct you to the appropriate place for support. Please bear in mind, we are here to support you.

Spencer, in the extract above, does not refuse the student request for an extension but negotiates the acceptance of the request by asking the student to provide some reasons for why she requested this extension in the first place. Spencer's response, and while looking at it from Bousfield's (2008) response model, is categorized as "response seeking challenge" (Bousfield, 2008: 243). The question of whether the response seeking challenge is type (i)[22] or type (ii)[23] is unfolded in the current research. Regarding the previous point, I agree with Bousfield 's (2008: 244) claim that making the difference between the two previous types of 'response seeking challenge' (and also the distinction between 'response seeking challenge' and 'rhetorical challenge') is *fuzzy.* In another words, Bousfield (2008: 244) notes that for this distinction to be clear, it needs context or further response from interlocutors to categorize the type(s) of challenge.

It is important to highlight in this section, however, that the overall response seems to be supportive; yet it can be considered as face threatening as Spencer is requesting more details that the student might not be willing to disclose/share, and which can be face threatening for the students uttering it. What Spencer appears to be aiming at, within this example, is defending simultaneously both his positive and negative aspects of face. In the process of saving, one's face, Bousfield (2008: 193) claims that one can damage and attack another's face. To explain, Spencer, and while it seems an

[22] according to Bousfield (2008: 243) this type of challenge allows the addressee to provide and account or an explanation
[23] Bousfield (2008: 243-244) defines this as 'verbal trap', meaning that the responses to this is accepting the face damage or the criticism behind it.

attempt to save, protect, and defend aspects of his positive face; is (incidentally) threatening the face of his supervisee through challenging him/her. At the same time by asking the student for a "tangible reason", Spencer here is trying to defend aspects of his negative face and his want to be free from imposition.

> **[112] Spencer: response for supervision request**
> Thank you for your interest in my work and in our institution…**I wonder whether you have already applied to our central team in recruitment. If you haven't, please, do. Your application and summary will then come to me and we can have a meeting in person.**

In the above, Spencer's response, although promising, seems to be neither an acceptance nor a refusal for the supervision request. As a supervisor, who has been contacted for the first time by the Algerian supervisee, he (Spencer) is negotiating his approval of the student' previous request for supervision (see scenario 4, appendix E). Spencer's negotiation seems to be implied in him advising the student to apply via the university so he (Spencer) can have a look on the summary of the perspective student application and consequently decide on meeting. Although the sentence in bold above can be interpreted as a partial acceptance as Spencer urges the student to apply by uttering "if you haven't, please do", but this is not a guarantee to accept supervision and refusal remains an option to consider. Spencer's response [112] is face enhancing as it implies interest in the supervisee Ph.D. project, and therefore, addresses his positive face aspects.

> **[113] Kate: Response for deadline extension**
> thanks for getting in touch.
> As discussed, the deadline we have set are primarily in place to make sure you are making progress but are, of course, flexible. **Where are you at with your work and how much more time do you need? Would one week be sufficient for you to complete it and sent it over to me for feedback?**

Opposite to the *challenge* (face threat) that Spencer (see extract 111 above) has forwarded to the student face, Kate in the above example [113] "response seeking challenge" seems to be less face threatening as she did not ask for a reason why the student is requesting a deadline extension but rather, she started by explaining that deadlines can be negotiated, then she was more concerned about the student and the time needed to finish the writing. Following the previous response strategies, Kate is addressing, and enhancing the student's face. Face enhancement is implied in decreasing the psychological stress that the student might be facing as they are beyond their submission date/deadline, thus, decreasing the emergency of the situation by stating that deadlines are flexible. This, although inferred as an acceptance of the initial request made by the student, nevertheless, is a negotiated acceptance, which require further turn takings before it resolves to reach an agreement. On one hand, Kate in the above example, seems to be challenging the supervisee to know how long s/he will take to submit the work to her. On the other hand, however, her response can also be interpreted as a strategy to save her own face. In regard to deadline extension, Kate, to provide feedback to the supervisee, has suggested an extension of a week. This can be interpreted as Kate wanting to save her negative face, and her wants to be free from any further imposition by the student. In other words, suggesting a week seems to be the most appropriate length of extension that the supervisors can arrange her schedule around to provide feedback on the student work. The two examples, below, have been classified under negotiate as these cannot be taken as a complete acceptance of the students' requests for feedback. I will successively discuss each example in the following paragraph.

> **[114] Kevin: response for feedback request**
> It is great to hear that you are making so much progress on your literature review. **I have almost finished preparing my feedback on your most recent work and will send this to you by the end of today or at the latest tomorrow.** In the meantime, if you let me know how I might help with reading suggestions…I can send you few ideas beforehand.

[115] Diana: response for feedback request
Many thanks for your work which **I am currently editing and reviewing, it should take me another week to have some written feedback and annotations for you**. In the meantime, I suggest you look at some of the samples online to reassure yourself that you are going in the right direction.

Regarding the response for feedback request, Kevin [114], and Diana [115], have employed similar politeness strategies on when their feedback will be ready to be sent to the students (supervisee). First of all, and looking at Kevin's response, although it seems to be an acceptance of sending the feedback while considering aspects of the student' face needs, there seem to be a high imposition on the supervisors himself. The imposition, although on one hand stemming from the emergency of the request (requesting feedback after a week of submitting the piece of writing), it can also be implemented from Kevin saying, "I **have almost finished preparing my feedback on your most recent work and will send this to you by the end of today or at the latest tomorrow."** Kevin's response is still beneficial to the student at a propositional level but again whether Kevin accepts the potential face threat behind it or not this is beyond the scope of the current study. In other words, given the busy schedule of Kevin, providing feedback on a work that has been submitted a week ago is highly imposing. Kevin later in the interview (see extract) explains that his response to this has been based on his responsibility as the main supervisor to prioritize providing constructive feedback on students' written works.

While Kevin choses to address the needs of the student with providing next day feedback, Diana suggested that the student should give her another week to get feedback ready. Although on a spectrum, this is a beneficial response, it does not address the student's need, and thus face wants immediately in comparison with Kevin's response. By the end of their responses, both Kevin and Diana further suggest that the students may contact them for further reading resources within the research they are doing to avoid waiting for the feedback and in order to progress. The previous suggestion can work as a face enhancement to the supervisee's face, where supervisors are inviting students to contact them, which may decrease the social distance over time. Interestingly here, and although Kevin's and Diana's are negotiated responses which are orientated to an acceptance of the request for feedback, Nelly's responses [116 and 117], below, hold a potential face threat to the student.

> **[116] Nelly: response for feedback request**
>
> Thank you for your email. I know you must be eager to continue with your research **and that you are awaiting my feedback on your latest draft. We try to get feedback to you as soon as possible and try to balance our time between our PhD students and other duties.**

Looking at the response above, it is not clear which orientation on the continuum (beneficial- face damaging/ acceptance-refusal) this might have taken as this depends on Nelly's intention and the student's uptake (both these dimensions are beyond the realm of the study). By saying that Nelly's response can be interpreted in two ways:

1) as acceptance of providing feedback, and thus beneficial to the student as it satisfies his/her want to be approved of (positive face) and;

2) as a refusal to provide quick feedback, and thus could be face (positive face) threatening to the supervisee.

> **[117] Nelly:** We try to get feedback to you as soon as possible and try to balance our time between our PhD students and other duties",

Nelly [117] seems to highlight that the student should have an understanding of supervisors' roles in Academia; although a potential threat to the student face might reside in her response Nelly used the pronouns, we (to refer to all academic staff at the

MMU) to lessen the threat that her response might have on the student and to imply that this is not only her concern but the concern of all supervisors. The above statement can also be used as a face-saving strategy, where Nelly is protecting aspects of her negative face; those of being free from imposition.

> **[118] Kevin: response to providing resources request**
> If the process is taking quite a while, then perhaps we can meet and discuss ways of sourcing materials…I have some of the books myself which I can lend you when we meet

> **[119] Diana: response to providing resources request**
> I will check if I can access these and **if at all possible I will send them on, if not please do get in touch with x our subject librarian and she can resolve this query.**

In the above, on request for resources, Kevin's and Diana's responses seem to be beneficial to the students as they imply a partial acceptance of their requests. However, these are classified under negotiate as they are neither a complete acceptance nor a refusal. Kevin proposes discussion of sourcing materials which in itself can be interpreted differently. On one hand, this might suggest that the student is unable to find sources properly and which can be a potential threat to the student positive face. On the other hand, the suggestion can be a face enhancing strategy as it can be interpreted as a polite consideration from the supervisor and which the student might not intend to request in the first place. Kevin further suggests that he has some books that the student can borrow, and this is another face enhancing move to the needs of the students. Like Kevin's, Diana's extract above seems to be promising. However, her suggestion can be less enhancing in terms of face needs as she proposes that the student contact the librarian if after checking she (Diana) figures out that she does not have the needed materials.

2. Face Damaging Responses

In spite of the overall beneficial responses that the supervisors display for the students' requests, some examples and extracts from the data suggest otherwise, where the supervisors seem to issue a face damaging act. There were 2 instance of face damaging responses (implying refusal for the request) across the data sets (request for feedback, and request for resources).

> **[120] Spencer: response to feedback request**
> The work you submitted is simply a plan and our real work starts with the literature review. **If you are finding that difficult and is confusing you, then it is imperative that you come to my office with what you have gathered so far so we can plan where to start the lit. review.** I have a few ideas regarding where to start from.

In the above example by Spencer, although on a surface, the response towards the end seems to be supportive, where Spencer is inviting his supervisee to have some instructions and suggestions on how to start writing the literature review; yet his response (Spencer) seems not to comply with the initial/main request for feedback that the student requested in the first place (that of requesting feedback). In other words, by proposing help, here Spencer is appealing to the supervisee's positive face (the aspect of approvement here as Spencer is willing to help). However, the use of the word "imperative", and which might here be frustrating to the student that it is an exaggerated expression used to intensify the need for urgent discussion, acts as a face threatening strategy. In this regard, Spencer seems to ignore the core of the email scenario (feedback), which is face damaging as it did not meet with the students' expectations. Additionally, urging the student to come to his (Spencer's) office is also a negative face threat, where Spencer is impinging on the students and his will to be free from imposition.

> **[121] Spencer: response to request for resources**
> **Unfortunately, I have not come across the resources about x and would be in no position of helping with this.** Next time, you need to plan well ahead so time is not an issue.

In the above extract, Spencer seems to be pointing out an apparent deficit in the student's ability to find resources. However, looking closely at the response utterances that Spencer has used, those utterances imply a face threatening act towards the supervisee's positive face as they can be considered as a criticism to his/her qualities as a Ph.D. candidate. The intention here (based on his interview response) is not primarily to cause face damage to the student but to perform, given his understanding of rights and responsibilities, an action that is consistent with his right of not providing resources as a matter of these being out of his responsibility; and that it is time consuming sometimes if not having the exact resource. Spencer considers the potentially offensive consequences of denying the student's request but since he does not have the resources requested, he is not able to provide these. Spencer in the above then seems to couch his refusal by expressing his inability to send the resources as a matter of not coming across these rather than his desire of not providing them. The previous strategy can work as a negative face-saving strategy, where Spencer is stressing his want to be free from the imposition put in the first place by the supervisee. What makes Spencer's response potentially more threatening is that he does not suggest help with resourcing tips like in Kevin's response nor does he suggest guidance one where the student should ask for these (assuming the student might not be aware of the librarian's roles and responsibilities).

To conclude this section, supervisors seem to either, accept, partially accept (compromise) or refuse the requests' scenarios distributed to them in the I-DCTs. In the case of partial acceptance, supervisors comply by different strategies (e.g. suggestions and alternatives, directing, proposing face to face meetings). For instance, in responses to request for resources 118 and 119 above, supervisors suggest alternatives to find the requested resources instead of accepting the student's request of the resource.

4.2.2. Supervisors' interview analysis

In this section I discuss the results from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the supervisors. The section, then, considers the different themes that have emerged and links these, where relevant, with the themes discussed in the students' interviews (see section 4.1.2., above).

4.2.2.1. Supervisors' perception of the email requests

Under this section, I exemplify and interpret how the supervisors perceive/expect email requests from their Algerian supervisees. The analysis sheds light on the attributions that supervisors direct toward the students' email requests, and the different aspects leading to those attributions. To this end, I am discussing the supervisors' perceptions of politeness which were found to be linked to a) the expression of difference, b) the expression of gratitude, and c) formulaic language. The discussion in A, B, C, and D sections below also supports my argument (see chapter 1) that politeness resides in some linguistic forms. As most of the supervisors claim that the Algerian students' style in email is quite polite, it is deemed important in the following paragraphs to exemplify instances of the use of linguistic politeness and the receivers' perception of these. The coming sections delve into how participants talked through their claims in response to how they perceive the email requests they receive from their Algerian supervisees and why they claimed that the email requests are polite.

A) Politeness and expression of deference through terms of address

Students' *expressions of deference* have emerged as one of the reasons the supervisors attribute politeness to the email requests they receive from their Algerian Ph.D. students (see the following lines and examples for further details). Indeed, expression of *honorifics* (e.g. terms of address) is considered polite by way of attending to the addressee's face through expressing deference (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 178; see also sections 2.3. and 4.1.1. for further details). In Brown and Levinson (1987), *giving deference* is a negative politeness strategy that addresses the positive face by means of addressing the H's wants to be superior. In the context of the present study, there is an asymmetrical power relationship that exists between the participants of the study (supervisors vs students); and which stems mainly from the influence of the Algerian students' educational background (as discussed in 5.1.5.), and the expert power supervisors have in comparison to that of the student supervisees. Participants (Supervisors) attribute politeness to the emails they receive from their supervisees while justifying their perception by claiming that the emails are formal, providing the examples of honorifics and address titles employed by the Algerian Ph.D. students. The following excerpt from Kate [122] is representative of how politeness and the *expression of deference* are exhibited, where she links her perception of politeness to the use of titles and address forms.

> **[122] Kate:** a tendency toward being very polite, slightly more polite than the average on the side of being more formal. I think I have noticed that the language in general is formal but certainly some patterns like forms of address. I would say that generally speaking, my Algerian PhD students tend to use titles until such times that I say please call me Kate.

In the excerpt above, Kate [122], like other supervisors, claims that the linguistic choices that her supervisees use is formal with an emphasis that the student employ 'absolute' terms of address (Levinson, 1983: 90ff), which are address terms directed to a person occupying a certain position or role/post. Therefore, Kate's perception of the email formality, in the example above, is built on her observation of Algerians' use of address titles (e.g. Dr.). However, an important point that Kate [122] referred to, and which Kevin [123] further highlighted, in the excerpt below, is the consistency of using terms of address by the students even though they have asked them not to.

> **[123] Kevin:** generally, quite standard, certainly quite polite, clear, obviously, the students that I regularly meet our emails get slightly less formal or at least the salutation is the only aspects that remains formal, although I ask not to use my title, that sometimes, come across in the greetings other than this the rest of the email is kind of chatty but I can understand that it is just a sign of being nice and respectful.

From my experience and understanding of British culture, the meta comments (as in 122 and 123) indicate, that using titles is unexpected to the supervisors as the British higher education hedges egalitarian social distance[24] in comparison to the Algerian educational system that is highly hierarchical[25] (See chapter 5 for further discussion). Most of the Algerian Ph.D. participants, as explained previously in section 4.1.2., use the forms of address and titles to convey respect and acknowledgement to expert power of their supervisors, these practices have been the result of attaining hierarchical educational institutions (primary school-university) in Algeria. The use of address titles in greetings and farewells, thus expression of deference, is rooted in the Algerian students' communicative behaviours as claimed by some students (e.g. Yara [49] section 4.1.2). While Kate [122] and Kevin [123] state that they asked students not to use titles while sending emails, the Ph.D. students seem to act differently. According to Kate [122],

[24] Interlocutors within British culture reduce considerably the social distance; in the above egalitarian is used to refer to the great extent to which social distance is minimized.
[25] System in which members of an organization or society are ranked according to relative status or authority.

supervisees seem to drop titles after she has stated the unnecessary use of these to the students. Yet, for Kevin, as in [123] excerpt above, he comes across these still but with an understanding that these are just expressions of politeness and respect and not a means to increase distance. Kevin [123] points the fact that the frequency of meeting contributes to the informality of the overall emails and email requests he received from his Algerian supervisees but nonetheless this does not apply to greetings, which remained rather formal.

B) Politeness Through Expressions of Gratitude.

As seen in chapter two, politeness can be expressed by means of different strategies to mitigate face threatening acts (FTAs) and to ensure positive social relationships (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Gratitude, as a feeling of thankfulness to acknowledge benefiting from an exchange (Froh, Sefick, and Emmons, 2008), seems to be a form of politeness that has been explicitly expressed by the student participants in the present study. Importantly, the display of gratitude by the students to their supervisors seems to have an influence on how their emails are perceived, meaning that the positive appraisal and perception of politeness has been made salient through the gratitude expressed by the students in their email requests. Indeed, while Kate [122] and Kevin [123] in section A above have discussed their perception of the emails in relation to greetings and the forms of address used, Kate [124] and Nelly [125], in the follow up comments below, are an exemplify how politeness can be manifested in the *expression of gratitude*.

> **[124] Kate:** Their style is formal and more elaborated perhaps and I always get the sense that they don't want to create inconvenience for me they do not want to impose upon me. There are very grateful even before I have done anything...there is always that sense of gratitude that comes across.

In the above extract, Kate [124] seems to expand on her perception of the email to cover linguistics patterns of politeness within its content. She claims that the students are non-imposing, which is a negative face-oriented politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 131). Kate explains the non-imposition in relation to the expression of gratitude, where students seem to pre-thank her and use expressions like “I would be grateful if…”. The use of conditional politeness here is displayed using the model verb ‘would’ and the conditional if, which increases the level of gratitude expressed by the students. Similarly, Nelly in the extract below [125] has highlighted that the expression of gratitude is a recurrent aspect of politeness that students use in sending email requests to her.

> **[125] Nelly:** I don't see it as very different to non-Algerian student. Certainly, there is more attempt at politeness, certainly more gratitude expressed in emails. It tends to start with an initial and checking you are ok. I also notice that whenever responding to their emails I get a thank you in return which I usually do not get from other students. In short it is nice to have that additional polite element.

Yet, while Nelly referred to her perception of the email request relative to the gratitude expressed, she further elaborated her comment to expand on other aspects that she considers polite regarding the requests she is receiving. The extract above reflects Nelly’s deeper awareness of the differences in the expression of politeness by Algerian supervisees in comparison with other students. At first, Nelly claimed that Algerian students are not ‘very’ different from those non-Algerian students, yet she (Nelly) has begun to refer to some linguistic patterns like expression of gratitude and friendliness (e.g. I am grateful…I hope this email finds you well) as particularly used by her Algerian supervisees. Therefore, here, the use of ‘not very different’ does not entail similarity between Algerian and Non-Algerian in writing email requests but it points out that there are differences in constructing email requests to supervisors/teachers in comparison at

British HE. Actually, Nelly's comment is an example of how supervisors perceive politeness within email requests initiated by Algerian students, while comparing them to those received from non-Algerian students/Ph.D. candidates (mainly British). Nelly for instance exemplifies the previous point by mentioning that the Algerian students tend to thank her for her responding email, which is unexpected for her and thus polite. Zoe [126] is another example from the data that refers to the politeness use implied within the expression of gratitude.

> **[126] Zoe:** they use dear ZOE, OR Dr. And my family name; they use expressions like I hope this email finds you well and would you, if it is possible, would you be able to, I would be glad if and these sort of language constructions.

In the above excerpt, a reference to politeness residing in linguistic forms is alluded to by Zoe, where she believes that in addition to the use of address titles (differentials in position) and other friendliness expressions (e.g. I hope this email finds you well), other linguistic constructions (e.g. checking possibility/ability, expression of gratitude) render the request polite. Indeed, such linguistic expressions are considered negative politeness strategies in Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework, and which attempt at FTA mitigation.

While in the excerpts above, supervisors perceive students requests as polite and formal, surprisingly Spencer's answer below seems to provide another angle from which we should look at these emails. Being in the UK for more than twenty years and being an Algerian himself, Spencer [127] finds the Algerian style of writing email to be distinguishable and markedly different from that of a British writer. He finds Algerians to be direct and not accommodating to the British University system which is, according to him, characterized by subtle politeness and indirectness. Spencer's answers to the questions concerning his perception of the students and students' requests seems to be distinguishable from those of other supervisors (mainly British), yet also contradictory to what students claimed previously (see excerpt 65, 66 in section 4.1.2.). Look paragraph following excerpt [127] for further details.

> **[127] Spencer:** I think being an Algerian myself and having gone through different systems (Algerian and Germanic styles), I find that the Algerian style is quite different from the English style because of the forwardness of the Algerian applicants I think in the sense slightly more direct, probably harsher way of putting things, they appear to be more direct and less frame worked within the British English system, which is more subtle more polite, and therefore, it is not direct but rather indicative and beating around the bush.

Spencer reflects, in the above excerpt, on his experience of both the Algerian and British (and other European) educational systems. He claims that the Algerian students, in comparison to non-Algerians, are direct. Although Spencer does not explicitly refer to the Algerian student way of requesting as impolite, the use of adjectives like 'harsher' and 'less frame worked' may imply that Algerian Ph.D. candidates are less polite. Coming to this conclusion seems to be accurate, especially if we look at his description of British politeness as subtle and more polite above.

C) Formulaic Language and Politeness

Contrary to the discursive approach to politeness (Mills, 2003; Mills, 2011; Kádár and Haugh, 2013; Mills,2015), which is predicated on the supposition that linguistic forms do not have a stable function and that meaning is always negotiated in situation, the data sets in this research, in accordance with Bousfield's (2010: 125) claim, reveals that some forms seem to have a stable meaning and function. In the following extracts from the data, I provide examples and explain how forms and their stable functions become formulaic. For instance, while students previously highlight (see section 4.1.2.) that they use expressions like ‘I hope you are doing well’; ‘I hope this email finds you well’ genuinely with their supervisors with an expectation to get a response, supervisors, on the other hand seem not to respond particularly to such formulae, as they have different views on such expressions from that of the students. In the following excerpt, Zoe (Non-British supervisor at the MMU) is pointing at how she perceives email openings and how she responds to these.

> **[128] Zoe:** expressions like these are just a nice way to start an email, I probably would not do that a couple of years ago, but I think it is me getting used to writing email in English, so maybe you get used to these specific styles or genre. When I use these expressions myself, I do mean them, and they are not for me just a filler or formulaic expressions. Sometimes, I do respond to these when sent by Algerian students due to work commitments, I just want to go straight to the content of the email itself and this is why sometimes I feel I am too direct.

Zoe [Bosnian], and after operating for a long time at UK universities, claims that she is now used to receiving these expressions (e.g. I hope this email finds you well) and for her this is now just a nice way to initiate an email. For Zoe, however, these expressions are genuine and not only formulaic, and the fact that she does not always respond to these is because of the work load she has as an academic, and which in turn directs her attention to the email’ core/body. During the interview, Zoe claims that these forms in British English are formulaic and contrary to what she had used to in her country, expressions like ‘I hope you doing well’ in British English are just a polite way to start an email.

Like Zoe, Kevin also perceives, as exemplified in extract 129 below, these expressions as nice openings for the email. However, he does not seem to consider these as genuine questions as their propositional content (linguistic expression/surface utterance) suggests but rather just formulaic expression to use at the start of the email to render it less direct. In other words, the structure of those expressions suggests that the sender (supervisee) is awaiting a response from the supervisor (see Kevin extract below for more clarification).

> **[129] Kevin:** maybe because I do not interpret these expressions as a question, but I take it more of a nice greeting and a nice way to start an email. I use it myself a little bit, but it is also a good start for a request because nobody I think would like to have an email such as, I want this and this, it is quite direct this way. So, it is good to set the scene before asking or requesting.

Similarly, Nelly [130] seems not to respond to ‘I hope this email finds you well’, where she thinks this is formulaic and when she, herself, uses these she does not expect an answer. Look at the following excerpt for exemplification.

> **[130] Nelly:** when I do not respond to, I hope this finds you well I guess this is part of my culture because when I say it, it is just formulaic and polite, but I don't really want a response, I think it is similar to Britishness and to when we say are you alright? when we just mean hello.

The above extract also suggests that Nelly is relying on her cultural schema (Nishida, 2005: 204) when not responding to ‘I hope this email finds you well’. In this regard, Nelly explicitly links this (not responding to those expression) to the British way of communication. To further explain, Nelly compared the use of “I hope this finds you well” to another formulaic expression “are you alright?” which in Britain is considered a formulaic expression that means just “hello”. Although the expression ‘I hope this email finds you well’ is a form of small talk (Coupland, 2003:1), that should be responded to, in the examples above, it is nevertheless considered as a formulaic expression of politeness. Diana’s extract below, additionally, echoes the supervisors’ perception of such expressions as formulaic instances of communication, and further highlights the occurrences of when supervisors use these expressions themselves.

> **[131] Diana:** I often use those forms, but I don't always necessarily say yes thank you I am ok and you? Because I see it as quite formal unnecessary opening it is a greeting so I would not necessarily add anything unless there was any concern on the part of either side about health for example. although sometimes I do, I mean I use those forms with colleagues that I do not know well, it is usually for those I rarely email. I would not use such expressions with people or students I email frequently if you understand what I mean.

Looking at the previous excerpt above, the use of formulaic expressions seems to imply a kind of social distance. To illustrate, Diana has claimed using expressions like 'I hope this email finds you well' or 'I hope you are doing well' with recipients (colleagues) that she has a high (increased) social distance with. She further explains this in terms of the frequency of contact with those recipients. Given the nature of Ph.D. supervision (PhD supervisors and supervisees at Manchester Metropolitan University need to make at least one supervisory meeting a month; therefore, one or more email exchanges throughout), the social distance is decreased as a result of frequency in meeting and email exchanges. The example of Diana above demonstrates that some formal and formulaic expressions can be used while an increased social distance exists between interlocutors, especially those with whom there is less contact.

Importantly, here, is the clash of expectations between a) the students, who think that the use of such expressions is not only polite

but implies a kind of social closeness and to which they expect a response (stated by the students in the interviews), and b) the supervisors, who believe these expressions to be formulaic to imply politeness and thus do not respond to these. Diana's comment, below, is a further exemplification of how supervisors consider those expressions, while more about the clash of expectation is discussed later on under politeness and culture in section 4.2.2.2.

> **[132] Diana:** I see that (she means the expression of 'looking forward hearing from you') I see it as a formality that it is their chosen version, I hope to hear from you soon, it is a normal sign off and again it would not be something that I would use either, but I would not see it as oppressive or demanding in the sense that I expect to hear from you in the next hour.

Diana in the above extract considers 'I look forward to hearing from you' to be formulaic expression and an email sign off. Indeed, Diana and other supervisors, alike, seem to ignore the literal meaning of the expression's prepositional content (surface utterance), and which is that stating the need for a reply. The previous point is important to highlight as the use of formulaic utterances might be an aspect, which might lead to clash of expectations between interlocutors. I mean the differences in beliefs, practices, understanding and perception of certain expressions and their meaning among the Algerian Ph.D. students and their supervisors (this point is expanded on in section 4.2.2.). Indeed, some expressions (e.g. I hope this email finds you well, I hope you are well) seem to have lost their power in all cultures and have become formulaic. While students seem to use these expressions genuinely to check that the supervisors are doing well, these expressions are thought of by the supervisors as polite expressions that render the request less formal and less direct. As these expressions, according to the supervisors, seem to hold a stable meaning and pragmatic function (i.e. expressing politeness), results from the six supervisors' DCTs reveal a constant use of informal opening (e.g. Hi and Hello) without responses to forms like "I hope this email finds you well".

To summarize what has been discussed in section (4.2.2.1), above, I argue that some lexico-syntactic phrases have stable pragmatic meaning, which the supervisors consider carry a politeness effect and imply a certain social distance in the above excerpts. Indeed, politeness seems to reside in some language forms like *address terms* (e.g. *use of titles* and *honorifics*), *expressions of gratitude* (as has been shown in section B above), and politeness seems also to be expressed through the use of some formulae like 'I hope this email finds you well', 'I hope you are well' and 'looking forward to hearing from you'. However, the use of these linguistic forms seems to be more complex than just being forms of politeness. The use of linguistic politeness has its cultural dimensions that are deeply rooted in the use, understanding, and the interpretation of different forms. The following section (4.2.2.2) sheds lights on the use and understanding of politeness from a cultural perspective.

4.2.2.2. Influence of Culture on the Use and Understanding of Politeness

An important theme that has emerged from the supervisors' interviews revolves around culture, cultural familiarity, and cultural sensitivity, and how these shape the understanding of politeness interculturally. Although the results from students and supervisors seem to concur with respect to the influence of culture, differences occurred mainly in relation to some factors (power, distance, and rank of imposition) affecting the use and perception of politeness. Throughout the following paragraphs, I delineate a) the influence of culture, cultural contact, and familiarity and how they inform cultural sensitivity and therefore the perception of politeness (see section 4.2.2.2.1.), and b) how sociocultural factors (power, distance and rank of imposition) are individually and culturally weighted differently (see section 4.2.2.2.2.).

4.2.2.2.1. The influence of cultural contact and familiarity on the perception of politeness.

The influence of culture (see chapter two, section 2.3.3. for further details on my stance towards culture) seems to be the common point between students and their supervisors relative to, respectively, the use of politeness strategies and perception of email requests. For reasons of space, I am only considering cultural factors and aspects that seem to influence the supervisors' perception of politeness in the current study based on the data from their interviews. In fact, the perception of politeness entails, inevitably, reflection on cultural expectations (Spencer-Oatey and Kádár, 2016: 74). In other words, to invoke a judgement of whether someone/an utterance is polite or not implies reflection on one's own cultural understanding of what is appropriate/expected or not. Although the supervisors, in this study, evaluate the students' email requests as polite (see section 4.2.2.1. above), they seem to notice the cultural differences between themselves and their supervisees when it comes to email request writing. All supervisors referred to those cultural differences and how they affect the way they perceive and respond to the Algerian students' email requests. Throughout the course of this section, I exemplify and interpret the supervisors' meta-comments, where they refer to cultural perspectives and how these together inform their cultural sensitivity and awareness, and thus perception of politeness. The following extract displays one of the supervisors' explicit references to the existence of cultural differences between herself and her Algerian supervisees.

> **[133] Nelly:** I respond in the same way I respond to other students; I'm aware that sometimes there are certain cultural differences, but I do not think I write in an offensive way anyway. My emails are quite informal and chatty.

In the above excerpt, while reflecting on how she responds to her Algerian supervisees email requests, Nelly claims that there are cultural differences in communication, yet, at the same time, she does not seem to change her way of responding as she believes that her emails are informal and chatty and non-offensive, and therefore, represent her culture of responding to emails. From the comment above by Nelly, teasing out the concept of cultural differences it was deemed important to show, in later excerpts, how these differences feed into intercultural awareness/sensitivity. Thus, the following excerpt is one example of the cultural differences that supervisors highlight between themselves and their Algerian supervisee.

> **[134] Diana:** to be honest I was expecting that formal style from overseas students compared to some students from the UK. As you might have noticed, we tend to be informal saying “hi” and “hello” in our emails, while my Algerian supervisees tend always to use “dear” along my title and surname. Requesting in a foreign language and while coming from another culture should be hard on overseas students coming to the UK and thus, we should be understanding.

In the above, Diana referred to cultural differences in terms of communication between Algerian and non-Algerian students by exemplifying the difference in the addressing forms. Diana [134] claims that British communication at university tends to be informal, where they use “hi” and “hello”, while the emails she receives from Algerian students tend to be formal as they use different terms of address, mainly titles and surnames. The use of different address forms has been a “marked” behaviour, mainly because it is unusual in UKHE, where more egalitarian terms of address are used (i.e. students address their teachers/lecturers/supervisors by their first names). Egalitarian here, however, does not mean that interlocutors are all equal in terms of power, but power within a British Culture is subtle and is performed differently. Diana further (as the excerpt 135 below indicates) extended her answer to explain the development of her cultural awareness relative to cultural differences in communication, and which has been a result of previous contact and familiarity with other overseas students at the University.

> **[135] Diana:** I think cultural differences around communication and language choice are very visible if you are a supervisor and you have a range of students to teach and supervise; and it is quite clear that the Algerian student body does have its cultural traditions when it comes to language use; I am becoming aware of them and it is also interesting to me to see how they map. It was nice however to see the difference in email and the actual supervision meetings.

In the excerpt above, Diana (British supervisor at MMU) [135] links the development of her intercultural sensitivity or awareness, I mean her ability to understand her culture and the culture of the other (overseas students), to her previous contact with students from different cultures and linguistics backgrounds throughout her career as an academic at Manchester Metropolitan University. According to her, Algerians seem to have their own cultural norms around communication and language choices, which most supervisors have linked to expressions of gratitude and address forms as previously discussed in section 4.2.2.1. At the end of the extract, however, Diana refers to an important point that is explained under theme 4 (email communication vs face-to-face communication), where she claims that there is a difference in the way Algerian students communicate face-to-face in comparison to emails, which is another point that I am expanding on in section 4.2.2.3.

Indeed, a robust intercultural awareness (Hamilton and Woodward-Kron, 2010; Zhang and Steele, 2012; İlter, 2016) is a result of encountering and being familiar with other cultures and how they communicate. Another example of these encounters and how they feed into intercultural awareness is given in Kevin extract below. For Kevin [136] cultural awareness has developed not only from his contact with overseas students in the UKHEIs (therefore United Kingdom Higher Education Institutions) but also from his contact with students while in their home countries. Kevin states that he taught in different Arabic countries including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and therefore, he has observed how individuals communicate there.

> **[136] Kevin:** I lived and taught in different countries where people [were] using English, which is not their first language, thus I am highly aware of how overseas student request for instance and thus I would not for instance be offended by the way they ask for things.

Like Diana [135], Kevin, in the above, seems to be sensitive to differences in cultures between himself and his Algerian supervisees. Kevin's sensitiveness and awareness stems from his contact with different overseas students whom he taught English outside the UK (mainly outside English-speaking countries like Dubai and Saudi Arabia); thus, he claims that he has never taken offense at their requesting style as he clearly stated that English is not their first language. Kevin, in the above extract, seems to shed light on what I refer to here as students' pragmatic failure (Thomas,1983: 99), and which might be a result of pragma-linguistic (the ability to use linguistic forms to convey illocutions) or socio-pragmatic (the appropriate use of forms in context) failure. However, due to his exposure to these students' communicative styles, Kevin seems to culturally sensitive and aware, to a certain extent, of the differences between himself and overseas students (including the Algerian student participants of this study) and thus, he is not offended by the way his overseas student write email requests to him.

While the previous extracts demonstrate the supervisors' awareness of cultural differences stemming from their contact with overseas student either inside or outside the UK, Spencer's [137] comment seems to be a result of in-group membership as he considers himself an Arab from North Africa, and thus he has that insider schematic knowledge, i.e. the ability to understand the linguistic behaviour of Algerian students.

> **[137] Spencer:** it is more about cultural concepts; I think it is good if they acquire and accommodate to the culture. I think Algerians need to change way of addressing. Saying please and thanks. Give more specific dates, avoid the use of I want and replace it with would you.

In the above extract, Spencer's comment on how Algerian should accommodate to British culture by highlighting the need to change forms of address (i.e. use of titles and family names) and by suggesting giving more clear time frameworks on when they need what has been requested. Spencer by his metacommentary above claims for the development of "socio-pragmatic competence" interculturally, i.e. 'the ability to use a second language [foreign language] to solve everyday problems and the ability to negotiate sociolinguistic norms of politeness'. Consequently, Spencer appears to be more concerned about how Algerians can accommodate to British culture by giving examples of exhibiting linguistic politeness through expressions like "would" and "please".

To conclude this section, it is worth mentioning that while student participants attempt to adhere to the social norms in communication at a British University, supervisors seem to have, at least, an initial understanding of the differences in the culture of communication. This knowledge and awareness are a result of being in touch with overseas students during their career at Manchester Metropolitan University and other universities (either in or outside the UK). Although not all supervisors seem to be conscious of the Algerian culture of communication, they seem to recognize the differences either by 1) observing differences by looking through the prism of their own cultures or by 2) comparing Algerians to other overseas students they have supervised.

B) Sociocultural Factors (Power, Distance, Rank of Imposition) Negotiated.

Another important theme that emerges from the data collected from supervisors evolves around the concepts of social distance, power hierarchy, and the conception of imposition. While the previous factors have been central to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness (see section 2. 2. 2. for more details), the results of the current study challenge those factors relative to the dynamics of culture (the different cultural facets) and the different individual understanding of these. Thus, this section challenges Brown and Levinson (1987) on overlooking the cultural/individual differences in politeness weightiness.

Indeed, and as previously stated (see section 2.3.), Brown and Levinson (1987) have been critiqued on their Anglocentric approach to politeness. Consequently, many scholars (e.g. Spencer-Oatey and Kádár, 2016) call for an evaluation of politeness from cultural perspectives. in other words, looking at politeness and its weightiness while considering how factors like power, distance and rank of the imposition are understood and operated cross-culturally.

In the excerpt 138 below, Kevin relates hierarchy to the use of titles, where he claims that using titles is not among his expectations but since their use seems comfortable to his Algerian supervisees, then he accepts and respects their (students) choices to use formal terms of address.

> **[138] Kevin:** sometimes, I like to keep that kind of respect as I feel this is what my Algerian supervisees like and got used to back home; again, I am highly aware and respectful of what they expect from me. For instance, I still get email with addressing me as a doctor, and this is honestly fine for me and not an issue at all but this is not what I expect but I just leave them free to use whatever they feel comfortable with. But using a title for me implies some sort of hierarchy .

Similar to Kevin, Kate [139] claims that hierarchy is a more a conception from the students' part. She (Kate) perceives her supervisees as colleagues instead of seeing them as students who are lower in hierarchy. Kate encourages students to see themselves as peers as she can learn from them as much as they can learn from her, and this in itself can affect how some supervisees would perceive power and social distance at UKHEI. Kate notes that the hierarchy can be mainly linked to the difference in experience of research and publication, which student participants refer to, previously, in excerpts (68, 70, and 71) and which I explain in relation to expert power.

> **[139] Kate:** in my experience, the hierarchy is as much as a perception from the student side. I think the further through higher education you get, the more it gets to a peer-to-peer relationship. Ph.D. students should see themselves as researchers like we are researchers...I feel that I can learn from PhD students as much as they could learn from me. Of course, there is a difference in experience. As staff we have more experience of doing research and publishing.

While Kevin and Kate perceive their relationship with Ph.D. students from the lenses of collegiality, Zoe [140] highlights the students' need to adjust their expectations in relation to her role as a supervisor while referring to hierarchy. In other words, while Kevin [138] and Kate [139] perceive hierarchy to be conceived by students, Zoe [140] highlights that hierarchy is not about power exercise on the students but rather it is more about perception of roles within academia and managing expectations. In the excerpts below, Zoe explains that awareness and understanding of the entitlements and obligations of interlocutors (Ph.D. supervisees and their supervisors) with respect to each other is necessary to avoid any misunderstanding.

> **[140] Zoe:** I think there is an effect of hierarchy on communication, I think they need to know what my role and they need to understand from the very beginning what my role as a supervisor is and that sometimes if I am a little bit pushy it is not because I am mean, or I want to exercise power, but I want them to meet deadlines.

A more detailed testimony to the hierarchy seems to be associated and explained in relation to the concept of power. For instance, while looking at Nelly [141], a reference to formulaic expressions like: "Dear" and "I hope this email finds you well" is interpreted by Nelly as an implication of power imbalance and that is what makes Nelly feel that their emails are different from those of British students.

> **[141] Nelly:** the use of some formulaic expressions like ‘dear’ instead of ‘hi’ and ‘hello’ along with the consistent use of ‘I hope you are doing well’ makes me feel that there is certain amount of power imbalance, the formality and formulaic nature of the email makes it more deferential.

While probing the effect of hierarchy on the communication between the supervisors and the supervisees, Kate and Kevin have explained (as exemplified below respectively in extracts 142. 143) this hierarchy in relation to the social distance. Although distance has been claimed as a result of academic roles, Kate and Kevin refer to the context of communication as friendly.

> **[142] Kate:** there is a sort of not understandable distance that kind of I'm still in academic role and that we are not necessarily friends in the maty sense although it is a friendly atmosphere.

> **[143] Kevin:** I think everything is quite friendly but there is a certain understandable distance in relation to the academic roles. We are not necessary friends in the maty way, but it is a friendly atmosphere.

Hierarchy, as previously stated above, seem to relate to the concepts of power and social distance, where these appear to be factors that motivate the use of politeness by the students. Nelly in the extract below explained the hierarchy in the power imbalance she observes in the email requests that she receives from Algerian Ph.D. students. Besides her observation of power imbalance, Nelly also notices that this sense of power gap has disappeared after a period of time when it comes to face-to-face communication. Power negotiation in the extract below is a result of the way she (Nelly) responses to email requests and her informal style along with her being a peer to those supervisees in terms of age.

[144] Nelly: I definitely think there is a power imbalance that is noticed by students and that does affect the communication in the sense that I think students feel like politeness is expected from them. In the initial communications between myself and my Algerian PhD. students it was noticed a lot that they are considering me their superior. But I feel after some time and because of my informal style and because probably I'm about the same age that power difference very much sort of disappeared in spoken conversations but in email it is still a bit there.

Like power, social distance is negotiated, the example below [145] demonstrates how Kate maintains social distance during the first contact she had with people outside her social bubble where she prefers to keep it formal and professional. Kate [145] made a distinction between her supervisees (those already in her social bubble) and those contacting her for the first time, and while she is more casual/ informal with the former, she is more formal with the latter. Additionally, Kate [146] claims that the use of certain expressions such as 'I hope this email finds you well' and 'dear' implies a certain social distance for her. While reflecting on her own use of the previous expressions, Kate [146] seems to use these only with those distant from her.

[145] Kate: yes, I think in most of the scenarios, I used to imagine it is one of my supervisees getting in touch so I once I established a relationship and I know who they are I would tend to address them more casually and tend just to say hi because they're in my bubble. But before that I want to keep a bit of distance. What I mean is if somebody is getting in touch with me from the outside like a sort of proposal to come and study with us; I would tend to maintain that level of formality till they come on board.

[146] Kate: also, I am assuming a distance there; the more I am distant from somebody the more likely I am to use those kinds of phrases. With colleagues, research partners, I don't even say hi. It is more like text message with those closer to me.

The examples below (147, 148) sum up most of the supervisors' perception of power in relation to social distance. Although slightly different from what (Kevin, Kate, Diana, Nelly) have claimed, Spencer claims hierarchy in power and social distance to be a result of the supervisors' projection of themselves. Spencer [147], similarly, claims that some supervisors might exercise their knowledge power over the students, where others might consider and project themselves as equals to the students.

> **[147] Spencer:** the hierarchy is very much dependent on how the supervisor projects himself to the supervisee. Obviously, we are different human beings, and some supervisors may wish to sort of show who is the boss and who has more/better knowledge and others put themselves on an equal footing with the supervisee because it is not so much a matter of supervisor/ supervisee, but it is a matter of exchange of ideas and the supervisor's role is only to direct as they have more experience. It is about sharing experience. I always see it as somebody experienced vs unexperienced.

> **[148] Kate:** Inevitably there is a bit of power dynamic going on because PhD students are going to come to us more than we go to them. But in terms of social relationship, I like to think that we are peers and I always force that into my introduction by making them as casual as possible.

While Spencer [147] highlights that hierarchy is only about experience and sharing it with supervisee, Kate [148] confirms the previous point by highlighting that the power dynamic is a result of students approaching/needing supervisors more than supervisors approach them, and she explained this under the light of staff expertise. Nonetheless, looking closely at Kate [148], there appears to be a separation of power (more precisely expert power) and social distance, where the participant claims that she always keeps short distance between her and her supervisees as she considers them peers. In other words, an increase in expert power does not correlate with an increase in social distance between interlocutors. In the following section, I highlight how the supervisors are discussing their email exchanges in comparison to their face-to-face-meetings with their Algerian supervisees.

1. Email vs Face-to-Face Communication

A recurring and common theme across the data, of both students and supervisors, is the difference between face-to-face and email communication. Like the students, some supervisors demonstrate a preference towards face-to-face communication. In the following excerpts, I discuss why participants prefer offline communication over the email one. In extracts 149 and 150, Zoe and Kate, respectively, claim that the absence of facial expression and the asynchronous nature of the email is the reason for their preference to face-to-face communication over the email one.

> **[149] Zoe:** I prefer to talk face to face rather than email, because I can see their reaction to what I am saying.

> **[150] Kate:** I think it is tricky because, I think in general I see emails as more casual, but the absence of nonverbal patterns that makes me be more casual. It is not synchronous. I Try to make sure I am clear.

Looking at the sociolinguistic dynamics of email communication, supervisors discuss these at length while referring to how they perceive email requests from students or how they construct email responses to these. In the following excerpt, Zoe [151], for instance, expands on her previous answer [149] to touch upon other factors that may affect how students perceive her language use through emails. Zoe [151] highlights that she comes from a culture that praises directness, thus her language in emails might be perceived as rude if the interlocutor comes from a culture where indirectness is more praised than directness.

> **[151] Zoe:** some people come from cultures that praise directness and when they come to other cultures praising indirectness these might come across as rude. My language might seem a little bit direct and this is why I prefer face to face to avoid being perceived from a linguistic perspective as rude.

Zoe, and to avoid coming across as direct and rude, uses emojis. In the following extract, Zoe explains that the option of adding emojis in email replaces the facial expressions existing in offline communication, and therefore, aid her in lessening the chances of being perceived as direct and rude and which in itself might be a result of lexico-syntactic formulae she might employ.

> **[152] Zoe:** I think emojis are very important; sometimes you cannot get across the precise meaning, and sometimes I think my email might be too direct; I use emojis to make sure that the student knows that I am not telling them off, but I am just guiding them. When I put a smile that makes it better. They add that extra layer of warmth to say everything is fine, I'm here to support you.

Besides, Zoe and Kate's focus on the asynchronous nature of email communication, in the excerpts above, and therefore on the differences between face-to-face and email communication; Kate [153] and Diana [154] further highlight the email's functionality. Kate [153] seems to be aware of the absence of interpersonal aspects (voice, tone, pitch) from email communication. Thus, she tends to use some expressions (e.g. Thank you for contacting me, I hope this email finds you well) as a warmup opening to avoid being too direct. Nonetheless, Kate notes that the email is useful as a means of communication as it is functional and practical when it comes to communication with supervisees.

> **[153] Kate:** I am maybe more on the side of email being very functional, so maybe the least of interpersonal stuff compared to others I think I do use those terms a lot in emails generally I would say ...I kind of see them as a warmup to the actual main content of the email; introduce the email because it might seem abrupt if you just go hi and start asking.

For Diana [154] emails, unlike face-to-face interaction, which she refers to as more friendly and relaxed, are just there for functional reasons such as documenting interaction and as a proof that students and supervisors are communicating regularly.

> **[154] Diana:** the spoken communication is extremely relaxed and very friendly, whereas the email would tend to stay quite formal. Email is more functional, and they are a trail of evidence of interaction with your students, emails have the role of documenting interaction between students and supervisees.

Chen (2006) points out emails cannot be written by student writers easily, even though this technology is widely used in the world. People may write emails to their colleagues who have the same social status in a relatively flexible way. However, they may find it difficult to write emails to receivers who have higher status than them in the workplace, in order to achieve different communicative purposes (Baron, 1998). In respect to the current study, writing and responding to emails seems to be still problematic as the participants have different power status and different pragma-linguistic background of writing and responding to email.

2. Supervisors' Perception of Students' Identity.

Another important theme that has emerged from the students' data (see section 4.1.2.) is the theme of face and identity. Students seem to manage face, and therefore, their identities through the use of polite linguistic expressions in email communication. On many occasions, during their interviews, the students referred to the nature of email and how this might affect their identities and how their supervisors might perceive them. Investigating whether email communication affects how the supervisors perceive students' identities, results from the current research show that supervisors rarely relate the language used in email communication with judgments about the students' identities or personality traits. In the following excerpt [155], Kate claims that she forms a picture of who the person is based on the way their emails are written, she, however, explains the concept of picture in relation to personality traits of the sender and what sort of social distance they may want to establish with her.

> **[155] Kate:** I think it (the way the email is written) does affect how I see them. We make some judgments based on the language they use and how they use it and if we can see them our judgment can be extended to their non-verbal language and style of dress. We constantly processing information we get, and we start unconsciously sometimes to build a picture of who that person is. I definitely get a sense of personality that comes across and also the relationship that people think they have with you.

Furthermore, in excerpts [156], Kate extends her answer to discuss in detail what image she formulates around her Algerian supervisees. Kate in the following extract considers Algerian students to be generally ‘humble’ and ‘respectful’. Her opinion seems to be based on 1) the use of address forms/titles (e.g. Dr. Pr.) by the Algerians in their emails and 2) their attempt to adhere to British social norms of communication that she summarises in the use of polite expressions of ‘thank you’, ‘would you’, and ‘please’.

> **[156] Kate:** The sense I get, focusing on Algerian PhD students, is hard as I don't want to generalize because we are different as individuals and there are some students that I know better than others, so I have more communication with them. But if to generalize I would say there is a sort of humble attitude and different kind of respecting authority and making sure to respect somebody's position. They seem to be very careful to kind of adhere to social norms... you know the use of polite expressions like thank you, please and would you.

Diana in excerpts [157] below highlights that she understands, and she is aware of the language and cultural struggles overseas students need to overcome in order to avoid being perceived as imposing and creating inconveniences to the supervisors. For her requesting from a supervisor might be face threatening as supposedly thought of by the students, and consequently, email requests seem to be a daunting task.

> **[157] Diana:** I think many students will find it anxious to email supervisors with a demand because they are worried that would be seen as pushy or needy or creating a problem.

Yet, she (Diana), in the excerpt below, claims that receiving frequent emails from one student with a highly imposing request in terms of time and emergency would lead her, as a supervisor, to think that this student is unrealistic as s/he (student) does not consider and understand the responsibilities of the supervisor. Given the nature of Academia, imposing on the supervisors in terms of time is negative face threatening act as supervisors have busy schedules and they need to prioritize some requests over others when it comes to responding. Therefore, here Diana seems to point out that the students may be threatening her negative face and her want to be free from imposition.

> **[158] Diana:** sometimes you want some understanding on the part of the students that you have so many email requests and that you need to prioritise, so if I receive a lot of emails from one student saying I want this and I want this today, there will be a sense of you need to be more realistic.

While Kate's and Diana's examples above seem to be dealing with some form of judgment, Kevin [159], below, and other supervisors seem not to formulate these as they consider email to be functional and the way people email differ on the bases of the social distance that senders have with their recipients. In the following excerpt, Kevin gives a counter argument to the link of language use and identity, where he does not seem to agree that an individual identity or personality can be decided upon through language use. Kevin further refers to the Algerian students' unawareness of requesting in a British English as they are FL speakers.

> **[159] Kevin:** I don't think I can make a particular judgment as they are formulating requests in a particular way and because they might be talking to me differently to someone else, they know. Language use matters of course but it will never affect how I perceive individuals especially those I

> am supervising. The Algerian PhD. Student are operating in a second or maybe a foreign language and it is unfair to make any judgment as they might be unaware of how British people formulate requests or email requests...yet I see them polite.

To conclude, saving face as a matter of identity saving or co-construction has been emphasised by the students more than the supervisors. Supervisors seem to agree that Algerian Ph.D. students are polite. In the following section, I discuss the supervisors' answers in regard to their responses to email requests received from the I-DCTs.

3. Language Use in Responses to Email Requests

Under the current theme, I discuss how the supervisors seem to tailor their responses to students' requests. In most of the responses found in the I-DCTs, the supervisors seem to be focusing on the clarity of their responses to participants emails in general, and to their (students') requests in particular. Although the supervisors mention the importance of appropriate language use, they explain this in relation to language clarity as the recipients of their emails are foreign language learners. For instance, Kate, in extract [160] below, claims that she always checks the content of her emails to Algerian Ph.D. students. She (Kate) claims to check her language in order to avoid using complex language, which might be confusing to her supervisee. In terms of politeness this can be explained as Kate's want to save the supervisees' positive face and their want to be approved. Using simple and unambiguous language may translate to the students as consideration for them as FL speakers. In this regard, Kate has reflected on her experience as a Ph.D. student where she used to check a dictionary to understand what her supervisor meant; and now, she tailors her language in the email in the simplest way she can so her students will not consider what she writes as ambiguous or unclear.

[160] Kate: I always try to tailor my emails to make sure they are appropriate. The thing I may say here, is when writing to Algerian PhD students or any other second or foreign language speakers of English is that kind of just checking the way I am wording things is not overly complex, unnecessarily complex. Sometimes I find myself writing things and then ask myself shall I simplify this a bit can I say that more clearly? I think sometimes, I need to remind myself that I might not need to word things in a complex way. I do not want them to check a dictionary to get across what I have written as I did during my Ph.D. So, I consciously think that my email should not have that effect on people.

Kate, in [161] below, perceives her email as polite with a British academic style. When probing what she meant by that, she explains that she attempts to be concise and precise, so the students do not feel the message is ambiguous. She further states that she starts the email by complimenting the student on their work before she proceeds to talk about the change and the amendments needed. This also can be read as a positive face-saving strategy to the recipient of the email (students in this case). By thanking the students for sending a piece of work and complimenting them on their work, Kate is praising the student, and therefore, satisfies their need to be appreciated and approved.

[161] Kate: My email style is generally quite polite, there is slightly a British Academic style...many things might be slightly what you do. I avoid being too wordy in my emails, so student might not follow what I am trying to say. I might start saying that the work is good then I might suggest and strongly recommend that the student might consider adding or amending some points. I would say that directly to make sure there is no ambiguity, and it is not misunderstood... maybe this isn't always conscious, but this is what I notice myself doing all the time.

Kevin, like Kate, considers his email style to be polite and further refers to this as a British academic style. Similar to what Kate has stated in excerpts [160] and [161] above, Kevin in the example [162] below avoids being wordy as students might not understand the points he wants to convey. Like Kate also, Kevin follows a similar strategy, where he compliments the supervisee then moves on to suggest what needs changing. The difference between Kate and Kevin resides in how conscious Kate was about what she is doing as Kevin states that it is unconscious for him. This difference in their answers might be related to their experience of Ph.D. supervision, where Kevin's supervision role is recent (less than two years) in comparison with that of Kate (6 years).

> **[162] Kevin:** it is a bit unconscious, but what can I say is that my email style is quite polite anyway and this is maybe a slightly a British academic style. Things would be slightly, would you? Is it possible? I avoid also being too wordy so meaning does not get lost; so, for instance I say this is looks very good, but you might consider adding this or that which mean however that I strongly recommend and sometimes I say it directly to avoid ambiguity.

4. Understanding of rights and responsibilities within academia and their relation to the rank of imposition

While discussing answers from the ranking task (see appendix E, task 2) that I administered to the supervisors, their answers and understanding to the imposition seem to be either related to time constraints/pressure or to the plethora of rights and responsibilities that they themselves and the students have in a higher education context. In the following lines and extracts from the supervisors' interviews, I show how these map-out and how supervisors formulate their responses to imposing email requests.

Most of the supervisors agree that requesting feedback is the most imposing situation for them. While requesting feedback seems to be one of the rights of the supervisees in academia, the urgency expressed in the original requests seems to affect how these requests are perceived by the supervisors. In the original scenario (see appendix D; scenario 3) of a request for feedback, the student requests the supervisors' assessment of a piece of writing (which in case of Ph.D. can be very long), which has been submitted a week ago. Almost all supervisors consider a feedback request as the most imposing as the student is not considering the busy schedule/timetable of the supervisors and not giving them enough time to provide constructive feedback. Here, the rank of imposition in this scenario stems from the urgency expressed by the students rather than any social distance or power that exists between the interlocutors. In the following extract [163], one supervisor highlights that the request for feedback is imposing because of the time framework provided for her to send back a commentary on the supervisee's work. This imposition that has been claimed by the supervisor is a threat towards their negative face, in the sense that it impinges on his freedom of actions.

> **[163] Kate:** Asking for feedback requires more time as it requires me to look at a draft and to leave comments on areas that need to be improved. Similarly, recommendation will be the same. Write a summary and write a formal letter and send it to the employer. They are imposing in terms of time. It is a requirement in terms of times.

Further to Kate's example above, Spencer [164] adds that feedback is essential in the sense that it is one of his responsibilities to provide students with a commentary on their written work. However, he stresses that feedback might be time consuming and requesting it after a short period after the submission is imposing.

> **[164] Spencer:** request for feedback: feedback is an essential thing, and it depends on the time that the students are requesting. Because I need to read and to comment.

Similar to Spencer's above, Nelly [165] explains that satisfying this type of request (feedback) is one of her responsibilities towards the Ph.D. students. Nelly in the following example referred and compared the occurrence of different types of requests by the students (e.g. feedback, recommendation, support and guidance) while alluding to the fact that some requests should be made considering her responsibilities as an academic at higher education. The hint can be concluded from Nelly when stressing that providing feedback should be given specific time. Here, Nelly's claim can be interpreted as her want to be free from imposition as times of providing feedback should be scheduled (to fit within her other responsibilities) in advance; otherwise, requesting feedback can be rejected.

> **[165] Nelly:** that is my job, the role of a PhD adviser is to provide guidance and support academically and personally throughout the whole of the journey, I am also responsible for writing feedback and recommendation letters, but I think the important part of the role is the support which is guaranteed at all times, but recommendations letters and feedback are given specific times.

Another important point to shed light on here is how ‘requesting resources’, that is requesting some materials like books and articles, has been an imposing task to some supervisors. Spencer’s response (see example 166 below) to this type of request in the DCTs has been classified as a refusal as it could potentially inflict face damage of the supervisees (see section 4.2.1. for further details). Yet, when asking Spencer for the reasons he refuses to provide resources, he claims that the request was imposing. Spencer’s explanation of the request imposition is exemplified by the extract below. Spencer in the following seems not to comply with the student’s requests as he does not want to mislead the supervisee, his refusal stems from the fact that he does not come across these resources and the fact that the student does not provide any time framework for when s/he needs what has been requested. Spencer adds that the task is also imposing as the student seems not to be aware of Spencer’s academic responsibilities that are beyond the supervision (administration and research), where he is claiming that downloading resources not his job but the responsibility of the students.

> **[166] Spencer:** I formulate my response this way because I did not come across these references and I also do not know what deadline they need to get that (the requested resources). I have stated that I might not be in position to help not to merely refuse but not to mislead the students. also, I thought it is imposing as the student is asking me to download resources for them whereas my role is to guide them, and they are aware that my schedule is insane. Downloading resources is not really the job of the supervisor.

In the above, although Spencer's refusal has been explained in terms of the rights and responsibilities both he and his supervisees are entitled to within a UK higher education institution, his response can be potentially face threatening. In the following section, I discuss the challenges I faced as a researcher while using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) as both a theoretical and analytical framework.

4.3. Challenges to Classify Data Using Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Model

Based on the different points that have been discussed within the previous sections (4.1.1. and 4.1.2.) and subsections of this chapter, the present section is a through summary to the challenges faced in classifying the data using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model. As the title above suggested, this section therefore discusses, critically, the 'universality' of the politeness strategies (and sub-strategies) that Brown and Levinson (1987) have suggested under the light of the current data, and which it has been applied to (see section 4.1.1. for further details). The section then extends to shed light on the concept of face, that is considered the elephant in the room within (Im)politeness research. Indeed, the section aims at transcending the debate over the concept of face (see chapter two; section 2.3.2.) to provide a prototype model of face and face work in intercultural communication context (see figure 11 for more details). Finally, the section concludes with some notes on the need for a hybrid approach to study (im)politeness in interaction.

Notably, Brown and Levinson (1987), and with reference to their book title, have discussed some universals in language use. Yet, results from the current research suggest that, although the super-strategies and their sub-strategies might be universal as notions, the linguistic forms they take may differ across cultures and interculturally. In other words, the way interactant formulates speech acts, when belonging to different cultures or speaking in a lingua franca, can be different on propositional level as they structure their talk in different syntactic forms. To illustrate, I shall refer to the examples [20] and [21] from section 4.1.1, where the student has been expressing pessimism differently from the way Brown and Levinson (1987) have been claiming this strategy to be realized. Looking at the previous excerpts from the data, and more precisely at the way their propositional content (surface structure of the utterances), one can notice that the expression of pessimism by Algerian participant in the study is different from the expression of pessimism in the English language (for further details on the above refer to section 4.1.1.).

Another challenge that I have encountered when applying the model of politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987) to my data has been the focus on one sentence during the analysis. Throughout the analysis of data in the current research, politeness seems not to reside in specific sentences, but is manifested throughout the whole email request (opening, body and closing). More importantly, and while analysing politeness on a sentence level, there seem to be an overlap of politeness strategies within a) one sentence and 2) across phrases. Respectively, one sentence can be interpreted as both positive and negative politeness strategy. Politeness also in the current project extends over stretches of phrases in the request scenarios rather than residing in single utterances. In other words, analysing politeness based on single utterances seems to be simplistic. The data I have collected from the participants were in the form of emails (the data collected from both students and their supervisors includes email openings, email body, and email closings), thus it is almost impossible to analyse the politeness of a single utterance as the email content includes various strategies that bind together to convey politeness. In other words, there were different mechanisms employed by the students to initiate requests to their supervisors. The requests made through a combination of politeness strategies that I have named as multivalent/mixing strategies (see section 4.1.1.). Besides, context here is important to understand the whole mechanism of using politeness strategies and to map how these are combining to address different face threats.

Another point that I argue is very important is the model's failure to capture culture specific descriptions of social variables. Social variables (e.g. power and social distance) seem to be complex factors that influence the use of politeness strategies. The participants of this study interacting in an asymmetrical context with their supervisors seem to negotiate concepts of power ratio, distance and the rank of the imposition. Although Brown and Levinson (1987) posit that the previous three variables affect the speaker's choices regardless of the culture, they have (ibid: 242–253), nevertheless, argued that these might be culture specific in the sense that one factor can be at the top while another can be at the bottom while choosing which politeness strategies to adopt. The results from the current study have shown that these concepts (power, social distance and weight of imposition) are, rather than fixed, to be negotiated concepts from both cultural and individual perspectives. To explain the previous point, culturally, the factor of power, or more precisely expert power seems to be the factor that the participants have been mostly referring to in relation to their negative politeness strategies use/choice. Given the asymmetrical relationship between participants (Ph.D. student and their supervisors), the power as a factor affecting politeness strategies use seems to be differently conceived by the students in comparison to their supervisors. All the student' participants claim that they have always considered the *power status* and the *expert power* that the supervisors have over them, when it comes to writing email requests. The difference in the interpretation of power from cultural perspective can be exemplified in the use of address titles (e.g. Dr., Pr.) and surnames. While claiming that this has been transferred from their interaction practices at the Algerian education institution, some of the student participants seem to negotiate the concept of power in a study abroad context. Namely, those students are accommodating to the English understanding of power status at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Being in the UK and being enrolled at Manchester Metropolitan University has a significant effect on their language use, especially within an academic context. Some of the Algerian Student participants have claimed that the concept of power here is almost non-existent as they notice students addressing their lecturers by their first names. See the following example from the student interviews for illustration.

> **[167] Bisane:** "here (UK) it is not like Algeria. You see students calling their supervisors by their first names with no second thought. I cannot imagine myself doing that in Algeria, I will be crossing redlines. Here I am doing it as my supervisors asked me to just call her X and also because I think it is the norm here"

Besides being interpreted from a cultural perspective, power can also be interpreted differently from one individual to another. In other words, while it is apparent from Bisane's excerpt above that power understanding is different cross-culturally (UK vs Algeria); there seem to be differences at the level of negotiating this concept from one student to another. While Bisane above claims that she is adapting to an English way of addressing her supervisors (implying change in conceptualization of power), other participants (e.g. Yara and Lily) seem to be persistent to the use of address titles with their British supervisors. See the following examples [168] and [169] for more details.

[168] Yara: "although I know it is totally normal to call my supervisors here with their first names, I still cannot do it. It has been now almost three years and I consider them my superiors. I feel I am doing something wrong and odd if I remove titles or use first names"

[169] Lily: "for a long time I grew up with a habit to call my teachers and superiors with respect using their titles and surnames, I cannot imagine myself doing the opposite simply because I am here in the UK even though I am aware it is normally what students do at UK universities".

Social distance, as a factor affecting the choice of politeness strategies, has been almost discussed only in relation to power by the student participants in the current research. Students claim that there is a correlation between power and distance. Moreover, social distance in the current research seems to also stem from the cultural gap that the students experience in the UK. The students express that the differences in culture, and precisely the linguistic background between themselves and their supervisors is one way to distance themselves, and therefore to avoid the occurrence of any misunderstanding. In the following extract, the student is exemplifying how unfamiliarity with some cultural and linguistic aspects can affect the conceptualization of social distance.

[170] Yara: "sometimes I like to consider myself as distant as possible from my supervisors, I mean I do not want to have that close relationship as I am afraid there are some culture related matters that I am not understanding and which I might across unconsciously. Also, the English is my third language, and I am afraid to have that relation where I have frequent talks with my supervisors, and which may lead to some misunderstanding in the future...I do not know it has always been the case in Algeria that whenever a student and a teacher/lecturer has close relation they end up having misunderstanding, so I prefer not to cross the boundaries from the start."

Furthermore, the rank of imposition seems to be less effective in deciding the politeness strategy to be used by the students, yet it appears to be an important factor for the supervisors, and which they thoroughly discussed in relation to their responses to requests. On an individual level, politeness strategies seem to be used and affected by factors like: the Algerian educational and cultural background (e.g. the use of titles and surnames to signify deference between students and their educators), the pragmatic transfer from both Arabic and French, and the development of pragmatic competence in British HE (e.g. students' avoidance of using titles to address supervisors). I, now, in the following paragraph, discuss one of the fundamentals in the politeness model (Brown and Levinson, 1987), which is the concept of 'face'.

While Brown and Levinson's (1987: 61) conceptualization of face as two opposing polars/dichotomies seems to be helpful, this categorization seems to ignore face complexity in real communication. In this regard, Culpeper, Bousfield and Wichmann (2003: 1576) claim that a distinction between positive face and negative face is an inherited problematic aspect from Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model. According to previous scholars, and considering impoliteness phenomenon, there can be an overlap between negative and positive impoliteness strategies within the same impoliteness strategy. In other words, one utterance can be interpreted as both negative and positive impoliteness strategies. Accordingly, some negative impoliteness strategies might primarily function as a negative face damage, and secondarily function as an attack towards the positive face and vice versa. Further to their collective paper, Bousfield (2008: 35), for instance, suggests a "dualism perspective" towards aspects of face that are scalar. In other words, he (ibid: 35-36) attempts to reconceptualize and challenge the dichotomy of positive/negative face by challenging Brown and Levinson's (1987) claim that positive or negative politeness do not *co-occur* in a single utterance. Looking at examples from Bousfield' work (2008: 132-134), one can notice that impoliteness can simultaneously be negative (attacking the addressee freedom of action) and positive (attacking his want of approval) in case of challenging (impolitely) the addressee. In line with Bousfield (ibid), the dynamics of Algerian face and facework call for an alternative and a more flexible model of face than that provided by Brown and Levinson (1987: 61). See the figure below to understand the duality of face occurrence, which I referred to by using a scalar representation in the middle of the figure, and this is to note that when using some laden politeness strategies, these have always a predominately address to 1) primarily one aspect of face and 2) secondarily to the other one as explained in sets 1 and 4 (see these in section 4.1.1. for further details). In figure 12 below, I demonstrate how facework and management is the result of using what I call multivalent politeness strategies, which can primarily address one aspect of face while secondarily addressing the other.

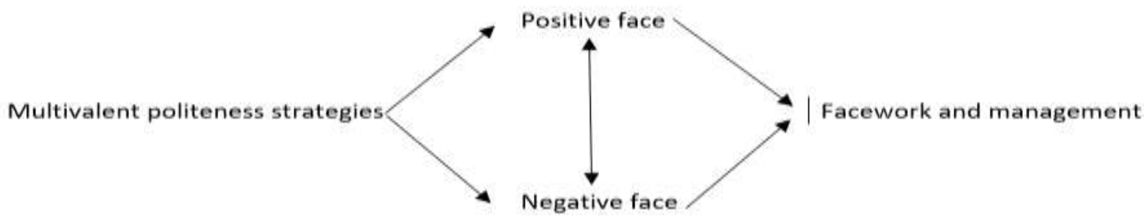

Figure 11: Face Model

In the model suggested in the diagram above, I aim to present a facework and management model, where I delineate how interlocutors save their face and the face of their interlocutors while using politeness strategies. On the left side of the model, there is the multivalent politeness strategies, which are the politeness strategies used by interlocutors and that can be interpreted differently and may hold different face redress (or damage in the case of impoliteness). Therefore, the previous strategies can redress, simultaneously, both aspects of face. The model has precisely focused on the positive and negative face address to challenge how they are presented in Brown and Levinson's (1987) work. Looking at the middle of the diagram, I present positive and negative face not as a dichotomy but as scalar concepts relative to politeness strategies use. In other words, and while the multivalent politeness strategies might redress both face aspects (positive and negative), there seem to be a primary and secondary face redress (as explained in the paragraph preceding the diagram). The arrow in the middle pointing at positive face and negative face is the representation of how multivalent strategies can redress both face aspect to different degrees. The right of the diagram 'face work and management' represent the result of using multivalent strategies aiming at the redress of both face aspects in order to achieve interactional goals and save one's face or social image.

To end up this section, I discuss why a hybrid approach (see section 5.2 for more details) is needed to investigate politeness. However, before delving into why this approach is needed in the first place, I should highlight that studying politeness has become a complex task for researchers over the years, and its investigation from a cross-cultural perspective became even more complicated as we move from traditional approach to a discursive one. Many researchers (Bousfield, 2010; Ogiermann, 2009: 01) argue that most of the criticism that scholars, following a pragmatic approach, like Brown and Levinson (1987) have received, emerges from those scholars taking a social theory/postmodern approach to the study of politeness. Although the latter has criticized the traditional approach for the analysis of politeness at a sentence level, they fail to come up with an alternative model/framework as it is inherent in their position that a model is restrictive and therefore impossible to apply. As a response to the discursive approach, Jansen and Janssen (2010: 2532), for example, have criticized the scholars' stance within that approach by claiming that when applying a framing effect[26] to assess requests for instance participants would inevitably provide you with what they think is polite in the situation in the first place. In this regard, Bousfield (2010: 119) argues that individuals' interpretation of what is polite or rude is inevitably based on *socially shared norms* that have been *conventionalized.* Thus, while a discursive approach remedies some fundamental issues of the traditional approach (mainly the analysis of politeness in context and from a hearer perspective), the approach itself has its limitations. Bousfield (2010: 125) claims that the discursive approach rejects the assumptions that certain linguistic forms hold a stable pragmatic meaning and adopts a negotiated meaning in context path for the analysis of (im)politeness. Moreover, by focusing on the hearers' uptake, the discursive approach decreases the importance of those in the role of producers of language (speakers or senders). Results from the current approach urges for an approach that takes both the speaker as well as the hearer into account. The results as well call for a holistic analysis of politeness phenomena. Put differently an analysis that does not only consider theoretical models of (im)politeness but also takes into account the participants' understanding and evaluation of the phenomenon.

The current research aims at marrying the two approaches: the traditional and the discursive, in order to investigate how politeness and responses to it unfold in an intercultural context. Thus, this research accounts for the engagement of those of the producer role (writers/senders/speakers) and those of the receiver role (receivers/ hearers), who are involved in a communicative event. This research follows a hybrid

[26] Framing effect: in psychology it is the individuals' explanation and evaluation of their own actions.

approach as some scholars (e.g. Culpeper et al., 2003: 1562) claim that "Research on both politeness and impoliteness has tended to overlook what the recipient of face threat does". Results from this study show 1) the producer (sender of the email request/ students) and his/her motivations behind using certain politeness strategies (lay person perspective), and 2) the receiver (receiver of the email request/ supervisors) responses to politeness and further highlight the perceptions they have on the students. The study also takes a socio-pragmatic approach informed by a lingua-pragmatic one to explain and highlight the importance of social and cultural factors in the use of politeness strategies while applying a politeness theory model (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the results from the data collected, where it explores the student participants' linguistic politeness choices relative to their requests' realization. The chapter also sheds light on those students' different perceptions and conceptions of politeness use, and what factors influence their choices of politeness strategies when formulating email requests to their supervisors. Results from the current chapter shows that Algerian Ph.D. students use a combination of positive and negative politeness strategies to attain their interactional goals (having their requests accepted by the supervisors). The results from the data suggest that the use of politeness strategies can be a complex phenomenon to analyse as these can combine in one utterance or stretch across different utterances to produce an effect on the receiver/listener. The chapter has also investigated the different response options that the supervisors can have towards the students' requests (accept, negotiate, refuse). It is further discussed in this chapter how these responses are formulated while taking different aspects into account (e.g. rights and responsibilities; students vs supervisors face).

The results within this chapter are not a rejection to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory but a call for some modifications to the model so it can be applied in an intercultural communication context. Indeed, the chapter focuses on discussing some of the fundamentals (concept of face) of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model in relation to the data of the current study. From the results collected, the chapter introduces a facework model (see figure 12 for further details) that suggests a different way of interpreting the use of politeness strategies and face redress.

Finally, the results within this chapter have suggested a complementary hybrid approach to study the communicative speech act of requests and their responses. The next chapter delves into a deeper theoretical commentary of the study results. Consequently, in the next chapter, I discuss the results of this project from the light of the literature (see chapter 2) and posit these discussions within the current body of knowledge on the speech act of requests and (im) politeness in intercultural communication.

Chapter Five: Discussion Chapter

5.0. Introduction

The current chapter addresses the research questions (See 1.3.) in the light of the research results (chapter 4) and the existing literature (chapter 2). As articulated previously in chapter 1, the current chapter endeavours to provide a) in-depth insights into the significance of the research results presented in chapter (4) and b) an understanding of the communicative speech acts of requests and their responses while considering the use of politeness strategies in an intercultural context. This chapter examines the operation/realization of Speech Acts of requests in context, and thus adds to the existing literature on speech acts (Austin, 1962) and politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Hence, this chapter further highlights and addresses the lack of research regarding the communicative act of request by Algerian foreign language speakers of English. Given my methodological approach (see chapter 3 for further details), I seek to address and provide a systematic understanding of the fundamental challenges of applying speech act theory in general and politeness in particular.

As articulated previously in chapter 3, the data was collected using triangulation of Written Informant based DCTs and semi structured interviews. A total of 21 I-DCTs (15 from Ph.D. students and 6 from supervisors) and 21 interviews (15 minutes to 45 minutes length each) were used. The current chapter deals with the results provided under 2 sections. Section (5.1) addresses the five research questions; where, I answer these in subsections (5.1.1., 5.1.2., 5.1.3., 5.1.4., 5.1.5.) according to their order in chapter 1. A multi-layered synthesis follows in section (5.2.) to provide a holistic understanding of the communicative act of requests and their responses while considering the use of politeness strategies. Furthermore, section (5.2.) discusses and re-defines the "perlocution act", and ipso facto considers the responses to (im)politeness, which have received little attention in the literature. The section also re-considers the validity/ universal applicability of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987). The discussion, as stated above, explores the importance of the results (presented in chapter 4), and links these to the literature discussed in chapter 2; this is to shed the light on the various implications of the current research and to fit its results within existing knowledge. The discussion thus enhances the quality of both cross and inter-cultural communication in the sense that it shows how foreign language speakers of English (Algerian in this research) use politeness strategies in intercultural communication, and results can also be comparable for studies within cross cultural research when interactions of people belonging to different cultures and speaking different languages is concerned. Moreover, the discussion presented is vital for study abroad students and instructors to grasp how communication -in regard to *requests* and their *responses*- via email operates (see chapter 6 on the implications of the current study).

5.1. Answering the Research Questions

Overall, this section engages in in-depth discussions and interpretations of the study findings, where it elaborates on previous studies and theories in the field of politeness. Therefore, when applicable, links to previous studies and literature will be established, and references to participants' data will be mentioned.

5.1.1. Politeness strategies use by Algerian Ph.D. students to formulate Requests to their supervisors.

As far as the study aims are concerned (see section 1.2.), it hopes to provide an understanding of how Algerians linguistically manage what Brown and Levinson (1987: 17) refer to as "Overt Behaviour", i.e. the actual use of politeness strategies in interaction by speakers to achieve interactional goals (in this case the realization of the speech act of *Requests*); and accordingly, the study aims to develop a conceptualization of how politeness operates at the level of the communicative/speech act of requests and their response in an online intercultural communication context, where asymmetrical power relations between the participants of the study pre-exist. Consequently, an analysis of the data using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, has been carried out to look at the linguistic politeness strategies that the Ph.D. students employ to formulate differently weighted requests. The following paragraphs discuss, explain and elaborate on the analysed data from the students written DCTs to see how politeness strategies are used.

It has been repeatedly indicated in the literature that, while heavily criticized, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) is nevertheless a systematic description of how politeness is used (Watts, 2003; Hamza, 2007). However, given that the theory is based on a western individualistic point of view (e.g. Matsumoto, 1988; Ide, 1989) the applicability of the theory across cultures has been tested by different scholars, who either support (e.g., Kiyama et al., 2012; Alabdali, 2019) or reject (e.g. Matsumoto, 1988) the model's claim for universality, and thus, application to non-western societies/cultures. In the current research, however, I partially support the model. In other words, the model seems to be applicable to the data drawn from non-western, Algerian PhD student. Nonetheless, like any other theory there are strength in using the model as well as weaknesses. Brown and Levinson's (1987) explanatory model of politeness appears to account for instances of politeness but while using the model as an analytical framework in the present research, three problematic areas have arisen. These being:

1) Brown and Levinson's (1987) universality claim.

2) the speech act (sentence-based) analysis which they follow, and which might hinder the complexity of using the proposed strategies, and

3) their conceptualization of face and face redress.

To begin with the first inadequacy, in their model, Brown and Levinson (1987) assume that politeness strategies are linked to specific linguistic realizations, which – given the claim to universality – are comparable across-cultures. Brown and Levinson (1987) attempt to support their claim by providing and comparing data from different languages and cultures (Tamil in India, Tzeltal in Mexico, and English in Britain and America). In the present research, my argument is not that Brown and Levinson's (1987) claims are invalid and that we should discard these, nor is it that their claims are applicable cross-culturally. Put differently, I am not discarding their claim to universality rather I had tested it against my data by further unpacking and discussing this claim, in order to understand how participants from different cultures and with different language' reservoirs converse in a foreign language.

My argument, here, is rather that their universality claim is problematic as it disregards culture, language and context' influences on the realization and the use of politeness strategies. For instance, while answering the research' first question on the politeness strategies' use by Algerian Ph.D. students, the results postulate a great deal of parallels -which can be demonstrated throughout the data (see chapter 4)- with the politeness strategies suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987: 102-131). Although there is a significant use of positive politeness, this research has shown that the participants tend to use/choose more negative politeness strategies in highly imposing situations (e.g. requesting feedback, urgent meeting) in comparison to the less imposing scenarios (e.g. requesting supervision and recommendation letter; see section 4.1.1.1. under the 4th theme of factors influencing politeness strategies use P. 177). The previous results fit with the result that Brown and Levinson (1987: 75) suggest while presenting the sociological factors' (Power, social distance and rank of the imposition) influence on strategy selection. As far as *bald on record* and *do not do the FTA* are concerned, the results suggest that these are almost non-existent, and that Algerians show a tendency to use more *negative* and *positive* politeness in the overall. In other words, results from this study show that the student participants use a variety of positive and negative politeness strategies and sub-strategies when formulating requests to their supervisors. There was only one instance of *bald on record,* and no marked instances of *do not do the face threatening act*.

Noteworthy to ascertain and that should be emphasized, from the outset, is that interpretability of the politeness strategies use can only be linked to the universality in the sense of mutual knowledge and the assumptions individual, cross culturally, have when employing politeness in interaction. To further explain the previous point, results from the current data suggest that although the politeness strategies can be universal, their propositional content (surface structure) and socio-pragmatic appropriateness (appropriate use of language) differ cross culturally. Throughout the course of the data, this appears to be applicable to the negative face-oriented politeness strategy of *pessimism* mainly (for further details see section 4.1.1.).

In regard to *pessimism*, it has been held that the strategy exists in Arabic, but its realization differs linguistically from one language and culture to another (e.g. Arabic, Algerian Arabic and British English). See the following extracts for exemplification, where example [171] represents pessimism in English and its translation in Arabic and example [172] is extracted from the current data (see set 6 in chapter 4 for further details) and shows the expression of pessimism by the student participants.

[171]: I do not suppose you could send me my feedback?
لا أعتقد أنه يمكنك إرسال ملاحظاتي؟

[172]: I really feel desperate about my PhD project, and I cannot make a progress in my literature review; I was wondering if I could lean on your expertise to identify the best way to help me overcome this difficulty**"**

In example [171] above, the Arabic translation of the English pessimism seems to be syntactically acceptable, but in Arabic (and more precisely in an Algerian dialect) the utterance is socio-pragmatically odd and inappropriate in general as it implies *irony*. Consequently, the use of the previous expression is entirely unacceptable with interlocutors, who have higher socioeconomic status (e.g. Teachers, Lecturers). Looking at the utterance from a politeness perspective, both in Arabic and translated in English, it can be interpreted as a challenge to the addressee as it questions his/her (the addressee) ability to provide feedback. Furthermore, such an expression of challenge can be interpreted as irony if we take the Arabic language into account. The sentence therefore can be interpreted as polite in English, while in Arabic it implies challenge and doubt about the addressee’s ability to perform something.

As previously demonstrated in chapter 4, student participants tend to perform pessimism differently to the way it is performed in British English (on the propositional act level). The example [172] is how most of the Algerian PhD students (as participant of the present study) have attempted at performing pessimism (negative politeness strategy). One of the culture specific aspects that can be highlighted from the results of the current study is the language and more precisely the language transfer from L1 and L2. The above discussion, indeed, supports my critique of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, where I argue that participants of this study are influenced by their previous language background when they communicate using the English language (see chapter 1 and 2). The example [172] above exemplifies how Algerians in this study perform pessimism while incorporating a divergent propositional content, and which seems to stem from their cultural and language repertories. Pessimism seems to be performed by informing the supervisors of the struggles they (students) are going through and then cushioning the request but questioning the supervisor's ability to provide request. The example [172] also suggests that the subjects (student participants) of the current research resort to the pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic knowledge they acquire from their L1 and L2. As a result, they transfer these to L3 (English) (see *being pessimistic* in section 4.1.1.1.). While the results from the data approve the hypothesis suggested in chapter 1 that the subjects use similar politeness strategies to those suggested by Brown and Levinson and thus, partially support the model universality of principles governing the use of politeness, where Brown and Levinson conclude that:

> "Interactional systematics are based largely on universal principles. But the application of the principles differs systematically across cultures, and within cultures across subcultures, categories and groups"

(Brown and Levinson, 1987: 283)

The results of this study and the current discussion also suggest that the model does not provide sufficient space to analyse language taking a pragmatic approach. In other words, the model ignores the diversity of pragmatic competence (pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic) across languages and cultures. Moreover, the model (i.e. that of politeness by Brown and Levinson, 1987) does not fully account for the different factors that influence the performance of politeness strategies. In the current study pragmatic transfer seems to play a role in the performance of politeness, where participants (students) seem to resort to the socio-pragmatics of their L1 and L2 while operating in EFL.

The second point that is problematic, yet an important one, is the model's under-analysis of politeness strategies; that is the analysis of politeness based on isolated utterances. Accordingly, one of the critiques that the current study highlights is the critique of Brown and Levinson's (1987) model's applicability across cultures, and which seems to be the results of the sentence-based analysis they draw on to extract and to analyse politeness instances. Although, as stated above, Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987) claim that broadly comparable linguistic strategies are available in each language but there are local cultural differences in what triggers their use, they (ibid: 15-17) further presuppose three sociological factors (for further details see chapter 2 on Power, Distance, and Ranking of the imposition) to influence politeness strategies use (for further details see chapter 2) and politeness assessment. In other words, Brown and Levinson's (1987) model suggests that speakers address FTAs based on the outcome of the calculation they made regarding the weightiness of the speech act performed (the weightiness is calculated by considering three social variables: power, distance, and rank of the imposition). Thus, the politeness strategies in this model seem to be like a toolbox that interactants resort to and choose from in accordance with the weightiness of the FTA they are performing.

Noteworthy here is that although Brown and Levinson (1987) approach has been prominent in various analyses and cross-cultural research (e.g. Hamza, 2007; Bargiela-Chiappini, and Kádár, 2010; Nyree, 2018), one of the major criticisms (e.g. Bousfield, 2008; Culpeper, 2011) they receive is that the model they suggest does not engage with the dynamics of the context in interaction as it is a sentence-based model of analysis. Based on the literature review in chapter 2, Brown and Levinson (1978[1987]) seem to heavily depend on speech act theory (Austin, 1962) as a framework of analysis and thus claim that some linguistic forms hold politeness meaning within them. In this regard, and as an opposition to their claim, Fraser and Nolen (1981: 96) note that sentences are not by nature either polite or impolite; for them to evaluate an utterance one needs a knowledge of context/condition of use. Therefore, the extent to which an utterance is deemed polite or impolite is open to different interpretations. Further to my critical position above on Brown and Levinson's (1987) universality, in the following line I, further, expound on my critique of their sentence-based analysis and its problematic application cross culturally, while referring to the findings from chapter 4. In the current project, and as previously noted, the interest is to investigate participants' choice of linguistic politeness strategies while performing requests in an asymmetrical context. Thus, I focus solely -within the coming lines of explanation and exemplification- on the different strategies used by the participants (students) while highlighting instances of mixed and multiple positive and negative politeness strategies within a) single utterances, and b) over stretches of utterances. The following discussion aims at revealing the complexity of politeness strategies and their interpretation.

Indeed, participants, in the present study, seem to resort to a variety of linguistic strategies. From the results in Chapter 4, female Ph.D. students seem to be more oriented towards negative politeness; yet it has been noticed that they use positive politeness along with negative ones. In other words, possible combinations of the politeness strategies, in a scalar manner (see scalar representation in figure 12). It has been found in the data analysis that the subjects of the study (Algerian Ph.D. students) use politeness strategies in an overlapped manner, i.e. they mix and combine different strategies to perform differently weighted requests. The use of politeness strategies, in the previously stated manner, in turn contradicts one of Brown and Levinson's claims of single utterances conveying single politeness strategies. Not to claim that the model goes without limitations, Brown and Levinson (1987: 17), themselves, highlight the inadequacy of their theory and its inapplicability to new data where positive and negative politeness strategies can be simultaneously used in discourse. This claim by Brown and Levinson (1987) chimes with the data collected from the students' I-DCTs in the current study, where the results signal the co-occurrence of both negative and positive politeness in the email request.

In addition to the use of politeness strategies, participants of this study have also resort to external modifications, results show that apology as an external is the most used category as a supportive move especially in highly imposing requests like feedback and urgent meeting (See section 4.1.1.6 for more details). The students did not resort to many external modifications in general and given the small amount of data correlation it has been difficult to proof any correlation between the amount of external modifications used and the extent to which supervisors were prepared to 'accept' or 'refuse' the requests.

Besides, and in line with the different critiques (e.g. Eleen, 2001; Bousfield, 2008; 2010), which have been made of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987 [1978]), their theory seems to project a misconception of the terms, positive and negative politeness; where the two terms have been understood and explained (originally by Brown and Levinson, (1987[1978]) as two politeness types that exclude each other. Consequently, many studies disagree with the Fundamental Model of politeness provided by Brown and Levinson (1987) and their claim that *positive* and *negative* politeness exclude each other (see Bousfield, 2008; 2010; Culpeper, 2011). In line with the previous studies, this research also presents a counterargument to Brown and Levinson's (1987) claim of exclusivity of positive and negative politeness strategies and their address to face. The findings of the current research reveal the difficulty of applying Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies, where these strategies seem to overlap, and combine (see sections 4.1.1. and 4.3. for a detailed discussion). I aim in the following lines (and while referring to some politeness strategies from those presented in chapter 4) to exemplify how positive and negative politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) a) can co-occur within the same utterance, therefore, they are mixed and enmeshed and b) can be combined and therefore can be identified in single utterance or sequence of clauses/phrases, therefore, they are combined multivalent strategies.

Analysis of the data collected from the participants (students), suggests that the use of positive and negative politeness is more complex than what Brown and Levinson (1987 [1978]) outlined. The use of these strategies in the current research seems to be intriguing in the sense that a particular utterance can be primarily conveying positive (or a negative) politeness strategy, where secondarily, and respectively, conveying negative (or a positive) politeness strategy (for detailed discussion see chapter 4). On this occasion, I refer to the example of apologizing where politeness strategies seem to be mixed in one utterance (see set 1 in chapter 4). While Brown and Levinson (1987) categorize apology as an attempt to redress the negative face of the addresser, and therefore, an attempt to not impose on the addressee; apology performance in the current data seems to be conveying both positive and negative politeness. While the primary aim of the apology is negative politeness, in this research (see sets 1-4) the apology seems to secondarily aim at positive politeness if we consider some cultures and contexts (Arabic, and precisely Algerian in the current project). The same can be said for other proposed positive and negative politeness strategies and sub-strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987) (see chapter 4 sections 4.1.1.1. and 4.1.1.2.), where there is always that element of mixing the politeness strategies within one utterance (i.e.one utterance can be interpreted as both positive and negative politeness).

Another important remark in the data sets has been the combination of multiple strategies in the email requests. In other words, students do not resort to only one strategy use in their overall email composition. Looking at the whole email request, it consists of different politeness strategies that mix. In the following example, when and Yara [174] requests a deadline extension from her supervisor, she starts her email with an act of positive politeness (use of honorifics; see stave 1), then she (Yara) begins her email content by performing an act of negative politeness (apology; which in this context can be interpreted as expressing regret; see stave 2) and accompanies it with an account and giving reasons that is a positive politeness strategy (see stave 3). Yara further adds, in stave 4, the positive politeness of being optimistic as she politely requests more time. In stave 5, Yara still performs another positive politeness, which can also be interpreted as an off-record politeness (I look towards your positive consideration can be interpreted as I want your positive consideration). Finally, in stave 6, Yara ends her email by another positive politeness (sign off). In the previous three (6) staves, Yara seems to combine and mix strategies to perform her request. In other words, politeness in her example cannot be attributed to one sentence but rather to the sequence of sentences within the request.

[173] Yara: Request for Deadline' extension.
[1] Dear Dr. X
[2] Kindly receive my sincere apologies for not being able to meet the deadline.
[3] I was expected to submit my work by the end of this week but due to an emergency I had, I was unable to finish on time.
[4] I would like to be given more time
[5] I look towards your positive consideration
[6] kind regards

The data in the example [173] above suggests that participants performance of linguistic politeness to request stretches over the content of the email (opening, content, closing) or what Van Dijk, (1977: 99) has referred to as "macro speech act". According to Van Dijk (ibid), macro speech act is the performance of speech acts (request, promise, warn and so on and so forth) in a sequence of sentences. Although the results support partially Brown and Levinson's (1987) claim that politeness strategies are comparable across cultures and languages, politeness strategies seem to expand over the whole message instead of residing in one utterance (Bousfield, 2008). Participants of the study seem to combine and mix different strategies to formulate differently weighted requests. Positive politeness seems to be used more in the opening and closing of the email (use of honorifics) and seems to be heavily used while requesting supervision or during first contact. In regard to the negative politeness, strategies within this category are mainly used in the body of the email request, and in accordance with Brown and Levinson (1987), negative politeness is used while the rank of the imposition is high (further detailed discussion on this will be in section 5.1.5.).

Forms of address are another example of mixing strategies. Under Brown and Levinson (1987) politeness model, forms of address seem to be addressed and expanded on in a very simplistic way. It has been assumed by Brown and Levinson (1987: 178) that using address forms is a negative politeness strategy, which aims at giving deference and conveying that H has a superior status than S. The previous assumption, consequently, means that S using address forms is avoiding imposition on H. Yet in the current research, forms of address appear to overlap under negative politeness and positive politeness. Using address forms by Algerian Ph.D. students may also signify respect and a positive gesture towards the supervisors' positive face and their want to be appreciated and valued by their interlocutors. Brown and Levinson (ibid), themselves in brackets, claim that S attempting to raise H involves a particular positive face redress to satisfy H's wants to be appreciated and valued. For further details on the previous point, refer to chapter 4, to see how terms of address are used to simultaneously give deference, and stroke an addressee's positive face. The following diagram (see figure 12) presents an adaptation to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies. The diagram is similar to that proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) except for with redress strategies. Based on the results and discussion from the current research, on record politeness with redress can be presented differently. Redress can be simultaneously positive and negative. Redress can convey primarily positive politeness and secondarily negative politeness, as well as, it can primarily hold a negative politeness and secondarily a positive one. The previous scenarios are explained in the diagram with the use of a vertical arrow (scalar representation) that links positive and negative politeness.

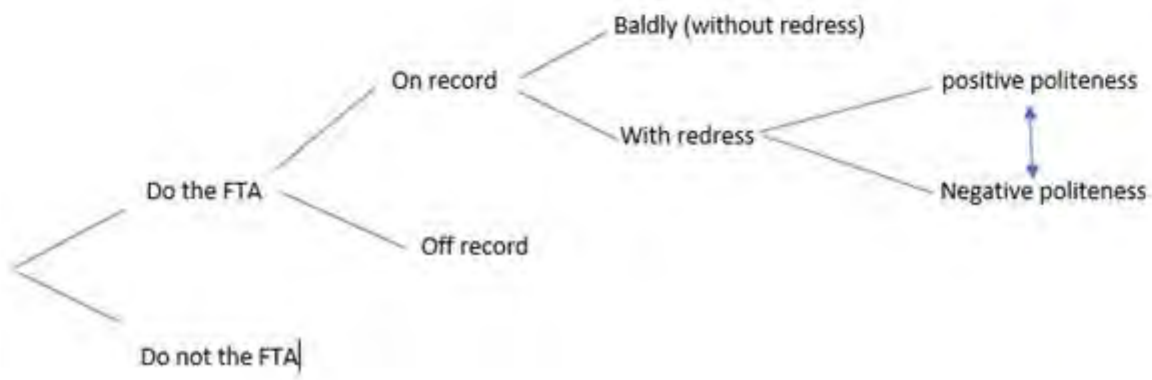

Figure 12: Adaptation to Brown and Levinson (1987) politeness strategies.

Finally, as one of the central concepts in Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness is that of 'face', I discuss here this concept in relation to the literature and the data collected within this research. Accordingly, this paragraph's aim is twofold: first, it aims at discussing the complexity of face and face address as far as the current research is concerned, and second, to propose a conceptualization of face cross culturally. To this end, I follow, an analysis based on a combination of second order politeness (the definitions provided by theorists) and first order politeness (lay person understanding of face; through the results from the interviews). Further detailed discussion of the concept is discussed in the following section.

Face is considered one the most complex concepts to define in politeness studies (see Sifianou, 2011: 42). Since its introduction by Goffman in 1955, the notion of face has become central to (im)politeness researchers (e.g. Brown and Levinson, 1987, Culpeper, 1996; Scollon and Scollon, 2001; Arundale, 2005; Spencer-Oatey, 2008 among others). Although there has been much of discussion about the concept of face, yet no consensus has been reached regarding how this concept should be defined. Influenced by Goffman (1967: 5), Brown and Levinson (1987) consider face as the social image a person/interlocutor claims for himself by the line others assume s/he does in interaction (see chapter two for further details). Relative to the results from the current study, the previous definition appears to be a simple one. Throughout the results from the interviews with Algerian Ph.D. students at the MMU, face has not only been the social image they want to save and want others to value. Face in this study seems to include other aspects like identity and how the participants want to be perceived as individuals. Looking closely at the data within chapter four (4), identity as an aspect of face that the supervisees want to preserve while using politeness strategies may be stratified into: individual identity, professional identity, and group identity. For the individual identity, or what I consider as how interactant is wanted to be seen as an independently as a person. An example of this can be the student participants' wants to be seen as polite and serious. For the professional identity, this can be explained as the students' expression of who they are relative to the social role they play in the interaction. Many participants in the current study (e.g. Safia, Sarah, Nina) referred to the use of politeness strategies as a way to preserve their identities as Ph.D. students. Finally, the group identity saving, some participants in the current study (mainly Yara and Lily) highlighted the use of politeness strategies relative to saving face and more precisely their group identity as Algerian Ph.D. students at the MMU. I am not expanding much on the face and identity aspect as these are beyond the scope of the current research, and therefore, further notes on these are referred to in the conclusion chapter.

Importantly, and in accordance with Scollon and Scollon's (2001: 48) claim that face is paradoxical (positive face and negative face), and it should be simultaneously deployed in interaction, where it is more or less, not absolute expression of just one or the other. The current study results show that both aspects of face, positive and negative are simultaneously enacted in interaction. In other words, interactants of this study (Algerian Ph.D. students), while formulating email requests, consider both aspects of their faces as well as those of their supervisors. It has been delineated in the previous chapter how certain politeness strategies by the supervisees attempt at saving their positive face and thus, how they want their supervisors to perceive them. Besides their attempt to save their faces (individual, professional or group identity), the supervisees attempt also to address both face aspects (positive and negative) of their supervisors through the use of multivalent politeness strategies, that is to say strategies that can be interpreted as positive and negative politeness strategies. To conclude, the data from this research, in line with Jansen and Janssen (2010: 2533), suggest that Brown and Levinson's (1987) model does not allow for a mixed/multivalent politeness strategies use to redress face aspects as it analyses politeness at a sentence level only. In the following section, I delve into a thorough discussion on how the concept of face should be reconsidered when studying the use of politeness strategies.

5.1.2. Motivations behind the use of politeness strategies: Face Reconsidered.

Answering the question on the PhD. Students' own motivations for phrasing the different requests while adopting different styles of linguistic politeness strategies, has resulted in a web of closely intertwined themes which has emerged from the analysis of the 15 semi-structured interviews that have been conducted with the supervisees (Algerian Ph.D.

students at MMU). Although the participants employ politeness strategies that vary not only cross -culturally but from one individual to another, they share the same motivation, which is face saving. Analysis of politeness strategies use relative to the concept of 'face' and face redress from Brown and Levinson (1987) model seems to be limited, within the current research, in the sense that it does not cover all the possible face' facets and levels in interaction. Being central to the theory of politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987), an interest into the notion of face and its conceptualization has then taken a further step throughout adopting and adapting the model of politeness. Face has been argued to be a complex phenomenon, thus different scholars (e.g. Scollon and Scollon, 2001; Spencer-Oatey, 2007; Blitvich, 2013 among others) highlight the importance of drawing on different fields to assure an adequate, clear and complete understanding for the notion of face. For instance, in her paper on face and identity, Spencer-Oatey (2007) stresses the need for an interdisciplinary approach to study and define the notion of face, where she (ibid) mainly claims that researchers need to incorporate research from psychology, and especially that dealing with identity when examining and interpreting face. Indeed, Spencer-Oatey (ibid: 642-644) has focused on highlighting the similarities and differences between the concepts of face and identity. In the same vein, Arundale (2005) claims that identity operates at an individual level, while face is a relational phenomenon that occurs in interaction. Furthermore, Spencer-Oatey (2007: 643) claims, based on social psychology insights, that identity can extend to include a relational level too as it is how the speaker wants to be perceived by the hearer.

It is thus in the realm of this section to raise discussions on face issues while emphasising 1) face and identity and 2) interlocutors' face saving and construction in interaction. Furthermore, this section concerns itself with describing and summarizing point 1 and 2 above while linking these to the previously established literature (See chapter 2) and the study results (chapter 4). To this end, and away from the idea that culture and language are homogeneous, I discuss the notion of face from the participants' individual perspectives, and then comment on aspects they share with the wider community (Mills 2003: 3), that is to say other participants in the study.

Given my approach, Spencer-Oatey's methodology of generating data from individuals themselves to attain an effective analysis and a better understanding of face seems to be relevant. Yet, my purpose in this section is neither to shed light on the different conceptualizations of face, nor the most appropriate ways to analyse it as there is a plethora of research that has been already conducted. Although the different theories of politeness provide a solid ground to understand the phenomenon, a need to understand the holy grail concepts like politeness and face should always be illuminated by a lay person perspective. Thus, I aim in the coming paragraphs to stress the necessity and the need for a *second order politeness* approach that is informed by a *first order approach*. I mean that the analysis of politeness should take a theoretical ground/stance (in this study it is Brown and Levinson's, 1987 politeness model), as well as the participants' perspective (lay person's evaluation).

Results from the current study show that the participants (Algerian Ph.D. students at MMU) of the current study link the ways in which they employ politeness strategies with how the supervisors perceive them. Either implicitly or explicitly stated, the participants are consciously aware of the different aspects (e.g. social roles, personality traits, group membership, language affiliations) of their identities and the identities of their supervisors when employing linguistic politeness strategies. In this regard, Simon (2004) postulates a *self-aspect identity* model that is concerned with self-conception. In other words, Simon (2004), suggests that participants' conceptualization of themselves (thinking about themselves) includes beliefs about their characteristics (e.g. group affiliation, personality traits, ideologies, among others), and these attributes about the self differ from one individual to another. In this regard, the participants of the study also seem to reflect on both individual and collective identities (See Brewer and Gardner, 1996) for further details on the three levels of identity). On many occasions, the participants linked saving face to identity. While reconsidering identity and face, Spencer-Oatey (2007: 644) claims that both terms are similar as they are related to the self and self-image. Contrary to Brown and Levinson (1987)' face should be considered in interaction; therefore, and to reconsider, elaborate on and revise the concept of face, it is important in this section to discuss the concept of face while shedding light on its relationship with identity. See the following examples from the students I-DCTs (Chapter 4; examples 25 and 26) to understand how Brown and Levinson (1987) model does not fully account for the different facets of face:

> **[25] Selma:** "**I have read through your profile, and some of your publications and they are very informative and interesting**, therefore, I believe I share with you the interest in blended and flipped learning"

> **[26] Nafas: "It was then that I read your article "Sociolinguistic Approaches to X", and I was motivated to read more about the field of Sociolinguistics of Orthography.** I particularly enjoyed the article's emphasis on how scripts are powerful markers of identity difference or belonging. I was also interested in the sociolinguistic issues raised in relation to the development of new writing systems."

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), as explored in chapter 4, Nafas and Selma are attempting at enhancing the positive face of their supervisors through highlighting, hypothetically, what the supervisors want them to notice. Such an analysis, however, not only misses the extended, multifunctional and combined politeness patterns and strategies, thus the dual face redress within the whole interaction (as claimed in previous chapters 2 and 4), but also misses out the complexity of face and the attributes that participants may claim for themselves or for the others in relation to their self-image (and which they actually claim during the interviews, see section 4.1.2. for further details). To further examine those attributes that are related to face, I have conducted interviews with the participants where their answers on the motivation behind using some expressions have indicated a link between their face and identity. In other words, and on different occasions, the participants identified some identity traits that are face sensitive, where they argued they should maintain their faces by providing excuses so the supervisors would not think they are lazy (individual identity), or through showing that they are aware of the supervisors' publications and that would give the latter the impression that they are intellectual and serious prospective Ph.D. candidates to supervise (professional identity). See the following excerpts for further illustration.

> **[174] Nafas:** "I tended at that time to highlight that I have read her (her supervisor) work so she thinks that I am **a serious candidate** who is interested in her work, it gives you some incredibility to show that you are aware as **Ph.D. student** of what the supervisor is doing...I think it is two in one, so I show interest in what she (the supervisor) is doing and at the same time to make her think you know..."

> **[175] Yara:** "I tend to apologize a lot if I am not able to submit the work within the deadline, we (Yara and her supervisor) and I provide a lot of reasons of why not being able to meet the deadline; I do that because I do not want her to think that I am **lazy or irresponsible**"

The possible threat in the above examples might be the mismatch of the speaker's positive attribute of being smart, serious (see example 174 above) and not being lazy, and the negative attributes that might have been ascribed to them by their supervisors (lazy, not serious; see example 175). Therefore, what I claim here is that Brown and Levinson (1987) unpacking of face into positive and negative are limited in the sense that they do not allow an understanding of the several aspects and the complexity of face in interaction. In other words, saving face in the above examples seems to be extending to incorporate a reflection on identity that the politeness model framework (Brown and Levinson, 1987) seems to ignore. Furthermore, and while Brown and Levinson (1987) consider the individual's face sensitivities, the results of the current study show that their model for the analysis of face is inadequate as it ignores the collective level of face, or Group identity/face (as explained in the previous section). An exemplification, therefore, of the collective aspect of face that emerges from the current study can be found below:

> **[176] Safia:** "I feel by being polite, I am not only giving them a good image of me but also on us **as Algerians**"
>
> **[177] Lily:** "I do not want them to think that we **Algerians** are ignorant, lazy, or rude this is a very common thing to say about the **Arabs** and I do not want that to be associated with Algerians and this is why I tend to be polite, formal and serious about work"

Both Safia and Lily, in the above examples, refer to the collective aspect of their faces in relation to their identities as Algerians; they refer to their face as a collective property that they share with other Algerian Ph.D. students at the MMU.

In sum, while problematizing the concept of face and its analysis, it is important to point out that face in interaction has received little attention. In other words, such a complex concept requires serious consideration especially in intercultural contexts. A further examination of face and its analysis vis-a-vis other disciplines is a crucial step towards grounding a solid understanding of how interactants enact and save face(s) in communication.

5.1.3. Responses to (im)Politeness

This section deals with the third research question: “What effect(s) do the linguistic politeness strategies (utilised by students) have on the responses’ forms/types of the supervisors, given the weightiness (Brown and Levinson 1987) of the requests made?” In this section, I discuss the three response options (accept, negotiate, and refuse) that have been deduced from the supervisors I-DCTs data. Throughout the years, research on politeness in relation to the speech act of requests has focused on the mechanism of producing requests (e.g. Félix-Brasdefer, 2005; Taguchi, 2006; Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007; Chen, 2015; Qari, 2017; Ho, 2018) while scant attention has been paid to responses to requests (Clark and Schunk, 1980; Fukushima, 2003; Vergis, Jiang, and Pell, 2020). Moreover, work on the responsive strategies has been devoted, mostly, to the investigation of responses to impoliteness (e.g. Bousfield, 2008; Limberg, 2009; Alqarni, 2020), while to the best of my knowledge no responses model for politeness has been suggested. This research contributes to the current knowledge in interlanguage pragmatics, politeness, and computer mediated communication by highlighting the responses options that the students may have from their supervisors in bidirectional -request-response- email interactions.

The results of this study suggest that supervisors’ responses can be classified on a continuum ranging from *accept*, through *negotiate* and ultimately to *refusal* (see section 4.2.1. for further details on these typology). Most of the results from the supervisors’ DCTs indicate co-operative responses, where supervisors show acceptance or negotiation of the students’ initial requests. Generally, the supervisors’ responses classified under acceptance have been those request-responses where the supervisors agree to grant what the students have requested in the initial email (see extracts 103, 104, 105, 106; chapter 4, section 4.2.1.1. for exemplification). An example of complying, and hence one of the accepting strategies, can be the supervisor's suggestion to meet the students with a proposition of time slot or slots. Usually, acceptance is a response strategy to those requests considered as less imposing by most of the supervisors (e.g. urgent meeting, and letter of recommendation requests). These type of answers or responses have been interpreted in this study as beneficial responses to the hearer (students) as the receiver (the supervisor) seems to be attentive to all aspects of the email request. To unpack the previous point, the majority (5 out of 6) of supervisor participants seem to demonstrate sympathy as a response to the expression of confusion and stress that has been indicated in the initial requests by the students (e.g. request for urgent meeting, and deadline extension). In the overall responses to email requests, the supervisors seem to take different moves to respond, however and importantly, a significant attentiveness has been forwarded to the students' psychological state and the body of the main request. Some supervisors seem to use *thanking* to encourage students' communication with them, and in which students sharing of concerns with supervisors becomes common (given the stressful nature of Ph.D. journey, expressing concerns can be imposing on the students' part). Then, the supervisors also attempt at expressing sympathy as stated above to show attentiveness to the student state (Brown and Levinson, 1987 positive face and the students' want to be valued). Looking at the email endings, the supervisors usually agree to be co-operative, by suggesting meeting' times. The potential effect of this strategy (acceptance) can be face enhancing to the students as its actual perlocution (receiver performance) meets with the intended perlocution of the students and which is for example meeting the supervisor as soon as possible (see figure 2 for the adaptation of Speech Act Theory).

Another important response strategy that the supervisors attempt at is *negotiation*. Here, I shall highlight again that negotiation is taken as a strategy on a spectrum. It is represented in a scalar manner (see figure 12 in chapter 4), meaning that it has two ends that of the acceptances and the other of the refusals, and both of these (ends) can only be realized as communication unfolds over stretches of talk. Negotiation as a strategy for response in the current research is defined as a strategy whereby, as an analyst or a receiver of the email response, you cannot ascertain whether the supervisors is accepting the request or not until the communication unfolds over other stretches; meaning that it is until we figure out couple of interaction turns from both students and supervisors before we can decide on whether it is 'acceptance' or 'refusal'. In comparison to other response options, element of acceptance or refusal are not significantly apparent. For instance, acceptance in response to 'request for urgent meeting' is implied in the supervisor's suggestion of meeting times, where it is up to the supervisee to accept those times or suggest others before the request is finally met. However, looking at negotiation strategy, it seems to be summarized in providing suggestions and alternatives to the students, while the students originally requested meeting one of their needs (e.g. requesting some resources; feedback). For instance, supervisors, in the present study, tend to use this strategy (negotiation) in response to request for feedback, where students have informed the supervisor that they are struggling to progress with work and from that perspective, they have been requesting feedback on a previous piece of work sent to the supervisor a week ago. While the *intended perlocution* from a student perspective is having their feedback sent back by their supervisors, the *actual perlocution* by the supervisor seems not to entirely match with the students' intended perlocutionary act. While some supervisors suggest that they need some time to finish the feedback, they propose that the students should do another task. Although the responses seem to be oriented towards the acceptance end of the spectrum, it cannot be considered as fully beneficial to the students. Other negotiated responses seem to be oriented towards the refusal end of the spectrum (e.g. Nelly examples 116-117, see chapter 4 section 4.2.1.1.). The previous response of the supervisor holds a potential threat to the supervisee's face as the supervisors appears not to be precise on when feedback should be given back. Put differently, Nelly (116-117) has emphasized that feedback within a week is impossible as she has other duties as an academic. She further suggests that student should keep progressing instead of waiting for the feedback to be sent. The way Nelly structured her responses is face threatening to the students, and it implies providing feedback but not as fast as the student has requested.

The last option I am suggesting, when coding the data, is *refusal.* This option of response within the current research is mainly attributed to those responses, where the supervisor is explicitly refusing to comply with the student's request. Throughout the data, only two instances of refusal have occurred. It might be significant, however, to see how this strategy is performed and what potential effect it may have on the supervisee's face. Spencer in examples (120) and (121) seem to, respectively, deny the students requests of feedback and resources and thus, his responses do not meet the intended perlocution initiated in the first place by the student. Spencer's denial of the request seems to be justified by the fact that he is in no position of providing these, yet performing his refusal challenges the students (see section 4.2.1.1. for further details). Within the results chapter (chapter 4), the above examples seem to hold a potential face threatening that may damage the receiver's face (the students). While in the literature on response options, a focus has been forwarded to responses to impoliteness (Bousfield, 2008); and the speech act of compliments; this study adds to the body of literature by providing options for responses to requests (see figure 12)

To sum up this section, it is important to reflect on the results generated from the current research in relation to some of the claims stated in the literature (see chapter two for further details). Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that responses to politeness escalate, meaning that politeness strategies are responded to by politeness and results from the current research partially support this claim. In other words, and while the overall analysis of the supervisors' responses can be applicable to the previous claim that polite strategies are responded to with politeness, some of the responses were face threatening to the students, and therefore, the degree of politeness within these is not absolute. Put differently, response options of acceptance and negotiation seem to be face-saving towards the students' face. Yet, looking at some refusal options, some supervisors are performing a potential face threat/damage to their supervisees, and therefore, these may not be interpreted as polite (See Spencer's refusal for providing resources). Furthermore, considering responses' options within the impoliteness model (Bousfield, 2008), the results of this study reject the claim that 'defensive', and 'offensive' are always the response options to impoliteness (see chapter 3; section 3.7. for further details on the response option suggested by Bousfield, 2008; also here, I am mainly referring to incidental impoliteness that can be a result of cultural mismatch of assumptions and expectations.)

5.1.4. Motivation behind Responses to (im) Politeness

Like section 5.1.2. above on Algerian students' motivation, the current section aims to answer the current research requestion around the supervisors' motivations in responding to email requests. The section discusses the different aspects that the supervisors consider while formulating request responses to their Algerian Ph.D. students. Two major discussions arise from the supervisors' interviews regarding the way they structure their answers. The first one is language clarity and the second is face consideration and thus, face saving.

From the results of the present study, supervisors seem to focus on the clarity of their response, in the sense that they consider their language use and the cultural differences that may exist between themselves and their supervisees. Relative to the literature, this highlights the importance of pragma-linguistic knowledge (Leech, 1983), that is the speaker's knowledge (supervisors) of the linguistic properties of language and how they are used properly (i.e. socio-pragmatic knowledge) to convey meaning. Supervisor participants in this study claim to be simplifying the language they use in their email responses to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding from the students' part, and which can be a result of language use. Although the student participants are studying for a Ph.D. at a UK higher education institution, the claim by the Supervisors seems to support previous studies' results (see chapter two for more details), suggesting that second and foreign language speakers have a low proficiency level in English. Moreover, the supervisors suggest that the potential confusions or misunderstandings may stem not only from a deficiency in the students' pragmatic knowledge, but it can also be a result of using emails as a medium of communication that lacks synchronicity and facial expressions. Considering the previous review of studies on politeness and email communication, the results from the current research show that email as a medium of communication seems to affect politeness strategies' choices and understanding.

In relation to face-saving as a motivation to respond in a particular way(s), the supervisors in this study claim their awareness of the difference between their culture and their supervisees' culture. Supervisors also highlight that the Ph.D. journey is intensive and lonely (from their own experiences), therefore, they tend to thank their supervisees for any contact. Thanking the supervisees, however, is an invitation to further contact and which has been interpreted (see chapter 4) as a positive face redress to the students face as it implies that the supervisor is concerned about the supervisee. In other words, thanking the supervisees and showing them consideration can be interpreted as a satisfaction of the students' positive face needs and their want to be approved of. Thus, results reveal that responses to requests by the supervisors take the students' face into account. Moreover, face-saving in some instances, seems not only to be directed towards students' face. Supervisors seem to also respond in a way where they save their negative face and their wants to be free from imposition. Review of the literature, within the present research, stresses the negotiation of face in interaction, and how people attempt to simultaneously attend to other's and their own face. Moreover, Mao (1994) argues that by mitigating FTAs for others, one is not merely saving face for them, but that also promoting one's own face. Therefore, results from this study strongly emphasise the previous claim.

5.1.5. Factors Influencing Politeness Use and Response to (im)Politeness

This section discusses the fifth and the last research question (see chapter one, section 1.3.) regarding the sociological, socio-cultural aspects that affect the Ph.D. students' choice of politeness strategies/ and supervisors' responses to these. In the realm of this section, I discuss the major findings of the present research to provide an in-depth understanding of how different factors (Power, Social distance, rank of the imposition, understanding of rights and responsibilities, and the mean of communication) affect politeness strategies use by Algerian Ph.D. students and responses to these by their respective supervisors at Manchester Metropolitan University. Therefore, in the following lines, I discuss how these different factors map throughout the current study, while deciphering them against the past established discussions in literature on politeness and speech acts.

First, the notion of power in the current research seems to be a complex one in comparison to what Brown and Levinson (1987) have claimed (see chapter two for further details). Power seems not to confine in the status one interlocutor has in a society in comparison to another interlocutor; and by which s/he can impose on others. Power in the current study seems to be a combination of different power types. It is indeed the power status as explained by Brown and Levinson (1987) but this stems and combines with other types of power like *expert power* (French and Raven, 1957). Considering the results generated from the student participants' interviews, a thorough explanation, and interpretation have been provided in the results chapter (chapter 4). The findings demonstrate that the Algerian Ph.D. students' perception of power is hierarchical, where they "properly acknowledge their own lower institutional status and the faculty members' higher institutional status" (Biesenbach-Lucas 2007, 61). In other words, the results from this research highlight the effect of the sociocultural factors of power as an aspect integrated into the student participants' schemata, as the students come from a society that praises hierarchy and requires an expression of respect and politeness to those of higher status. Yet, gauging the concept of power, participants (students) seem to be affected by a specific type of power; that of expert power. Expert power in the current study seems to be a significant factor that determines the Algerian Ph.D. students' choice of politeness strategies. And it is that power from which the power status stems mainly.

However, this conception of power imbalance is more a conception from the Algerian students. In other words, their supervisors at the MMU regard their supervisees as colleagues, thus with considerably less power exists. The supervisors agree with the students that they may have the expertise in research that the students might not have (and which were, as claimed, the result of years of teaching and research), yet, this does not entail for them any power imbalance. Therefore, findings suggest that the power does not affect the way supervisors respond to their Algerian supervisees.

The second factor that influences the Algerian supervisee performance of politeness strategies is the social distance. However, unlike Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that an increase in power entails increase in the social distance; findings of the current research found that the social distance is negotiated by both participants (supervisors and supervisees). The current research claims that the social distance between interlocutors change as a matter of frequency of contact. Social distance in the current research has been perceived by the supervisors relative to the use of address titles (e.g. Dr., Pr.). Nonetheless, the supervisors are aware that the use of titles is inherited from the supervisees' previous educational background, and it does not mean that they are distancing themselves.

A significant factor that the study findings show is that of past educational background and cultural awareness. In this regard, the study supports, partially, the claim that second and foreign languages learners/speakers might find it hard to write emails, which necessitates the presence of sufficient pragmatic competence (Leech, 1983), that is the high linguistic ability and familiarity with the norms and values of the target culture (Chen, 2006: 7). While composing email requests, student participants claim that writing emails causes them anxiety as it is not the means of communication that they are used to in their home countries. Yet, while relying on their previous communication practices, L2 and FL learners are, very likely to produce emails which contain some inappropriate language uses and even to generate a negative impression for the email recipients; Algerian Ph.D. students have formulated polite email requests (as claimed by their supervisors). An important result from the study is also about the perception of the email requests, and consequently about Algerian Ph.D. students, by the supervisors. Supervisors seem not to evaluate the politeness relative to the linguistic structures and politeness strategies that the student' participants in this study have been employing. Rather the supervisors show an awareness of the differences in culture and language background that may influence the way their Algerian Ph.D. supervisee formulates email requests. In this research, both supervisors and Algerian Ph.D. students seem to reflect on their own culture and practices, thus the results of this study support Zaharna's (1995: 2) claim that 'without a conscious awareness of how another culture is different from one's own, there is a tendency to see the differences of another through the prism of one's culture' (as cited in Hamza, 2007: 10)

5.2. Towards a Holistic Understanding of Politeness within the Communicative Speech Act of Request and their responses

As previously stated in chapter one, the current study aims to investigate the speech act of requests and their response. Therefore, this section highlights the relevant research findings while emphasizing the necessary elements taken to understand the phenomenon of politeness in interaction. The section focuses on those results in relation to the theoretical frameworks (mainly SAT and politeness theory) used and the data collection methods (mainly Discourse Completion Tasks).

First, the study findings challenge some of several pre-established assumptions within the Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962) and Politeness Theory (Brown and Levinson's, 1987) as the applicability of both theories to the current research data seems to be problematic. Both theories base their analysis on single utterances, which in turn hinders the ability to understand the phenomenon of politeness at an interactional level. Being a speaker-oriented frameworks, both Austin (1962) and Brown and Levinson (1987) ignore the hearer perspective. The current research has undertaken a hybrid approach (Bousfield, 2010). Consequently, the study findings agree with Leech's (2007: 170) claim that both an absolute universalist position (traditional approach/ first wave politeness), as well as, a completely relativist position (discursive/second wave politeness) are equally untenable. A hybrid approach then, in the current research, is a remedy to incorporate relevant insights from both approaches (traditional and discursive), while focusing on both the writer and reader (see chapter two for further details). This approach is important as it suggests a better understanding of politeness phenomenon at the level of speech acts and their responses.

Relative to the traditional approach of analysing politeness, the current study benefits from the systemic analysis that Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model suggests. In other words, the theory provides the ground to deduce politeness instances in utterances, and which in turn can help unfold how expression of politeness happen in interaction. Indeed, results from the study support the theorist's (ibid) claim that politeness can reside in linguistic forms (see section 4.2.1. on formulaic language use for further details). Participants (students) within this research demonstrate a significant use of different politeness strategies, especially those addressing the positive and negative face of the addressee. Furthermore, and regarding the sociological factors (Power, Social Distance, and Rank of the Imposition) that Brown and Levinson (1987) claim to influence the strategy choice, the current research results seem to partially agree with these. Put differently, the factors suggested proved to influence the politeness strategies choice (based on the interviews conducted with the students). Nonetheless, the previous factors have been problematized in the current work as there seem to be a culturally different understanding to them. The results also have shown that there are other factors that interactants consider while drafting email request to their supervisors, therefore, the study results support Brown and Levinson's (1987) claim other factors may influence the choice of strategies choice in addition to those they primarily suggested. First, the means of communication (email in the current research) is reported to have a vital role in the way participants of the current research (both students and supervisors) formulate, respectively, their email requests and responses to these. The asynchronicity of email communication is what both students and supervisors have referred to while discussing their answers. Second, the influence of the past educational background of the Algerian Ph.D. students, and which has been interpreted in terms of pragmatic transfer of their L1 and L2 communication practices (the use of address titles and expressions like 'I hope you are doing well').

Moreover, and to challenge some of the assumptions within Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, the current study adopted a hybrid approach (Bousfield, 2010). Taking the previous approach has been of vital importance as I could overcome the inadequacies within a traditional approach by taking some insights from the discursive one. The data analysed using Brown and Levinson's (1987) model has been supported by what Watts (2003) refers to as politeness 1; that is to say a lay person perspective. Many theorists within the discursive approach (e.g. Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003), as previously stated in the literature review in chapter two, argued against the traditional approach theorists (e.g. Brown and Levinson, 1987) claim that politeness resides in single utterances. Discursive theorists claim that politeness can only be explained from a lay person perspective as interaction unfolds. While the current research partially supports that claim, yet it does problematize the discursive approach claims as it would have been impossible to attain a definition of the politeness phenomenon or an understanding of how it maps out in interaction. Findings from the supervisors' interviews (see 4.2.2. for details) show that the discursive theorists' dependency on the understanding of politeness away from any attribution to any linguistic forms is problematic. Results from the interviews demonstrate that the supervisors rely on their shared and previous assumption regarding language use to make judgments about politeness or the lack of it. For instance, some expressions become stabilized among the subjects of the current research. The results then go hand in hand with Bousfield (2010) critique of the discursive politeness approach, where he claims that understanding and analysis of politeness from a lay person's perspective implicitly includes reliance on the shared social conventions, and therefore, it is politeness 1. In other words, theories of politeness are based on the conventionalised language use by lay persons, accordingly, the latter perspective on the phenomenon inevitably includes their perspective on the conventionalized use of linguistic forms.

Another challenge that the current study results present to the politeness theory (Brown and Levinson, 1987) and Speech act theory (Austin, 1962) resides in the 1) the suggestion for multivalent politeness strategies and multi aspects of face in interaction;

and 2) the suggestion for a reconceptualization of perlocutionary act. In regard to the first point, analysis of data sets and their interpretation indicates that politeness strategies can combine and mix, and these were referred to as multivalent strategies within this research (the naming is based on the discussions I had with my supervisors). The multivalency resulted in simultaneous redress to face aspects. Moreover, and again relative to politeness theory, the findings of this study demonstrate that face should be reconsidered as Brown and Levinson's (1987) conceptualizations seems to be very simplistic. In regard to Speech Act theory, however, the study results propose a further stratification of perlocutionary effect into the *intended perlocutionary act* (relative to the speaker/sender) and *actual perlocutionary act/effect* (relative to the hearer/receiver). This further stratification is vital as the study explores the speech act of requests and their responses; therefore, it is important to compare the students' aim behind sending particular email requests (intended perlocution) and their supervisors' responses (actual perlocution).

Another crucial finding that stems from the current research is related to understanding the context, where interaction is taking place. The study looks at the communication of requests and their responses at an intercultural level, where participants belong to different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, but use English as a lingua franca to communicate. Results from some studies into intercultural communication (e.g. Hamza, 2007) suggest that due to linguistic and cultural differences between Arabic and English speakers, miscommunication is likely to occur. In opposition to those studies, findings from the current research suggest that interlocutors communication is free of miscommunication or conflict.

Finally, while research on politeness has, thoroughly, investigated foreign language speakers of English but a growing interest within the field has concentrated on Japanese speakers of English while less has been done on Arabs from different regions (middle eastern and north African; therefore, MENA). In most cases, politeness research dealing with non-western population postulates that these populations are more direct, which in itself suggests that they tend not to mitigate their FTA. Results from the current thesis suggest that Algerian Ph.D. students resort to more indirect and negative politeness when formulating email requests. Moreover, the perceptions by their supervisors confimrs that the participants are adhering to politeness standard expected from them at UKHEI.

5.3. Conclusion

As stated in the introduction above, this chapter discussed the results of the current research under the light of the reviewed literature and the data that has been collected, and therefore, analysed in the research. As a synthesis, the chapter answers the research questions thoroughly. The chapter also highlights the most important findings and explains them in relation to previous studies and research on intercultural communication.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.0. Introduction

This chapter provides further commentary on the current study. It consists of four sections in total. The first section (6.1.) summarises and discusses the major results from this study. The follow up section is more descriptive in nature, where it outlines the different theoretical, methodological and the practical implications of the thesis results in the field of speech acts, politeness, and intercultural communication (see section 6.2.). The chapter, further, highlights the study limitations in section 6.3. The chapter then concludes with future research suggestions in section 6.4.

6.1. Major Findings of the Research

This thesis looks at the realization patterns of requests and responses to these relative to the use of politeness strategies. The study explores, based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) model, the different politeness strategies used by Algerian Ph.D. students at MMU. The study also investigates, while aiming to develop a response model, how the supervisors of these students respond to their differently weighted email requests. The study follows an abductive methodological approach, where it uses interactant-based Discourse Completion Tasks (I-DCTs) as an innovative data collection tool to deduce the students' politeness use and the supervisors' response options to these (see chapter three for further details). The study further uses semi-structured interviews to tease out, and therefore, to induce the different motivations, perceptions of the present study participants relative to politeness strategies use. Over the previous chapter (chapter four), I have discussed the research main findings while analysing email requests and their responses as produced, respectively, by 15 Algerian Ph.D. students and their 6 supervisors at Manchester Metropolitan University. In the following paragraphs, a summary of those results is outlined, where a focus is on the different politeness strategies realized by the participants and their responses formulation by their respective supervisors.

Relative to politeness strategy use, Algerian Ph.D. students preferred the use of more negative politeness strategies in comparison to the positive ones. It has been generally noticed that across the request's scenarios/situations that the student participants forward more negative face redress to those requests that are imposing (e.g. feedback and Urgent meeting), while more positive politeness strategies are used within less imposing request situation (e.g. recommendation letter, supervision). Importantly, however, is that the findings of the current research show that the use of politeness strategies is under analysed in Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model. Looking closely at the results within the previous chapter, it is concluded that politeness strategies can be combined and multivalent. In other words, politeness seems not to reside within single utterances, but it rather 1) stretches over several utterances/phrases (combined); or, 2) one single utterance can hold more than one face redress (e.g. positive and negative), and therefore, multivalent. The above results have led to the adaptation of both: speech act model, and Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies (see respectively figure 2 and 12 for further details).

Regarding the responses to requests by supervisors at British higher education institution (MMU), results from the study suggest that these are generally favourable response. The results agree, partially, with Brown and Levinson’s (1987) claim that politeness and responses to it are escalating. Additionally, the results agree also with Spencer-Oatey’s (2008) assumptions that appropriate requests are responded to by satisfying answers, yet she (ibid) adds that requests can sometimes be challenging and thus may be replied to unfavourably (refuse to do what has been requested in the first place). Reflection on the research findings, instances of requests (e.g. Urgent meeting and sending resources) that received unfavourable responses have been highlighted in examples 120 and 121 by Spencer (see chapter 4 for further explanations); yet, these has been a result of the supervisor (Spencer) understanding of the imposition rather than any challenges in terms of the linguistic composition of the email request. Therefore, results from this study motivate the development of a typology of responses to politeness. Response option deduced from the supervisors I-DCTs are summarized under 1) accept, 2) Negotiate, and 3) Refuse. Development of the current responses model to politeness have been influenced and adapted from Bousfield's (2008) responses to impoliteness.

Another important finding in the current research revolves around the concept of face. In opposition to Brown and Levinson (1987), who present face into a dichotomy of positive and negative face' aspects, the present study sheds light on the complexity of the concept in interaction. The results of the current research stress the need to study face in interaction. In other words, face seems to be structured and co-structured. The study therefore suggests a more contextualized study of face in interactions. In the current study using politeness strategies seems not only to fulfil students' interactional goals and their want to have their requests accepted but it also constructs 'their desirable personal identities' and establishing 'stronger rapport with the requestee. (Ho, 2010).

The final relevant finding suggests that factors influencing politeness strategies use not only consist of power, social distance, and rank of the imposition that Brown and Levinson (1987) have suggested, but these extend to include the effect/influence of the past educational background, pragmatic transfer from their culture, L1, and L2 into L3, and the means of communication (email).

6.2. Theoretical and Practical Implications of the Research

Researchers might engage in different activities, yet they share a common goal of advancing knowledge. Although this study is based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model, it brings, while taking a critical approach, new understanding and perspectives on notions of politeness strategies and face interculturally. This study endeavours to contribute to the body of knowledge already existing on politeness and speech act of requests, by engaging with the ongoing discussions on these concepts, and related issues that are discussed in the field.

The study provides a number of theoretical and practical implications for intercultural communication at higher education institutions both in the UK and Algeria. First, the theoretical and the analytical framework of the study aims to combine both the traditional and the discursive approaches to study politeness together. The synergy of both approaches is deemed important to reach a full picture of how politeness and the speech acts of requests and their responses are manifested in an intercultural higher education context. Results from the study facilitate the understanding of the complexity of communication, which seems to be affected by a combination of different parameters (e.g., face, identity, interactional goals, rights and obligations). Second, the study hopes to study both requests and their response, for that reason, I adopted Austin's (1992) speech act theory. The study also aims to develop a response model, while being inspired by Bousfield's (2008) theoretical sets of responses to impoliteness.

The study contributes also to the field of impoliteness where it adapts both model of face and politeness strategies. Furthermore, the adaptation has also extended to include the integration and the design of an innovative data collection tool (I-DCT), which may be useful for future research in the field of pragmatics.

In addition to the contributions above, the current study has also significant implications, particularly for English language teaching in Algeria and preparing students for study abroad environment (UK). The results are insightful to teachers in and to textbook writers, where a focus on the pragmatic aspect of language is as important as the focus of teaching language syntactics and grammar. Reflecting on the study results, Teachers are advised to include situated scenarios to prompt students' communicative aspects relative to the use of politeness strategies. Using the study results help teachers, to make English language learners aware of the complexity of intercultural communication and thus prepare them for study abroad encounters. The current study also invites researchers from the EFL context as well as language abroad context to re-thinking the notion of English foreign learners pragma-linguistic competence in classroom teaching.

6.3. Study Limitations

Despite the insightful data and findings this project yielded, there are still some limitations, which prompt a discussion of directions for future research. All the Algerian participants were female Ph.D. student at the MMU. The sample of this study is, therefore, homogeneous relative to their language level, age, and gender. As a result, a more heterogeneous sample is needed to highlight any differences at the level of politeness strategies use.

The study also recruited Algerian Ph.D. student at one of the UK higher education institutions, therefore, the results obtained from this research cannot be generalized to all Algerian Ph.D. students, and also cannot be generalized to other FL speakers with distinct cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

At a methodological level, the study collected data using an innovative I-DCT, therefore, the results cannot be applicable to other (or future) studies where I-DCTs are not the data collection method used with respondents.

One of the other limitations is the lack of participant long observation or access to natural data (real email exchanges) as immersing oneself in the field of study by systematic observation would have offered more understanding of the participants' day to day communicative practices. In other words, to gain better vision of participants use of politeness in email requests it would have been useful to have access to their real email exchanges. In other words, using other data collection methods may generate different results.

6.4. Future Research

This research has been undertaken in the hope that it would give other researchers enough inspiration and motivation to pursue this line of study on politeness and speech acts. In terms of the speech act selected, future researchers may choose to investigate other FTAs than requests, while using the same sample of participants recruited in this project. Future researchers may also benefit from investigating the same FTAs (requests), while manipulating the factor of participant samples, in terms of number, year of study, and gender. Future researchers can also replicate this research but use participants from other countries. Further data collection tools and method can be employed as it generated different data and thus different results. Further research, for instance, may use longitudinal study of real email exchanges. I believe also that future research may well benefit from teasing out and comparing results from different participants. Further studies are required on the discrepancies between learners' previous linguistic competences and their new ones in the UK.

As these are my suggestions for future studies show, much remains for detailed scrutiny.

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Appendix A

Manchester Metropolitan University

14/04/2020
Project Title: The Investigation of Speech Act of Request from a Discursive Approach: Case Study of Algerian PhD Student at Manchester Metropolitan University. (2)

EthOS Reference Number: 21238

Ethical Opinion

Dear Halima Benzdira,

The purpose of this letter is to acknowledge that a favourable ethical opinion was given on 26 July 2018 under the now superseded paper-based system Reference Number A&H17-18-77. The following the documents were submitted

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Ethical Approval Application Form	Halima Benzdira full ethical approval	18/07/2018	
Ethical Approval Supporting Information	advert-recruitment final	23/07/2018	1
Ethical Approval Supporting Information	halima benzdira consent form	23/07/2018	1
Ethical Approval Supporting Information	information sheet final to send	23/07/2018	1
Ethical Approval Supporting Information	recruitment of supervisors	23/07/2018	1
Ethical Approval Letter	Ethics Approval 26.07.18 HB (1)	26/07/2018	1

You can submit an amendment via the on-line system EthOS. Participant information and consent forms should follow current guidance and templates to be found under 'Frameworks & Guidance' at the university ethics webpage (note there have been some changes in the since 2018).
https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/research/staff/ethics-and-governance/ethics/

.Art and Humanities Research Ethics and Governance Committee

Art and Humanities Research Ethics and Governance Committee

For help with this application, please first contact your Faculty Research Officer. Their details can be found here

Appendix B

CONSENT FORM

Title of the project: The Investigation of Speech Act of Request from a Discursive Approach: Case Study of Algerian PhD Student at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Name of the researcher: Halima Benzdira

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated 20.04.2020 (version v1.3.2) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences for me. ☐
3. I have been informed that the interviews will be audio recorded and Might be conducted via Skype and I give my consent for both. ☐
4. I understand that all information I provide will be treated as confidential and will be anonymised. ☐
5. I agree to the use of anonymised direct quotes from my data in publications and presentations arising from the study. ☐
6. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

Name of Participant	Date	Signature

Name of researcher	Date	Signature

Consent form date of issue: **21/04/2020**
Consent form version number: **v1.3.2**

Appendix C

Manchester Metropolitan University

Participant Information Sheet

Title of the research

The Investigation of Speech Act of Request from a Discursive Approach: Case Study of Algerian PhD Student at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Invitation to the research

You are invited to take part of this research that is conducted by Halima Benzdira, a researcher at Manchester Metropolitan University. However, before you decide whether you wish to take part; it is important that you will be aware of the research aims and what it would involve for you. Please, take time to read the following information carefully and do not hesitate if you would like more information or if anything you read is not clear. Finally, take time to decide whether to take part in the study or not.

What is the purpose of the research?

The aim of the study proposed here is to better understand how foreign language students perform requests within an educational context. Moreover, the study tries to find out the politeness strategies used and the underpinning reasons for their use and how these affect responses of the supervisors and their perception of the students. This research will be part of the researcher doctoral thesis, for the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been asked to participate in this study as an individual who is currently enrolled as an Algerian Ph.D. student at Manchester Metropolitan University. You have been also chosen, as you are an adult over 25 years old, and able to provide informed consent.

Do I have to take part?

The participation is on a voluntary base and unpaid; however, the researcher is willing to offer help of a similar kind (if applicable) to any of the participants, such as taking part in a study they are conducting or will conduct in the future. Thus, you are free to decide whether you wish to take part or not. However, if you decide to take part you will be asked to sign two consent forms, one is for you to keep, the other is for our records. This will show you have agreed to take part. You are able to decline to respond to questions prompts at any point in the interview, and more importantly, you are free also to withdraw from this study at any time and without giving reasons. And if you wish for any data to be destroyed, this can be done up on request

What do I have to do?

You will be asked at to fill into a written discourse completion tasks; which are mainly statement in which you imagine a particular situation and you provide answer and a

response to it, for example they tell you to imagine you are at a restaurant with your friend and you forgot your purse at home, how would you request money from him or her. As a second task, you will be invited to conduct one to one interview either face to face or online (based on what is suitable and convenient to you), and which will not exceed 45 minutes, and which will be audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed later. In the interviews you will be mainly asked on why you have formed your request in a particular way, you will be also asked on what you have been thinking of while writing a particular request. If you take part in this research, any information you provide will be treated with complete confidentiality. No participant in this research will be identifiable nor traceable after the publication or presentation of the findings. Data will be only processed using a computer that is equipped with all the data security measures.
As a result of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, interviews will take part on Skype/Zoom (depending on which you prefer). If no longer wish to be part of this study due to these changes, you will be able to withdraw.

Are there any risks if I participate?

The study will cause no physical or psychological harm to participants. To alleviate the risk of being identifiable, all participants will be anonymised, and any distinguishing data will be removed. The data collection will take place in university premises, which adhere to health and safety regulation standards.

Are there any advantages if I participate?

There are might be no direct advantages for participants in this research, however, we hope that this study will help you better understand how speech acts, more specifically how requests are initiated to influence the addressee's responses. Additionally, it is hoped that the research results will help you and other overseas student initiate more effective requests to achieve successful communicative goals.

What will happen to data I provide?

When you agree to participate in this research, The data collected will be used for this study; this will include the presentation of the project at conferences or within academic journals where appropriate. All personally identifiable information will be made anonymous; this includes removing names and any other identifiable features. The researcher will tape record the conversation in the interviews. The recordings will be transcribed by and will not include any names. You will be assigned a pseudonym and referred to as 'participant A', etc. Once the transcription is complete, the recording will be disposed of. The transcribed data will be kept safely in password-protected files for the length of the project and will not be made accessible to any other parties but the researcher. You are welcome to request a copy of the transcription.
Manchester Metropolitan University ('the University') is the Data Controller in respect of this research and any personal data that you provide as a research participant. The University is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and manages

personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's Data Protection Policy. We collect personal data as part of this research (such as name, telephone numbers or age). As a public authority acting in the public interest we rely upon the 'public task' lawful basis. When we collect special category data (such as medical information or ethnicity) we rely upon the research and archiving purposes in the public interest lawful basis. Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained. We will not share your personal data collected in this form with any third parties. If your data is shared this will be under the terms of a Research Collaboration Agreement which defines use, and agrees confidentiality and information security provisions. It is the University's policy to only publish anonymised data unless you have given your explicit written consent to be identified in the research. **The University never sells personal data to third parties.**
We will only retain your personal data for as long as is necessary to achieve the research purpose. For further information about use of your personal data and your data protection rights please see the University's Data Protection Pages.

What will happen to the results of the study?

Results of the research will be published; however, you will not be identified. The results will not carry any traceable details of you. After publication, the research will be available to all participants.

Who had reviewed this research?

This research is reviewed by: Dr. Derek Bousfield and Dr. Bullo Stella. It is also reviewed by Research Ethics and Governance Managers.

Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?

Halima Benzdira: halima.benzdira@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Dr. Derek bousfield: 213 Mabel Tylecote Building, Manchester Campus UK.
Tel: +44 (0)161 247 3620. Email: d.bousfield@mmu.ac.uk

Professor Susan Baines – Faculty Head of Research Ethics and
Governance, Email: s.baines@mmu.ac.uk

Katherine Walthall - Research Group
Officer, Tel:+44(0)1612476673 , Email: artsandhumanitiesethics@mmu.ac.uk

What should I do now?

You can take a period of a week to think about whether to take part or not. If you have any inquiries or require any further explanation during this week, please send your inquiry to the email below. If you do wish to take part, please send your decision to the email below.

I will then contact you to arrange a time for the written task and the interview and forward a consent form for you to sign. If you decide not to take part, you are not required to do anything.
If you have any concerns regarding the personal data collected from you, our Data Protection Officer can be contacted using the legal@mmu.ac.uk e-mail address, by calling 0161 247 3331 or in writing to: Data Protection Officer, Legal Services, All Saints Building, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, M15 6BH. You also have a right to lodge a complaint in respect of the processing of your personal data with the Information Commissioner's Office as the supervisory authority. Please see: https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/

Contact for further information

If you have any further questions then please feel free to contact
halima.benzdira@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this information sheet and considering taking part.

Consent form date of issue: **21/04/2020**
Consent form version number: **v1.3.2**

Appendix D

Discourse Completion Tasks: Students Version

Part One:

Instructions: A set of imaginary situations are given below. Please read carefully and imagine yourself in each situation, then write down what you will say in each. Use the space under each situation to give your answer.

1. You are sending an e-mail to your supervisor to ask for an urgent meeting in the next coming days because you felt desperate about your own PhD project. What would you tell him/her in the email to persuade him/her?

2. You have a deadline tomorrow and you are sending an e-mail to your supervisor to inform him that you could not finish the work for submission; therefore, you want him/her to give you more time or to extend the due date. What would you tell him/her in the email?

3. You are sending an e-mail to your supervisor asking him/her to give you a feedback about a recent work that you have submitted less than a week ago. What would you write in the e-mail?

4. You are on a scholarship to study abroad, and during the process of looking for a potential supervisor; you have found someone, whose interests fall exactly within what you want to do in your PhD. How would you write an email to demand and ask that person to be your supervisor?

5. You are going to work as a teacher assistant at a university level, and you are asked to provide a letter of recommendation written by your supervisor next week. What would you write in the email?

6. You want to work on particular theory/framework/author/ novel…etc. and you did not find any sources (hardcopy/electronic) available for you; your supervisor is someone who might have these in any form. How will you ask him/her to provide you with these?

7. You are on the milestones of your PhD, and you have many confusions in relation to writing literature review/ organizing thought and ideas/ which procedures you should take/ or what to start with. As you know that your supervisor/ supervisors are there for guidance, how would you approach them regarding this matter?

Part Two:

Would you please rank the previous situations you were exposed to from the most imposing (on the part of the supervisor) to the least imposing one in the following table? Taking into consideration that (1) represents the most imposing and (5) the least imposing one; while Situations are coded as (S1, S2, S3, S4. S5, S6, S7)

	1	2	3	4	5
S1					
S2					
S3					
S4					
S5					
S6					
S7					

Appendix E

Discourse Completion Tasks: Supervisors' Version

Part One:

Context: A set of situations (based on Ph.D. students' responses) are given below. Imagine yourself receiving these as email requests from your Ph.D. supervisee. Please read carefully and imagine yourself in each situation, then write down what how would you reply within each situation. Please use the space under each situation to give your answer.

1. You are receiving this request for an urgent meeting at a short notice. How would you reply to this email?

Dear (first name),
I hope that you are doing well. I am emailing you because I feel so worried and stressful as I am trying to read and write about my topic. At this point of time, I am facing some obstacles concerning my Ph. D project. If possible, can we arrange a meeting in the coming days to discuss my concerns?
Regards
Amina
Your response:

2. you are receiving the email below for deadline extension request from one of your Ph.D. candidates asking you to give her more time to submit the work. How would you respond to this request?

Dear (first name),
I am writing to you to ask for an extension for submission. Unfortunately, I could not finish the work within the deadline because of some health issues. Therefore, I need some more time to finish it.
Looking forward to hearing from you,
Regards,
Amina

Your response:

3. You are receiving the email below to request feedback on work submitted a week ago.

What would you say in the email reply?

Dear (first name),
I hope that you are doing well. I am trying to write my literature review; however, I am confused about what are the next steps to take regarding the reading. I am aware of the fact that I have only recently sent you my work but if possible, I would highly appreciate to hear your fruitful feedback on the last work I sent to you so I know which direction to take next.
Looking forward to hearing from you,
Regards,
Amina

Your response:

4. You are receiving this email from a prospective Ph.D. student. The student is sending

you a request for supervision. How would you respond to this email?

Dear (title + full name),
I am a graduate student from Algeria. I have a master's degree in X and I have obtained a fully funded scholarship from the Algerian government to undertake PhD research in the UK. I am planning to carry out research on X. I read your article and I was motivated to read more about the field due to this. I particularly enjoyed the article's emphasis on Y and Z. These two points are relevant to my research interests, and they inspired me to narrow my focus. May I ask whether you are currently accepting new PhD students and if you are, would you be willing to talk to me more about it, by email or in person? I have consulted your profile on
the University website, and it seems an excellent fit for my project. Taking into consideration that you are busy, I appreciate any time you can give me.
Kindest regards,
Amina

Your response:

5. You are receiving this email where your Ph.D. supervisee is requesting you to write a recommendation letter for her. What would be your respond to this request?

Dear (first name),
Good afternoon. I am happy to let you know that I have been accepted on a teacher assistant role that I previously applied for at the level of our university. As part of the procedures, they asked me to provide a letter of recommendation and that should be written by yourself.
I was wondering if you could please provide me with this, so I finish the application process quickly.
Looking forward to hearing from you
Regards
Amina

Your response:

6. Imagine you are receiving this email, where a Ph.D. student is asking you to provide some inaccessible resources/article that you might have. How would you respond?

Dear (first name),
I hope everything is well. I have been searching for resources about X, but I found myself unable to access some of the fundamental works. I also asked for those resources from the library inter-loans, however, the process would take a while. Would it be possible to download and provide me with these resources if you have them?
Looking forward to hearing from you,
Regards,
Amina

Your response:

7. Imagine you have received this request via email; where the Ph.D. supervisee is desperate and looking for guidance. Please, answer in the space bellow the email how would you respond to this.

Dear (first name),
Good morning, as the submission of my RD1 is due soon, I am a bit confused about what are the procedures regarding this milestone also I feel so stressful about it. I am also unsure about
how to organize my work and how to write the literature review. Could you help me regarding this?
Regards
Amina

Your response:

Part Two:

Would you please rank the previous situations you were exposed to from the most imposing on you to the least imposing one in the following table? Taking into consideration that (1) represents the most imposing and (5) the least imposing one; while Situations are coded as (S1, S2, S3, S4. S5, S6, S7)

	1	2	3	4	5
S1					
S2					
S3					
S4					
S5					
S6					
S7					

Appendix F

One-to-one Semi-structured interview questions guide:

Theme 1: The profiles of participants

1. How old are you?
2. Since when you have been in the UK? and How long you have been in Manchester?
3. What gender and what nationality are your supervisors ?

Theme 2: Intercultural communication and the role of the email communication.

1. As you are here to pursuit you PhD degree, how do you contact your supervisors and what is the frequency of the contact.
2. Would you describe for me how your relationship with your supervisor developed over time and do you think email contributed to this?
3. Would you tell me about any instances of miscommunication or instances where you felt uncapable of either contacting or explaining to your supervisors certain situation?
4. What do you like about each way of communication (email and FTF)?
5. What do you think of before formulating the emails? And what do you do usually before sending? Why?
6. Do you use any features including emojis in email exchanges? Why yes or why not?

Theme 3: (im)politeness strategies

1. I have noticed that you use dear + X in all the requests except for the very first one, would you tell me more about how could you drop the use of titles ?
2. How this is different from the way you email your ex-lecturers back home?

3. I have noticed that your very first email to your supervisor was extremly long in comparison to the others ; where you highlighted your nationality and that you are

4. Finally ; would you like to say or add anything around your email communication with your supervisors ?